



MARINE *Management News*



A newsletter for everyone interested in the management and conservation of California's living marine resources.

California Department of Fish and Game
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DFG Releases Management Plan for California's Nearshore Fishery

... by **Chamois Andersen, Information Officer &
Ed Roberts, Marine Biologist**

The California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) unveiled a new plan for marine life that takes an adaptive management approach to conserving the state's economically important nearshore fishery.

DFG's Marine Region staff presented the Nearshore Fishery Management Plan (NFMP) to the Fish and Game Commission at its meeting Thursday, May 9 in Fresno.

The new NFMP is a revision of a plan presented to the Commission and public last year. The plan was redrafted to address public input

and comments received from a scientific review panel.

The NFMP is designed to guide DFG's management of both the recreational and commercial harvest of 19 finfish species found in the nearshore environment, which spans the state's entire 1,100 mile coast.

"With a fishery that involves the state's entire coast, it is important that this plan reflect the needs of all Californians as well as the need for

maintaining the health of our vital nearshore species," said DFG Director Robert Hight. "We look forward to hearing from the public about the plan and how we might further improve it."

California's NFMP was made available May 9 on DFG's Web site at www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/nfmp. Copies may also be reviewed at DFG's Regional offices, harbors and marinas, and at county libraries along the coast.

Written comments will be accepted through June 27 and should be mailed to the Fish and Game Commission, DNFMP, 20 Lower Ragsdale Dr., Suite 100, Monterey, CA 93940, or faxed to (831) 649-2894. Comments must include a name and address, and may also be e-mailed (add NFMP to subject line) to NearshoreFMP@dfg.ca.gov.

The Commission will hear public testimony on the NFMP and its suite of management options at several meetings and special hearings scheduled this summer (see list on page 8). The Commission's adoption hearing is currently slated for Aug. 29-30 in Oakland.

"This plan is the foundation for the nearshore fishery," said DFG Marine Region Manager Patricia Wolf. "It is a process structure that will be used for making decisions and regulations, and will guide our management of nearshore fishing activities for many years to come. Thanks to the hard work of many people, including our staff as well as a broad cross section of the public who have a special interest in maintaining a healthy fishery, we've redrafted this plan to reflect the many opinions of users as well as a cadre of scientists from

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DFG Continues Commercial Gill Net Prohibition to Protect Marine Life

... by *Chamois Andersen, Information Officer*

California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) Director Robert C. Hight on April 2 signed a final emergency order to prevent the drowning of threatened southern sea otters, common murre (a seabird), and other marine life due to entanglement in gill and trammel nets in waters off California's central coast. The prohibition is from Point Reyes (Marin County) to Point Arguello (Santa Barbara County).

The order is a continuation of a process that began in September of 2000 when the commercial fishery was first closed from Point Reyes to Yankee Point, and from Point Sal to Point Arguello. The action prohibits the use of gill and trammel nets in waters less than 60 fathoms (360 feet) deep from Point Reyes southward to Point Arguello. Emergency regulations to implement the gill net fishing ban took effect April 26, and includes the area between Yankee Point (Monterey County) south to Point Sal (Santa Barbara).

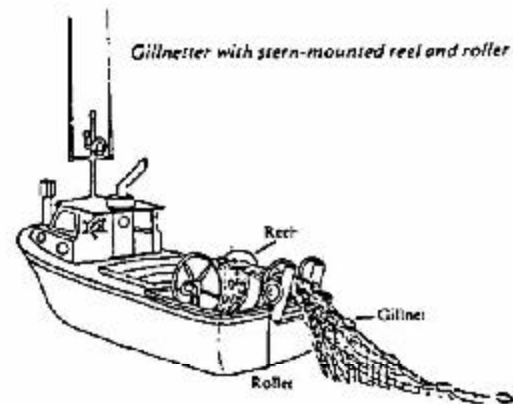
The inclusion of this middle area will close the gap between Yankee Point and Point Sal where since the original ban in 2000, fishermen were able to fish with gill and trammel nets in waters deeper than 30 fathoms. The continued use of gill nets in this area poses a threat to the recovery of the southern sea otter, which is a state protected species and also listed as threatened on the federal Endangered Species List, and to the state's recovering common murre population.

"Restricting the use of gill and trammel nets is the best tool we have to promote the continued recovery of common murre and other marine life," Hight said. "Commercial landings of California halibut by hook and line will not be affected by the emergency order," he added.

Many California breeding seabirds, particularly common murre, are concentrated on offshore rocks along the central coast. Common murre rely heavily on the availability of suitable nesting habitat, as well as the ocean's strong upwelling systems that provide for many prey species in the same general area of their nests. Common murre are known to dive to depths of

up to 98 fathoms (588 feet) to seek prey, and thus are highly vulnerable to gill nets. "The central California population is estimated to be a fraction of its historic level, and although it is subject to various restoration and management actions, set gill net entanglements continue to exacerbate the serious impediments to recovery faced by this species," said Paul Kelly, a DFG senior seabird biologist.

An onboard observer program conducted by the National Marine Fisheries Service in 1999



Picture from "Fishing Vessel Gear ID Job Aide"
Created by USCG Pacific Fisheries Training Group

and 2000, revealed a high number of common murre mortalities due to gill nets, particularly off the coast of Monterey.

In addition to protecting common murre and sea otters, this action will benefit other marine life such as harbor porpoises, sea lions, elephant seals, and cormorants that inhabit California's nearshore ocean environment, and are also subject to entanglement by gill and trammel nets.

The emergency regulation will last for 120 days which began April 26. DFG has initiated a rulemaking to permanently prohibit the use of gill and trammel nets along California's central coast, in waters less than 60 fathoms (360 feet) deep. Set gill nets (both gill and trammel nets) are used to fish for halibut, white seabass, white croaker, and rockfish. Gill nets can be either single or multiple panels of webbing that hang curtain-like in the water and are anchored to the ocean bottom on both ends. Animals are either entangled by rolling up in the net or are ensnared by getting caught around the head in the webbing (mesh).

("Gill net" continued on page 9)

Public Meetings on Nearshore Restricted Access

... by Traci Bishop, Associate Marine Biologist

In March 2002, the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) held six public meetings around the state to discuss potential options for a commercial nearshore fishery restricted access program. Input from the public was received at these meetings as part of the latest step in developing a restricted access program for the Nearshore Fishery Management Plan.

The DFG is developing a nearshore restricted access program based on the Fish and Game Commission's policy. The Commission's policy has several goals, including to promote sustainable fisheries, provide for orderly fisheries, promote conservation among participants, and to maintain the long-term economic viability of the fishery. Limited participation in this fishery may be necessary to achieve these goals.

As DFG develops the nearshore fishery restricted access program, public involvement is an important part of the process. Although currently DFG is focused on the commercial fishery, recreational and environmental interests were also addressed at these six meetings.

Comments and suggestions from these six public meetings and the small group meetings held last year will be used to shape the restricted access program. While a wide-range of opinions were expressed, the main points heard at the meetings were:

- \$ A simple program would be best.
- \$ There are differences between the regions.
- \$ Timeframe for qualifying may need to be different.
- \$ No one set of qualifying criteria fits all needs.
- \$ Participants should still be active in the fishery.

Through these meetings, DFG has gained much insight into the differences of the

("Access" continued on page 7)

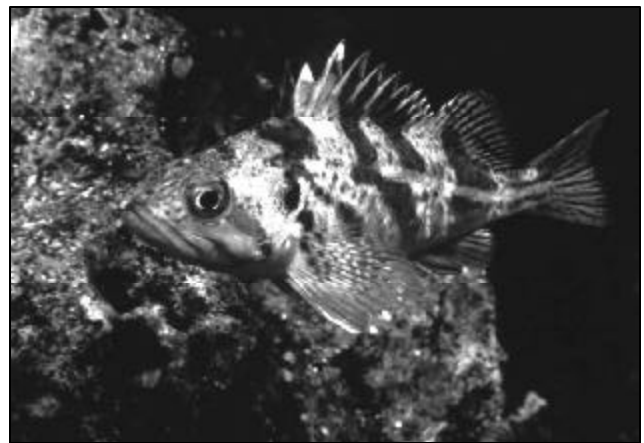
New Control Date for Other Nearshore Species Adopted

... by Traci Bishop, Associate Marine Biologist

The Commission has adopted a control date of December 31, 1999 for participation and October 20, 2000 for a possible gear endorsement program for nine additional nearshore species. The species include monkeyface prickleback (eel) and the following rockfish species: black, blue, brown, calico, copper, olive, quillback and treefish. These nine species were added to the list of nearshore fishes in 2000 during the development of the Nearshore Fishery Management Plan. Since they were added after the Nearshore Fishery Permit was established, there is no control date and a permit is not required to land these species currently.

What is a control date?

A control date is the first step in limiting access to a fishery. If someone has not participated in or used a certain gear type prior to the control date, they may not be eligible to partici-



*Calico rockfish
Photo by Dan Gotshall*

pate in the future. This informs participants that they should not make large investments in a fishery if they have not been active prior to the control date.

Why set a control date?

Nearshore Advisory Committee members and fishermen were concerned that increased restrictions in the other rockfish fisheries and

("Control date" continued on page 9)

Attention Saltwater Anglers: Your Help is Needed!

... by *Ed Roberts, Marine Biologist*

Have you ever run into a person at the end of your fishing day who came up to you with a clipboard and fish measuring board in hand, and wanted to ask you some questions about your trip and take a look at your catch? This person was conducting one of a number of important surveys, gathering information on the marine sport fishery. One of these surveys, the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFSS), is a nationwide survey funded by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). The MRFSS has been conducted here on the West Coast (California, Oregon and Washington) by the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC), with the cooperation and support of the state fishery management agencies, for more than 20 years. The survey information is used to estimate catch and fishing effort of sport anglers who fish along the nation's coasts. Fishery Technicians (commonly called "samplers"), employed by the PSMFC, interview marine recreational anglers at randomly selected beaches, piers, jetties, breakwaters, launch ramps, marinas, and on commercial passenger fishing vessels, or "party boats". They collect information on each angler's fishing habits, related expenditures, as well as biological information such as the lengths and weights of the fish the sampler observes.

Recently, the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) began to place staff in the field to increase the amount of information now being collected by the existing PSMFC Fishery Technicians. The main reason for the additional field staff is to increase the sample size by conducting more interviews. Because of the random sampling framework of the survey, and the increased coverage, an angler who fishes frequently is likely to run into a sampler several times a year. Now, more than ever, your cooperation with the survey is encouraged. In order for the survey to produce accurate estimates, it is important to get a representative cross-section of angler and trip types by including anglers who fish once per year to those who fish

infrequently. Each and every fishing trip you make is unique – different fish, different location, more/less time spent fishing, etc. The first trip you made at the beginning of the year when you caught a few rockfish from your private boat is just as important as the day you went out on the party boat and got your limit of bass or salmon, or the trip you made in the fall when you caught a couple of halibut on the pier, or the time you got skunked while surf fishing on the beach near the end of the year.



Sampler weighing a yellowtail for the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistical Survey

So, the next time you are out fishing and are approached by a sampler at the end of the day, please cooperate with the survey by taking the time to answer the questions and allowing the sampler to examine your catch. Ensure that your valuable contribution to the California marine recreational fishery is represented in the survey. All data collected are considered confidential, and the survey is regulated under the Privacy Act of 1974. The NMFS, PSMFC and DFG appreciate your time and cooperation.

For information on the agencies conducting the MRFSS, visit the NMFS and PSMFC online at www.nmfs.noaa.gov and www.psmfc.org, respectively. For more information on the Pacific Coast MRFSS, please visit www.recfin.org. Click on "Data" to see the results of the survey, or "Surveys" to learn how the MRFSS is conducted. 🐟📊

Abalone Recovery and Management Plan

... by Jonathan Ramsay, Marine Biologist

The first draft of the Abalone Recovery and Management Plan (ARMP) is well underway after the completion of three successful workshops. In July 2000, the first workshop was held with commercial abalone constituents. In November 2001, the ARMP advisory panel met in Los Alamitos to discuss the recovery of abalone resources in southern California. The ARMP Advisory Panel is composed of members and alternates representing commercial and sport abalone fishermen, environmental organizations, aquaculturists, and scientists.

A third workshop with the ARMP advisory panel and the Recreational Abalone Advisory Committee (RAAC) was held on March 15, 2002 in Oakland to address the management of northern California's red abalone fishery. The RAAC members are representatives from diverse disciplines and geographical locations who have been appointed by the Director of the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) to oversee the use of all funds generated through the abalone stamp program. Comments and suggestions gathered at these workshops have contributed to the development of both the management and recovery sections of the ARMP. In addition, members of the general public present at the two latter workshops provided important input on the ARMP.

When the first draft of the plan is completed, it will undergo an internal review by the Department of Fish and Game (DFG). After the internal review is completed in mid-August, the draft ARMP will be submitted for peer review and made available to the public for an informal review. At that time, the draft ARMP will be available on DFG's abalone resource Web site www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/abalone.html, at DFG offices, and at selected libraries and locations throughout California's coastal communities. The public will also have an opportunity to comment on the draft at two town hall meetings; one in late August and one in early September (dates and locations are yet to be determined). Written comments are welcome at any time and

("Abalone" continued on page 7)

The White Seabass Fishery Management Plan: the First FMP to be Adopted

...by Kelly O'Reilly, Marine Biologist



White seabass
Photo by Paul Gregory

The White Seabass Fishery Management Plan (WSFMP) is the first of several fishery management plans (FMPs) to be adopted by the Fish and Game Commission. Many individuals within and outside DFG were involved in the development of the management plan. This process began in 1993 when DFG was directed to prepare a white seabass fishery management plan as a pilot program intended to precede the development and adoption of other FMPs. An initial WSFMP was adopted by the California Fish and Game Commission in 1996. However, legislation needed to fully implement the plan was never introduced. In 1998, the state Legislature enacted the Marine Life Management Act (MLMA) which granted broader regulatory authority to the Commission and declared that the WSFMP remain in effect until amended and brought into compliance with the MLMA.

More than twenty individuals assisted DFG staff with the plan's development by serving on advisory panels. The advisory panels consisted of outside scientists and representatives of the commercial and recreational fisheries. A four-person scientific review panel critiqued the plan for its basis in sound science, for MLMA compliance and provided valuable input to DFG biologists for completion of the final document.

The final WSFMP was adopted by the Commission on April 4, 2002. Following that action, the Commission commented that this was a historic moment: the first fishery management plan to be adopted by California. To complete the requirements under the California Environmental Quality Act, the environmental document was certified at the May 9 Commission meeting

("WSFMP" continued on page 8)

Channel Islands Marine Protected Areas

... by John Ugoretz, Senior Marine Biologist

In 1998, the California Fish and Game Commission received a proposal to create marine reserves, or no-take zones, around the northern Channel Islands. This proposal suggested closing 20 percent of the shoreline outward to one nautical mile to all fishing. The proposal led to nearly one year of public discussion of the issue in the Commission forum. In response to the proposal and the need for an open constituent-based process, the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary and the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) developed a joint federal and state partnership to consider the establishment of marine reserves in the Sanctuary. The Commission endorsed this process at its March 4, 1999 meeting.

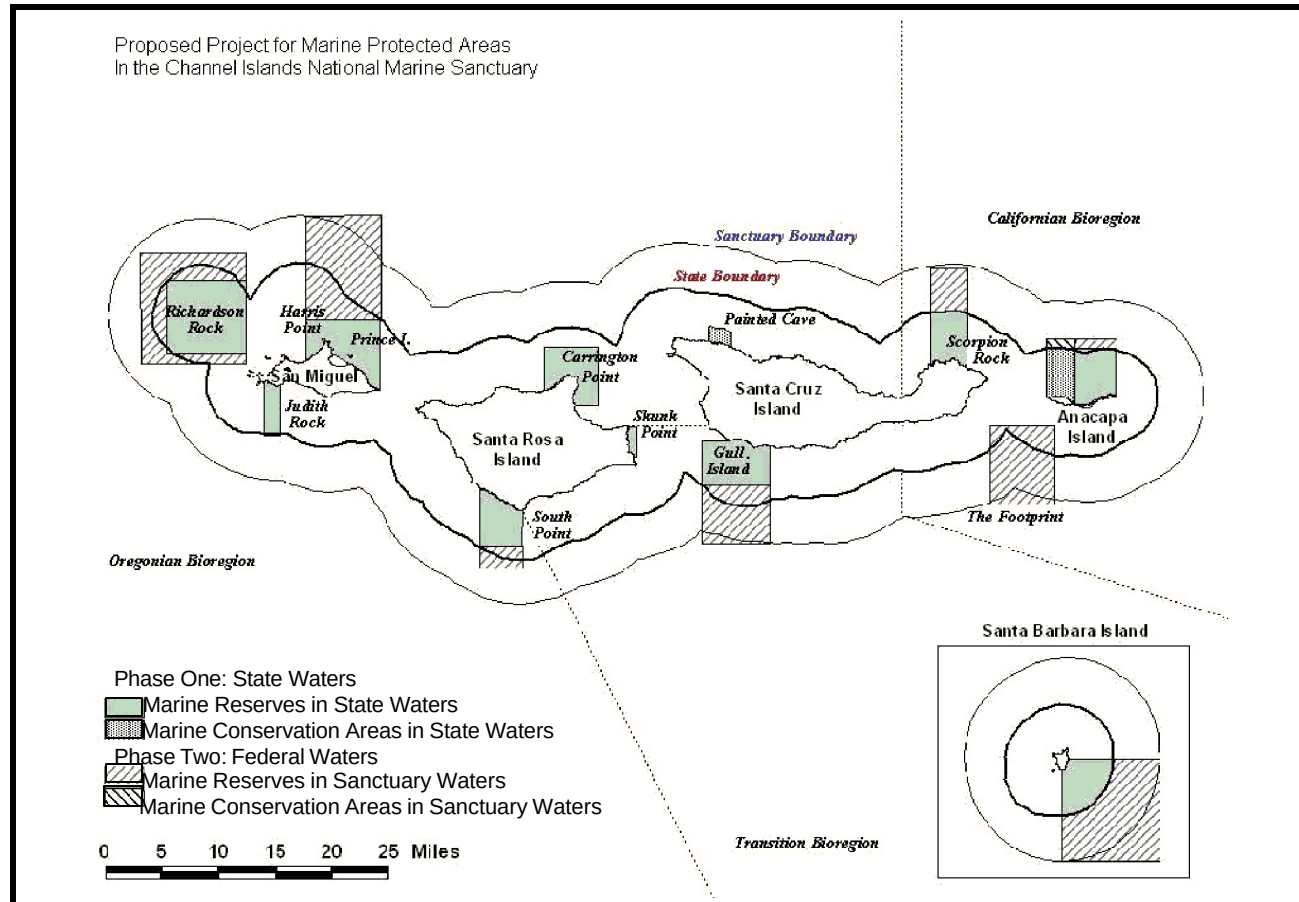
The Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council, an advisory body to the sanctuary manager, created a stakeholder based community group called the Marine Reserves Working Group (MRWG) in July,

1999. This constituent panel was comprised of 17 members representing state and federal agencies, conservation interests, consumptive recreational and commercial groups, the public at large, and the California Sea Grant Extension program. The MRWG met 24 times between July 1999 and June 2001 to discuss issues surrounding the potential establishment of new MPAs and to try to come to a consensus on a recommendation on marine reserves around the Channel Islands.

While the MRWG did not reach consensus on a specific recommendation for the spatial placement of marine protected areas (MPA), they did agree on a mission statement, problem statement, goals and objectives. The MRWG's goals stated the following:

- Ecosystem Biodiversity Goal: To protect representative and unique marine habitats, ecological processes, and populations of interest.

(“MPA” continued on page 7)



("MPA" continued from page 6)

- Socio-Economic Goal: To maintain long-term socio-economic viability while minimizing short-term socio-economic losses to all users and dependent parties.
- Sustainable Fisheries Goal: To achieve sustainable fisheries by integrating marine reserves into fisheries management.
- Natural and Cultural Heritage Goal: To maintain areas for visitor, spiritual, and recreational opportunities, which include cultural and ecological features and their associated values.
- Education Goal: To foster stewardship of the marine environment by providing educational opportunities to increase awareness and encourage responsible use of resources.

The information and recommendations developed in the MRWG process led to a DFG recommendation for MPAs in the region. This recommendation, along with a range of alternatives, was presented to the Commission in August 2001. The Commission requested that DFG develop proposed regulations for the range of alternatives and an environmental document describing the potential impacts of each. The alternatives range from about 12 percent of state waters within the Sanctuary, to more than 30 percent of state waters within the Sanctuary. A no-project alternative (which would leave the existing regulations in place), and an alternative to defer decision to the MLPA process are also included.

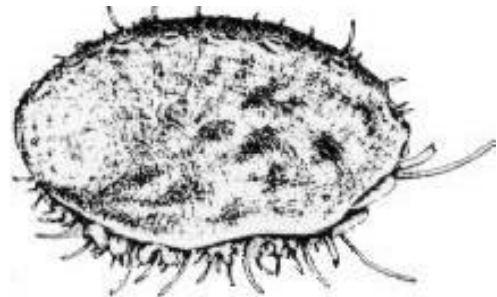
As a part of the regulatory process DFG is also preparing a Draft Environmental Document (DED) to meet California Environmental Quality Act requirements. This document details the potential environmental impacts of each MPA alternative. The DED includes information on potential impacts to both the natural environment and the human environment in the Channel Islands area. The human environment includes potential socio-economic impacts to both consumptive and non-consumptive user groups. The DED will be available for written public comment and review for a period of 45 days once it is submitted to the Commission. The Commission is not expected to make a decision on the matter before their Aug. 2 meeting in San Luis Obispo.

For more information on the Channel Islands MPA process, including descriptions and maps of the MPA alternatives, log on to the DFG's Web site at:
www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/channel_islands/index.html. 🌐

("Access" continued from page 3)

nearshore fishery throughout the State. DFG will use this information to develop a program that addresses the unique features of each region while working towards the goals of the Commission's restricted access policy.

Currently, DFG is developing a suite of nearshore restricted access program options for the Commission's consideration later this year. If you have any questions about the new control date, please contact, Ms. Traci Bishop by phone at (562) 342-7111 or via e-mail at tbishop@dfg.ca.gov. 🌐



("Abalone" continued from 5)

may be sent to Mr. Pete Haaker, 4665 Lampson Avenue, Suite C, Los Alamitos, CA 90702.

Public and peer review comments will help guide revision of the revised draft prior to its submission to the Fish and Game Commission at their December 2002 meeting in Monterey. A formal public review process will then follow. As the events mentioned above may change, be sure to keep up-to-date on the process by referring to the abalone resources section on the Web site listed above or by contacting Diana Watters (abalone constituent involvement coordinator) at (650) 631-2535 or dwwatters@dfg.ca.gov. 🌐

("NFMP" continued from front page)

throughout the state."

The first draft NFMP was presented to the Commission in August of 2001. Under the Marine Life Management Act (MLMA) enacted in 1998, the Commission was to adopt the plan by Jan. 1, 2002.

However, because the first review period produced a wealth of valuable public comments, the Commission provided DFG with additional time to allow staff to revise the plan.

The plan is organized into three main sections - the fishery management plan, environmental document, and regulations. The plan focuses on 19 finfish species, including cabezon, California scorpionfish and sheephead, kelp and rock greenlings, monkeyface prickleback, and 13 species of rockfish. The plan contains 14 detailed management options for the Commission to consider upon the plan's adoption.

Those options relate to annual control rules (the opening and closing of the fishery and the take of certain species), allocation of fish between sport and commercial users, and the potential use of marine protected areas as one tool to help conserve nearshore stocks. Also included are sections on research needs and the costs associated with implementing the plan.

The NFMP relies heavily on regional management and collaborative research. Within the plan, DFG recommends dividing the coast into three main regions: the North Region, from the California/Oregon border south to Cape Mendocino (Humboldt County); Central Region, from Cape Mendocino south to Point Conception (Santa Barbara County); and South Region, from Point Conception south to the California/Mexico border.

These three regions are currently being used as research areas for gathering and analyzing data such as fish population surveys. The framework plan for the nearshore fishery was developed to be conducive to regional and adaptive management approaches. Based on new information learned about nearshore populations and the state's changing fish markets, DFG can alter its regional management practices through this plan without affecting the entire nearshore ecosystem.

The concept of managing the state's

nearshore fishery as one ecosystem and by way of regional management is a direct result of the MLMA, and the intent of the state Legislature to manage the entire fishery for the long term. The act's overriding goal is to ensure the conservation, sustainable use, and restoration of all of California's living marine resources.

Under the MLMA, fishery management plans such as the one for the nearshore fishery, provide parameters to allocate any increases or decreases in allowable catches fairly between commercial and recreational users. The NFMP takes an adaptive approach to fishery management and was developed in accordance with the MLMA, which relies heavily on collaborative science and stakeholder involvement.

The following is a list of scheduled Commission meetings and special hearing dates:

- June 20-21, Commission meeting, Lake-land Village Beach and Mountain Resort, Lakeshore Room, 3535 Lake Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe.
- Aug. 1-2, Commission meeting, City Council Chambers, 990 Palm St., San Luis Obispo.
- Aug. 29-30, Commission meeting (adoption hearing), Elihu Harris State Office Building, 1515 Clay St., Oakland.

For additional information on California's nearshore fishery, logon to DFG's Web site at www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd.

(The information in this piece was released on May 7, 2002 as a news release.) 🌿

("WSFMP" continued from page 5)

and regulation changes pertaining to the WSFMP were adopted at that time.

The WSFMP uses a framework approach to manage the white seabass fishery in a flexible and adaptive manner, allowing for annual adjustments to the FMP and regulations, when deemed necessary in order to protect the resource. The plan calls for the resource to be monitored by DFG staff who will work closely with an advisory panel consisting of representatives from the scientific community, recreational and commercial fishing interests, and environmental groups. The text of the WSFMP can be viewed at: www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/wsfmp/index.html. 🌿

("Control date" continued from page 3)

possibly a restricted access program for the original 10 nearshore species might shift effort to these other nearshore species. Because of these concerns, it may be necessary to limit participation in the future. A control date is the first step in limiting participation in the fishery.

What will happen in the future?

It's not certain whether there is a need to limit access to this segment of the nearshore fishery. However, there is sufficient concern at this time to set a control date. Expected changes to the groundfish fishery may influence the Department of Fish and Game's (DFG) decision whether to develop a restricted access program for these additional nearshore species.

If you have any questions, please contact, Ms. Traci Bishop at (562) 342-7111 or at tbishop@dfg.ca.gov. 

("Gill net" continued from page 2)

The permanent rulemaking for the gill net closure was filed with the Office of Administrative Law and noticed on May 17 with the California Regulatory Notice Register.

All comments previously received by DFG, including comments provided during DFG hearings conducted May 8 and 9, 2001, will be included in this rulemaking. DFG will receive final comments through July 1. Send comments to Elena Teves, DFG, Marine Region Office, 20 Lower Ragsdale Dr., Suite 100, Monterey, CA 93940, fax: (831) 649-2917, or e-mail eteves@dfg.ca.gov.

For additional information on the gill net fishery closure or to obtain a copy of the order, log on to DFG's Web site at www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/gillnet/emergency.html.

The information in this piece was released on April 15, 2002 as a news release. 

Calendar of Upcoming Meetings

Marine Life Protection Act Working Group Orientation Meetings

Contact: John Ugoretz, Senior Marine Biologist, jugoretz@dfg2.ca.gov or (805) 560-6758

July 17	Long Beach	July 19	Eureka
July 18	Monterey		

Fish and Game Commission Meetings 2002

www.dfg.ca.gov/fg_comm/2002mtgs.html

June 20-21	South Lake Tahoe	Oct. 24-25	Crescent City
Aug. 1-2	San Luis Obispo	Dec. 5-6	Monterey
Aug. 29-30	Oakland		

Pacific Fishery Management Council 2002

Meetings are subject to change. The following are the week of:

June 16-21	San Francisco	Nov. 4-8	San Francisco
Sept. 9-13	Portland, Oregon		

For all of the latest information on upcoming Marine Region meetings and events, please check out our Master Calendar at www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/mlma/calendar/externalcalendar.html or contact our DFG office in Monterey at (831) 649-2870.

The Marine Life Management Act

California's 1999 Marine Life Management Act (MLMA) is an innovative, collaborative, science-based approach to managing all of California's living marine resources. One of its major goals is the long-term sustainability of our resources and our fisheries. The MLMA recognizes and values the non-consumptive benefits of healthy marine life as well as the interests of those who are economically dependent upon them. Implementation and enforcement of the MLMA is the responsibility of the California Department of Fish and Game, whose mission is to conserve wildlife and the habitats upon which they depend through good science and informed citizen involvement. For more information visit www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd.

"To protect, maintain, enhance, and restore California's marine ecosystems for their ecological values and their use and enjoyment by the public"



MARINE Management News

Marine Management News is published quarterly by the Marine Region of the California Department of Fish and Game and is for everyone interested in the management and conservation of California's living marine resources. Through this newsletter we hope to inform all associates and constituents interested in participating in and/or tracking the progresses of the Marine Life Management Act (MLMA). The MLMA places a strong emphasis on decision-making that is open and involves people who are interested in or affected by management measures.

For more information on the MLMA or to sign up to get more involved, please visit our web site at www.dfg.ca.gov/mrd/mlma/index.html.

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