

## Executive Summary

This Nearshore Fishery Management Plan (NFMP) concerns 19 species of finfish that generally frequent kelp beds and reefs in less than 120 feet depth of water off the coast of California and the islands. Of the 19 species in this plan, 13 are classified as rockfish. The biology and life history of many of these species make them vulnerable to environmental change and to over fishing. Fishing for these species, which has been intense over the last two decades, has not been managed comprehensively. Declines in the abundances of the species and in other fisheries, has generated economic and ecological disruption and aggravated competition among commercial and recreational fishers and other non-consumptive groups.

The goal of the Marine Life Management Act (MLMA) is to promote and allow only sustainable uses of California's marine wildlife. The NFMP includes six goals: resource conservation, adaptive management, coordinated and cooperative approaches, socioeconomic dimensions, fair resource allocation, and evaluation of costs for management. Under the federal Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, the State must ensure that its management of the 16 nearshore species under active federal management is consistent with the federal fishery management plan developed by the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC or Council). The State exercises management authority over three species: California sheephead, rock greenling, and monkeyface prickleback.

The draft NFMP proposes a fishery management program for the nearshore and procedures for implementing and adjusting the program. Depending upon the degree to which an action can or can not rely on an analysis and standards in the NFMP, it will require little or considerable additional analysis and administrative review. The NFMP describes the proposed project and 13 alternatives. The proposed project includes five components: harvest control rules, Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), restricted access, regional management, and allocation. The alternatives are grouped around the five components of the proposed project:

### **Regional Management**

- council nearshore rockfish regional management areas
- north coast, north-central coast, south-central coast, and south coast regional management areas

### **Allocation**

- allocation percentages based on stock biomass
- on an economic basis of benefit to the State

### **Restricted Access**

- commercial restricted access program
- restricted access program based on regional management
- restricted access program based on tiered management by nearshore fishery participation level
- commercial passenger fishing vessel control date
- nearshore recreational permit
- bycatch in other commercial fisheries

- individual fishing shares program

### **Harvest Control Rules**

- harvest control rules without the commercial live-fish fishery

Since the determination of MPA location and size will be deferred to the Marine Life Protection Act process, there are no alternatives for the MPA component of the proposed project.

Of the proposed 13 alternatives to proposed project (including No Project), all have similar effects to the environment as the proposed alternative (7 out of 13 alternatives). Of the remaining alternatives, Alternative 4 Allocation Percentages Based on Stock Biomass, PFMC's Two Nearshore Rockfish Regional Management Areas, and 6 Allocation Percentages could increase effects to the environment beyond the proposed project. Alternative 2 Fishery Control Rules without the Commercial Live-Fish Fishery, Alternative 8 Commercial Restricted Access Programs, Alternative 9 Restricted Access Programs Based on Regional Management, and Alternative 10 Restricted Access Programs Based on Tiered Management by Nearshore Fishery Participation Level have the potential to decrease effects to the environment compared to the proposed project.

## NFMP Environmental Document

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