

INTRODUCTION

The Marine Life Management Act (MLMA) of 1998 changed the way the California Department of Fish and Game (Department) approached management of the State's marine resources. The goal of the act, which became law on January 1, 1999, was to ensure that the marine resources of the State and the habitats upon which they depend, are used sustainably and conserved. When species have been depleted or habitats degraded, restoration is the management goal. The Department is also expected to use the best available science to guide management efforts.

Acknowledging that the Department's resources are limited, the Act also prescribed a collaborative and public involvement approach to management. This approach includes all interest groups that have a stake in the State's marine resources, users and non-users alike.

The MLMA also required the Department to prepare regular reports on the status of recreational and commercial marine fisheries managed by the State. In 2001, *California's Living Marine Resources: A Status Report* was published.

The comprehensive 2001 document provides baseline information and references on all of California's economically and ecologically important marine species. In 2004, an *Annual Status of the Fisheries Report Through 2003* was completed by the Department and updated information was provided on 14 species or species groups. This *Status of the Fisheries Report- An Update Through 2006* continues the series and provides information on a different set of 15 species. This continuing series of reports allows those who are interested in, or participants in California's marine management, to have a common and updated source of information about important marine resources. All of the mentioned reports can be found on the Department's website at www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/status/index.asp.

Recognizing the increasing importance of economic value in evaluating fisheries, data other than ex-vessel price (what the fisherman was paid for his catch) was included in these species reviews. Small coastal communities and local economies that have little industrial diversity must import necessary goods and services from outside the area. The sale and delivery of commercial fishing products (exports) helps to offset expenditures for these imports.

Several key sources of information were used in writing these species reviews. Fishery-dependant data (information collected from fishermen or fishing activities) include:

- Commercial landing receipts. Every time a commercial fisherman lands his catch, a Department landing receipt is filled out

documenting the species, poundage, gear, price paid to the fisherman, and other relevant information.

- Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFSS). This statewide survey provided estimates of the fish caught recreationally in California through interviews with anglers and onboard observations. The program was terminated in California on December 31, 2003.
- California Recreational Fisheries Survey (CRFS). This statewide survey provides estimates of the fish caught recreationally in California through interviews with anglers and onboard observations on a more geographically-based model than the previous survey. The CRFS program replaced MRFSS on January 1, 2004.
- Commercial Passenger Fishing Vessel (CPFV) logbooks. CPFV captains are required to submit a log for each day fished which documents the number of anglers aboard and the species and numbers of fish caught.

Whenever available, fishery independent data (information that is not collected from fishermen or fishing activities) was also used in the species reviews. This information is primarily research data collected by the Department or academics using research methodology and technology.