3.3 Science Advisory Team Guidance on MPA Network Design

The MLPA calls for the use of the best readily available science, and establishes a science team as one vehicle for fostering consistency with this standard. The MLPA also requires that the MPA network and individual MPAs be of adequate size, number, type of protection, and location as to ensure that each MPA and the network as a whole meet the objectives of the MLPA. In addition, the MLPA requires that representative habitats in each bioregion be replicated, to the extent possible, in more than one marine reserve.

The availability of scientific information is expected to change and increase over time. As with the rest of this framework, the following guidelines should be modified if new science becomes available that indicates changes are warranted. Additionally, changes should be made based on adaptive management and lessons learned as MPAs are monitored throughout various regions of the state. (See Appendix R for science methodology specific to each study region).

The science team provides the following guidance in meeting the MLPA standards. This guidance, which is expressed in ranges for some aspects such as size and spacing of MPAs, should be the starting point for regional discussions of alternative MPAs. Although this guidance is not prescriptive, any significant deviation from it should be consistent with both regional goals and objectives and the requirements of the MLPA. The guidelines are linked to specific objectives and not all guidelines will necessarily be achieved by each MPA.

Overall MPA and network guidelines:

- The diversity of species and habitats to be protected, and the diversity of human uses of marine environments, prevents a single optimum network design in all environments.

- For an objective of protecting the diversity of species that live in different habitats and those that move among different habitats over their lifetime, every ‘key’ marine habitat should be represented in the MPA network.

- For an objective of protecting the diversity of species that live at different depths and to accommodate the ontogenetic movement of individuals to and from nursery or spawning grounds to adult habitats, MPAs should extend from the intertidal zone to deep waters offshore.

- For an objective of protecting adult populations, based on adult neighborhood sizes and movement patterns, MPAs should have an alongshore span of 5-10 km (3-6 mi or 2.5-5.4 nmi) of coastline, and preferably 10-20 km (6-12.5 mi or 5.4-11 nmi). Larger MPAs should be required to fully protect marine birds, mammals, and migratory fish.

- For an objective of facilitating dispersal and connectedness of important bottom-dwelling fish and invertebrate groups among MPAs, based on currently known scales of larval dispersal, MPAs should be placed within 50-100 km (31-62 mi or 27-54 nmi) of each other.

- "Key" marine habitats (defined below) should be replicated in multiple MPAs across large environmental and geographic gradients to protect the greater diversity of species and communities that occur across such gradients, and to protect species from local year-to-year fluctuations in larval production and recruitment.

- For an objective of providing analytical power for management comparisons and to buffer against catastrophic loss of an MPA, at least three to five replicate MPAs should be designed for each habitat type within a biogeographical region.

- For an objective of lessening negative impact while maintaining value, placement of MPAs should take into account local resource use and stakeholder activities.

- Placement of MPAs should take into account the adjacent terrestrial environment and associated human activities.

- For an objective of facilitating adaptive management of the MPA network into the future, and the use of MPAs as natural scientific laboratories, the network design should account for the need to evaluate and monitor biological changes within MPAs.

1. Different marine habitats support particular species and biological communities, which in themselves vary across large-scale environmental gradients[8]

MPA networks should include "key" marine habitats (defined below), and each of these habitats should be represented in multiple MPAs across biogeographical regions, upwelling cells, and environmental and geographical gradients.

The strong association of most demersal (live on or near the ocean bottom) marine species with particular habitat types (e.g., sea grass beds, submarine canyons, shallow and deep rock reefs), and variation in species composition across latitudinal, depth clines, and biogeographical regions, implies that habitat types must be represented across each of these larger environmental gradients to capture the breadth of biodiversity in California's waters.

Different species use marine habitats in different ways. As a result, protection of all the key habitats along the California coast is a critical component of network design. "Key" habitat types provide particular benefits by harboring a different set of species or life stages, having special physical characteristics, or being used in ways that differ from the use of other habitats. For the purpose of evaluation, key habitat types were considered to be:

- sand beach
- rocky intertidal
- estuary
- shallow sand
- deep sand
- shallow rock
- deep rock
- kelp
- shallow canyon
- deep canyon

[8] Allen, Pondella II, and Horn 2006; Carr and Syms 2006; Hyrenbach, Forney, and Dayton 2000; Jones 2002; Love, Carr, and Haldorson 1991; Moser and Boehlert 1991; NRC 2001; NRC 2005; Roberts et al. 2003a; Salomon et al. 2002; Stevens 2002.

In addition, many species require different habitats at different stages of their life cycle. For example, nearshore species may occur in offshore open ocean habitats during their larval phase. Thus, protection of these habitats, as well as designs that ensure connections between habitats, is critical to MPA success. Individual MPAs that encompass a diversity of habitats will both ensure the protection of species that move among habitats and protect adjoining habitats that benefit one another (e.g., exchange nutrients, productivity).

Habitats with unique features (educationally, ecologically, archeologically, anthropologically, culturally, spiritually), or those that are rare, should be targeted for inclusion. Habitats that are uniquely productive (e.g., upwelling centers or kelp forests) or aggregative (e.g., fronts) or those that sustain distinct use patterns (e.g. dive training centers, fishing or whale watching hot spots), should also get special consideration in design planning.

2. Target species are ecologically diverse[9]

MPAs potentially protect a large number of species within their borders, and these species can have dramatically different requirements. As a result, MPA networks cannot be designed for the specific needs of each individual species. Rather, design criteria need to focus on maximizing collective benefits across species by minimizing compromises where possible. Commonly, it is more practical to consider protecting groups of species based on shared functional characteristics that influence MPA function and design (e.g., patterns of adult movement; patterns of larval dispersal; dependence on critical locations such as spawning grounds, mammal haul out areas, bird rookeries). It is also reasonable to emphasize protection of individual species and groups of species that have special significance because of their dominant role in ecosystems or their economic importance. Ecologically dominant species play the largest roles in the function of coastal ecosystems, and economically important species often experience the greatest impacts from human activities. In addition, knowledge of the distribution of rare, endemic, and endangered species should supplement the use of species groups. Generally, MPAs should not be used solely to enhance single-species management goals.

3. Uses of marine and adjacent terrestrial environments are diverse[10]

The way people use coastal marine environments is highly diversified in method, goals, timing, economic objectives, and spatial patterns. The wide spectrum of environmental uses should be a part of decisions comparing alternative networks of MPAs. The heterogeneity of uses, both between and within consumptive and non-consumptive categories make it unlikely that any one design will satisfy all user groups. The design will need to make some explicit provisions for trading off among the various negative and positive impacts on user groups. Placement of MPAs should also take into account the adjacent terrestrial environment and associated human activities. Freshwater runoff can be an important source of nutrients but also a potential source of contaminants to the adjacent marine environment. Terrestrial protected areas (e.g., preserves, parks) can regulate human access, restrict discharge of contaminants and provide enforcement support to adjoining MPAs.

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[9] Carr and Reed 1993; Eckert 2003.
[10] Batisse 1990; Kildow and Colgan 2005; Mascia 2004; NRC 2001; Stoms et al. 2005.

4. MPA permanence is especially critical for long lived animals

Two clear objectives for establishing self-sustaining MPAs are to protect areas that are important sources of reproduction (nurseries, spawning areas, egg sources) and to protect areas that will receive recruits and thus be future sources of spawning potential. To meet the first objective of protecting areas that serve as sources of young, protection should occur both for areas that historically contained high abundances and for areas that currently contain high abundances. Historically productive fishing areas, which are now depleted, are likely to show a larger, ultimate response to protective measures if critical habitat has not been damaged. Protecting areas where targeted populations were historically abundant alone is insufficient, however, because the pace of recovery may be slow, especially for species with relatively long life spans and sporadic recruitment (e.g., top marine predators). Including areas with currently high abundances in an MPA network helps buffer the network from the inevitable time lag for realizing the responses of some species. The biological characteristics of longevity and sporadic recruitment also suggest that the concept of a rotation of open and closed areas will probably not work well for the diversity of coastal species in California.

5. Size and shape guidelines[11]

To provide any significant protection to a target species, the size of an individual MPA must be large enough to encompass the typical movements of many individuals. Movement patterns vary greatly among species. Some are completely immobile or move only a few meters. Others forage widely. The more mobile the individuals, the larger the individual MPA must be to afford protection. Therefore, minimum MPA size constraints are set by the more mobile target species. Because some of California's coastal species are known to move hundreds of miles, MPAs of any modest size are unlikely to provide a high degree of protection for these species. Fortunately, tagging studies indicate that net movements of many of California's nearshore bottom-dwelling fish species, particularly reef-associated species, are on the order of 5-20 km (3-12.5 mi or 2.5-11 nmi) or less over the course of a year (Lea, McAllister, and VenTresca 1999). Knowledge of these individual adult neighborhood or home range sizes must be combined with knowledge of how individuals are distributed relative to one another (e.g., in exclusive versus overlapping neighborhoods) to determine how many individuals a specific MPA design will protect. Current data suggest that MPAs spanning less than about 5-10 km (3-6 mi or 2.5-5.4 nmi) in extent along coastlines may leave many individuals of important species poorly protected. Larger MPAs, spanning 10-20 km (6-12.5 mi or 5.4-11 nmi) of coastline, are probably a better choice given current data on adult fish movement patterns.

In an MPA network it is relatively easy to protect non-mobile species, and relatively difficult to protect species whose ranges generally extend beyond MPA boundaries. This is due to the fact that highly mobile species will spend the majority of their lives outside the protected area and thus receive little added protection by its establishment. Non-mobile species, conversely, may spend their entire life within the protected area and be completely protected from human take. In light of this, special consideration in MPA network design is paid to species with intermediate mobility, which will not only receive significant protection but also be available for

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[11] Halpern 2003; Lea, McAllister and VenTresca 1999; Roberts et al. 2003a and 2003b; Roberts et al. 2001; and Starr, O'Connell; Ralston 2004.

take when outside MPA boundaries. With MPAs spanning 10-20 km (6-12.5 mi or 5.4-11 nmi) of coastline, pelagic species with very large neighborhood sizes will likely receive little protection unless the MPA network as a whole affords significant reductions in mortality during the cumulative periods that individuals spend in different MPAs, or unless other ecological benefits are conferred (e.g., protection of feeding grounds, reduction in bycatch). Protection for highly mobile species will come from other means, such as state and federal fisheries management programs, but MPAs may play a role.

Less is known about the net movements of most of the deeper water sedentary and pelagic fishes, especially those associated with soft-bottom habitat, but it is reasonable to suspect that the range of movements will be similar or greater than those of nearshore species. One cause of migration in demersal fishes is the changing resource/habitat requirements of individuals as they grow. Thus, individual ranges can reflect the gradual movement of an individual among habitats, and MPAs that encompass more diverse habitat types will more likely encompass the movement of an individual over its lifetime. Although fisheries may not target younger fish, offshore MPAs that include inshore nursery habitats increase the likelihood of replenishment of adult populations offshore. Such MPAs would also protect younger fish from incidental take (i.e., bycatch). Fish with moderate movements, especially those in deeper water, will require larger MPA sizes. Because several species also move between shallow and deeper habitat, MPAs that extend offshore (from the coastline to the three-mile offshore boundary of state waters) will accommodate such movement and protect individuals over their lifetime.

Typically, the relative amount of higher relief rocky reef habitat decreases with distance from shore. In such situations, an MPA shape that covers an increasing area with distance offshore (i.e., a wedge shape) may be an effective design. This shape also better accommodates the greater movement ranges of deeper water and soft-bottom associated fishes and the larval/juvenile stages of nearshore species, which may occur offshore during their planktonic phase of life. However, this may conflict with the optimum design for enforcement purposes of using lines of latitude and longitude for boundaries.

Coupling of pelagic and benthic habitats is an important consideration in both offshore and nearshore MPA design. The size of a protected area should also be large enough to facilitate enforcement and to limit deleterious edge effects caused by fishing adjacent to the MPA. MPA shape should ultimately be determined on a case-by-case basis using a combination of information about bathymetry, habitat complexity, species distribution, and relative abundance.

6. *Spacing between MPAs*[12]

The exchange of larvae among MPAs is the fundamental biological rationale for MPA "networks." Larval exchange has at least three primary objectives: to assure that populations within MPAs are not jeopardized by their reliance on replenishment from less protected populations outside MPAs; to ensure exchange and persistence of genetic traits of protected populations (e.g., fast growth, longevity); and to enhance the independence of populations and communities within MPAs from those outside MPAs for the use of MPAs as reference sites. One role of MPAs is to act as reference sites for comparison with less protected populations or communities. For this to occur, MPAs must act independently from areas with less protected populations. Independence is enhanced for MPAs whose replenishment is contributed to by other MPAs.

Movement out of, into, and between MPAs, by juveniles, larvae, eggs, or spores of marine species depends on their dispersal distance. Important determinants of dispersal distance are the length of the planktonic period, oceanography and current regimes, larval behavior, and environmental conditions (e.g., temperature and sources of entrainment). As with adult movement patterns, the dispersal of juveniles, larvae and eggs varies enormously among species. Some barely move from their natal site. Others disperse vast distances. MPAs will only be connected through the dispersal of young if they are close enough together to allow movement from one MPA to another. Any given spacing of MPAs will undoubtedly provide connectivity for some species and not for others. The challenge is minimizing the number of key or threatened species that are left isolated by widely spaced MPAs.

Based on emerging genetic data from species around the world, larval movement of 50-100 km (31-62 mi or 27-54 nmi) appears common in marine invertebrates (Kinlan, Gaines, and Lester 2005; Kinlan and Gaines 2003; Shanks, Grantham, and Carr 2003; Siegel et al. 2003). For fishes, larval neighborhoods based on genetic data appear generally larger, ranging up to 100-200 km (62-124 mi or 54-108 nmi). For marine birds and mammals, dispersal of juveniles of hundreds of kilometers is not unusual, but for some of these species, return of juveniles to natal areas can maintain fine-scale population structure. For MPAs to be within dispersal range for most commercial or recreational groundfish or invertebrate species, they will need to be on the order of 50-100 km (31-62 mi or 27-54 nmi) a large fraction of coastal species will gain no benefits from connections between MPAs.

Current patterns of retention features, such as fronts, eddies, bays, and the lees of headlands, may create "recruitment sinks and sources." Such spatial variation in recruitment habitat may be predictable - dispersal distances will be shorter where retention is substantial (e.g., lees of

[12] Bailey, Rancis, and Stevens 1982; Barnes and Hanan 1995; Barnes et al. 1992; Baumgartner, Soutar, and Ferreira-Bartrina 1992; Burton et al. 2000; Cailliet and Bedford 1983; Cailliet, Osada, and Moser 1988; Carlson and Haight 1972; Cass et al. 1986; Coombs 1979; Culver 1987; Dark 1985; Grantham, Eckert, and Shanks 2003; Hallacher 1984; Hartman 1987; Haugen 1990; Heilprin 1992; Horton 1989; Ianelli, Lauth, and Jacobson 1994; Jagielo 1990; Karpov, Albin, and VanBuskirk 1995; Kinlan and Gaines 2003; Kinlan, Gaines, and Lester 2005; Kramer 1990; Krygier and Pearcy 1986; Laurs and Lynn 1977; Lea, McAllister, and VenTresca 1999; Leet, Dewees, and Haugen 1992; Leet et al. 2001; Lenarz et al. 1995; Love 1996; Love, Yoklavich, and Thorsteinson 2002; MacCall et al. 1999; Mathews 1990 and 1992; Mathews and LaRiviere 1997; Mathews and Barker 1983; Miller and Geibel 1973; Palumbi 2003; Pearcy 1992; Pereyra, Pearcy, and Carvey, Jr. 1969; Shanks, Grantham, and Carr 2003; Siegel et al. 2003; Smith and Abramson 1990; Stanley et al. 1994; Starr et al. 2002; Starr, Heine, and Johnson 2000; Starr and Thorne 1998; Wilkins 1996; Yamanaka and Richards 1993.

headlands). As a result, MPAs may need to be more closely spaced in these settings. Although dispersal data appear to be valid for a wide range of species, there are few coastal marine species in California that allow these estimates of larval neighborhoods to be made with confidence. Nonetheless, the specific pattern of larval dispersal in any particular species is not as important for network design as the sum of all the patterns of larval dispersal for all the species of concern.

7. Minimal replication of MPAs

MPAs in a particular habitat type need to be replicated along the coast. Four major reasons for this are: to provide stepping-stones for dispersal of marine species; to insure against local environmental disaster (e.g., oil spills or other catastrophes) that can significantly impact an individual, small MPA; to provide independent experimental replicates for scientific study of MPA effects; and for the use of MPAs as reference sites to evaluate the effects of human influences on populations and communities outside MPAs. Ideally at least five replicates (but a minimum of three) containing sufficient representation or each habitat type, should be placed in the MPA network within each biogeographical region and for each habitat to serve these goals. For large biogeographical regions, fulfilling the critical stepping stone role may require even more MPA replicates. The spacing criteria discussed above will drive the number of replicates in this situation. To ensure that the effects of MPAs can be quantified, the network should be designed in a way that facilitates comparison of protected and unprotected habitats, and between different degrees of consumptive and non-consumptive uses.

8. Human activities ranges and MPA placement

The geographic extent of human activities is suggestive of size and placement of MPAs. Fishing fleets and other user groups typically have a finite home range from ports and access points along the coast. Many activities, especially in central California, are day-based and conducted from motor-, sail- or hand-powered crafts with ranges between 1 and 29 mi (1 and 25 nmi). Historical patterns of fishing activity may have been concentrated much closer to ports than is true today because of declines in target species abundance from activities in the past. If MPAs are designed to limit consumptive uses, MPAs located farthest away from access points will tend to be associated with lower negative impacts. However, MPAs often become magnets for fishing along their edges. These situations create positive impacts for consumptive users by locating MPAs close to ports and coastal access points. Similarly, MPAs designed to facilitate certain non-consumptive types of activities such as diving may be more effective closer to ports and coastal access points. As a general rule, locating MPAs at the outer reaches of the maximum range of any given user group will tend to minimize the impacts on that group, both negative (loss of opportunity) and positive (creation of opportunity). The balance between these influences must be evaluated for specific locations. In addition, if MPAs restrict transit they will carry higher social, economic and, potentially, safety costs for users seeking access to sites beyond the MPA. For these reasons, it is recommended that, in general, MPAs do not restrict transit.

9. Human activity patterns

Human activities have distinct hotspots where effort is concentrated. In certain cases there may be an ecological benefit from eliminating certain activities while their may be socioeconomic benefit from allowing others. Areas of intense use will not only be those most impacted by human perturbation of the ecosystem, but also those where eliminating certain consumptive uses may cause high levels of short-term economic impact. It is recommended that proposals consider, in their design, areas of intensive human use and the cost and benefit of establishing MPAs in these areas.

3.4 Consideration of Habitats in the Design of MPAs[13]

The first step in assembling alternative proposals for MPAs in a region and in the context of a statewide MPA network is to use existing information to the extent possible to identify and to map the habitats that should be represented. The MLPA also calls for recommendations regarding the extent and types of habitats that should be represented.

The MLPA identifies the following habitat types: rocky reefs, intertidal zones, sandy or soft ocean bottoms, underwater pinnacles, seamounts, kelp forests, submarine canyons, and seagrass beds. The master plan team convened in 2000 reduced this basic list by eliminating seamounts, since there are no seamounts in state waters. The team also identified four depth zones as follows: intertidal, intertidal to 30 meters (0 to 16 fm), 30 meters to 200 meters (16 to 109 fm), and beyond 200 meters (beyond 109 fm). Several of the seven habitat types occur in only one zone, while others may occur in three or four zones. While pelagic habitats are also important from an ecosystem perspective, they are more difficult to include in a network of MPAs due to the transitory nature of the water and its inhabitants, both of which are not constrained by lines on a map.

The science team recommends expanding these habitat definitions in several ways:

1. Based on information about fish depth distributions provided in a new book on the ecology of California marine fishes (Allen, Pondella, and Horn 2006), the science team recommends dividing the 30-200 m depth zone into a 30-100 m and a 100-200 m zone. This establishes five depth zones for consideration:

    - Intertidal
    - Intertidal to 30 m (0 to 16 fm)
    - 30 to 100 m (16 to 55 fm)
    - 100 to 200 m (55 to 109 fm)
    - 200 m and deeper

[13] Allen, Pondella, and Horn 2006; Armstrong 2000; Breaker and Gilliland 1981; Carr 2000; Chavez and Collins 2000; Collins et al. 2000; Graham and Largier 1997; Hickey 1979 and 1998; Klinger and Ebbesmeyer 2001; Largier 2004; Pickett and Paduan 2003; Pierce et al. 2000; Service, Rice, and Chavez 1998; Strub, Kosro, and Huyer 1991.

2. The habitats defined in the MLPA implicitly focus on open coast ecosystems and ignore the critical influence of estuaries. California's estuaries contain most of the State's remaining soft bottom and herbaceous wetlands such as salt marshes, sand and mud flats, and eelgrass beds. Ecological communities in estuaries experience unique physical gradients that differ greatly from those in more exposed coastal habitats. They harbor unique suites of species, are highly productive, provide sheltered areas for bird and fish feeding, and are nursery grounds for the young of a wide range of coastal species. Emergent plants filter sediments and nutrients from the watershed, stabilize shorelines, and serve as buffers for flood waters and ocean waves. Given these critical ecological roles and ecosystem functions, estuaries warrant special delineation as a critical California coastal habitat.

3. Three of the habitats defined in the MLPA – rocky reefs, intertidal zones, and kelp forests – are generic habitat descriptions that include distinct habitats that warrant specific consideration and protection. In the case of rocky reefs and intertidal zones, the type of rock that forms the reef greatly influences the species using the habitat. For example, granitic versus sedimentary rock reefs harbor substantially different ecological assemblages and should not be treated as a single habitat. Similarly, the term kelp forest is a generic term that subsumes two distinct ecological assemblages dominated by different species of kelp. Kelp forests in the southern half of the state are dominated by the giant kelp, *Macrocystis pyrifera.* By contrast, kelp forests in the northern half of the state are dominated by the bull kelp, *Nereocystis luetkeana*. In central California, both types of kelp forests occur. These two types of kelp forests harbor distinct assemblages and should be treated as separate habitats.

4. Habitat definitions in the MLPA should be expanded to include ocean circulation features, because habitat is not simply defined by the substrate. Seawater characteristics are analogous to the climate of habitats on land, and play a critical role in determining the types of species that can thrive in any given setting. Just as features of both the soil and atmosphere characterize habitats on land, features of both the substrate (e.g., rock, sand, mud) and the water that bathes it (e.g., temperature, salinity, nutrients, current speed and direction) characterize habitats in the sea. No one would argue that a sand dune at the beach and a sand dune in the desert are the same habitat. Similarly, rocky reefs in distinct oceanographic settings are different habitats that can differ fundamentally in the species that use the reefs.

5. There are often multiple habitat types within a relatively small area, and these are often incorporated into proposed MPAs. The science team distinguished these habitat types using the highest resolution bathymetry data available, when calculating percent of each habitat within proposed MPAs. For the purposes of linking habitats within a network or network component, each MPA was characterized by the habitats that it includes in an ecologically meaningful amount. For the purpose of evaluating whether habitats are adequately represented within individual MPAs, the following factors must be considered: the relative amount of that habitat in the entire region, the overall size of the MPA, and the home range of species likely to benefit from protection in an MPA that rely upon that habitat.

6. In the central coast region, high-resolution bathymetric imagery data was not available for most of the southern half of the region. Coarse-scale bathymetry data indicated that a large portion of the region was soft bottom, yet commercial and recreational fishing effort data for rockfishes associated with hard bottom, as well as anecdotal information from fishermen and other constituents, indicated that considerable hard bottom exists within state waters. Maps derived from recreational CPFV (Commercial Passenger Fishing Vessel) fishing data for rockfish trips and maximum extent of kelp should be used to develop proxies for the location of hard-bottom habitat for any region in which high resolution maps do not exist; these in turn should be used for habitat calculations for proposed MPAs.

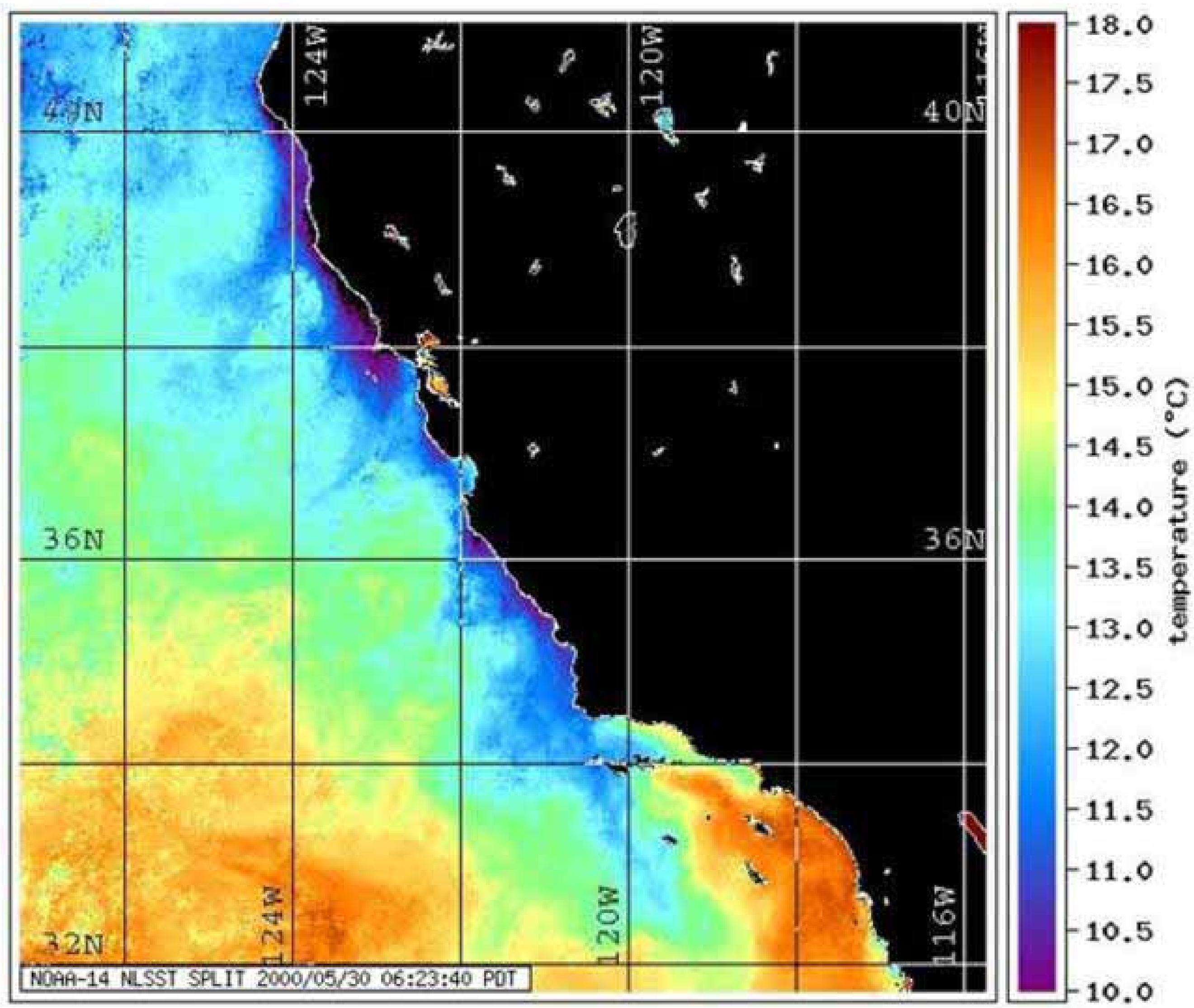
The oceanography of the California coastline is dominated by the influence of the California Current System. On the continental shelf and slope this system consists of two primary currents: the California Current, which flows toward the equator, and the California Undercurrent, which flows toward the North Pole (Hickey 1979, 1998). When present, the undercurrent occurs beneath the southward flowing California Current. North of Point Conception, the undercurrent may reach the surface as a nearshore, poleward flowing current that is best developed in fall and winter (Collins et al. 2000; Pierce et al. 2000). These currents vary in intensity and location, both seasonally and from year to year.

Organisms will also be affected by the circulation induced by tidal currents. For those living in shallow water habitats very close to shore, inshore of the surf zone, the dominant influence on transport of planktonic eggs and larvae will be the circulation generated by breaking waves.

As can be seen in a satellite image of ocean temperature along the California coastline (Figure 4), the circulation and physical characteristics of the California Current System are exceedingly complex and variable. This is not the image one would expect if ocean currents were analogous to northward or southward flowing rivers in the sea. Rather, ocean flows are greatly modified by variation in the strength and direction of winds, ocean temperatures and salinity, tides, the topography of the coastline, and the shape of the ocean bottom, among several other factors. The end result is a constantly changing sea of conditions.

The patterns are not completely random, however. Many aspects of ocean climates vary somewhat predictably in space, especially ones that are tied to key features of the coastline, such as points, headlands, and river mouths. Locations that share similar ocean climates are typically more similar in the types of species they harbor. Therefore, defining habitats for the MLPA and MPA networks must include habitats defined by coastal oceanography as well as the composition of the seafloor.

FIGURE 4 An example of sea surface temperature in the California coastal waters, May 30, 2000



Although a wide range of oceanographic habitats could be defined for the California coastline, the science team suggests that three prominent habitats stand out because of their demonstrated importance to different suites of coastal species:

- upwelling centers
- freshwater plumes
- retention areas

It is not recommended that such features (some of which are of very large scale) be isolated as habitats to be designated as MPAs or specifically encompassed within MPAs. However, MPAs could be designated that included or benefited from the presence or proximity of such features and processes.

3.4.1 Upwelling Centers

Upwelling is one of the most biologically important circulation features in the ocean. Upwelling occurs when deep water is brought to the surface. On average deep water is colder and more nutrient rich than surface waters. When upwelling delivers nutrients to the sunlit waters near the surface, it provides the fuel for rapid growth of marine plants, both plankton and seaweeds. Ultimately the added nutrients can energize the productivity of entire marine food webs. Upwelling regions are the most productive ocean ecosystems. The west coast of North America is one of the few major coastal upwelling regions on the entire planet (Chavez and Collins 2000; Hickey 1998). The major driver of upwelling along the California coastline is wind. Winds that blow from the north and northwest parallel to California's generally north-south coastline drive currents at the surface. Because of the complicated effects of friction and the rotation of the earth, surface water is pushed to the right of the direction of the wind (the Coriolis Effect). With winds blowing from the north and northwest, this effect pushes surface waters away from shore. As water is pushed offshore, it is replaced by water that is upwelled from below.

The rate of upwelling depends on many features that vary spatially along the coastline – the strength and direction of the wind, the topography of the shoreline, and the shape of the continental shelf are three of the most important. Capes and headlands play a key feature in all of these drivers of upwelling. They accelerate alongshore winds, and they channel coastal currents in such a way that upwelling intensity can increase dramatically in their vicinity. As a result, major headlands and capes from Point Conception north are commonly centers of upwelling associated with strong rates of offshore transport of surface waters, greatly elevated nutrient concentrations, and enhanced productivity offshore (Pickett and Paduan 2003). Since major capes and headlands tend to be fairly regularly spaced along the California coastline, with an average spacing between 150 and 200 km (93 and 124 mi or 81 and 108 nmi), these upwelling centers drive cells of ocean circulation with relatively predictable patterns of flow. Enhanced offshore flow and upwelling emanates from headlands, versus eddies and locations of more frequent alongshore flow in the regions between headlands. These filaments of upwelled water are readily identified emanating from key headlands in most satellite images of ocean temperature or biomass of phytoplankton. Because the upwelling centers are locations of more frequent and intense offshore flow near the surface, which moves larvae and other plankton away from shore, and elevated nutrients, which fuels much more rapid algal productivity, these locations represent a distinct oceanographically driven coastal habitat with substantially different species composition and dynamics compared to other coastal locations.

3.4.2 Freshwater Plumes

A second coastal habitat driven by features of the water column is generated by the influence of rivers. Freshwater emerging from watersheds alters the physical characteristics of coastal seawater (especially salinity), changes the pattern of circulation (by altering seawater density), and delivers a variety of particles and dissolved elements, such as sediments, nutrients, and microbes. These effects all arise from the land and can have a profound influence on the success of different marine species. The mouths of watersheds set the locations of low salinity plumes, and the size and shape of the plume vary over time as functions of the volume of flow from the watershed, the concentration of particles, and the nature of coastal circulation into which the water is released. The location of California's freshwater plume habitats can be defined by both satellite and ocean-based measurements. In other parts of the country (e.g., Mississippi River delta) and the state (e.g., San Francisco Bay estuarine complex) the influence of this habitat type is much greater than it is in regions such as the central California coast south of San Francisco.

3.4.3 Larval Retention Areas

Since connectivity and movement of larvae, plankton, and nutrients play such an important role in the impact of MPAs on different species, changes in the speed and direction of coastal currents can create very different ecological settings. A number of circulation features can greatly limit the coastal particles. In particular, features characterized by rotational flows, such as eddies, can greatly enhance the length of time that a particle or larval fish stays in a general region of the coastline. Such retentive features have been shown to significantly affect the species composition of coastal ecosystems (Largier 2004). Since many retention areas are tied to fixed features of coastal topography (e.g., eddies in the lee of coastal headlands or driven by bottom topography), they define unique regions of coastal habitat that can be predictably defined.

Experience in California and elsewhere demonstrates that individual MPAs generally include several types of habitat in different depth zones, so that the overall number of MPAs required to cover the various habitat types can be smaller than the number of total habitats. The master plan team convened in 2000 also called for considering adjacent lands and habitat types, including seabird and pinniped rookeries. Since marine birds and mammals are protected by federal regulations, they are not a primary focus of the MLPA. Nonetheless, these species can play important ecological roles and their success may be impacted by changes in other components of California’s coastal ecosystems that are a primary focus of MLPA. Therefore, MPA planning needs to coordinate with other efforts focused on marine birds and mammals.

As noted regarding the design of MPAs, this guidance should be the starting point for regional discussions regarding representative habitats in a region. Although this guidance is not prescriptive, any significant deviation from it should be explained.

3.5 Species Likely to Benefit from MPAs

Recommending the extent of habitat that should be included in an MPA network will require careful analysis and consideration of alternatives. These recommendations may vary with habitat and region, but should be based on the best readily available science. One aspect of determining appropriate levels of habitat coverage is the habitat requirements of species likely to benefit from MPAs in a region. California FGC subsection 2856(a)(2)(B) requires that the master plan identify “select species or groups of species likely to benefit from MPAs, and the extent of their marine habitat, with special attention to marine breeding and spawning grounds, and available information on oceanographic features, such as current patterns, upwelling zones, and other factors that significantly affect the distribution of those fish or shellfish and their larvae.”

The Department prepared a master list of such species, which appears in Appendix G. This list may serve as a useful starting point for identifying such species in each region during the development of alternative MPA proposals. With the assistance of the science team, the

Department should develop a list of species specific to each study region of the state, as they are determined, for use by the appropriate regional stakeholder group. The list will indicate which species are of critical concern and why. This regional list then can assist in evaluating desirable levels of habitat coverage in alternative MPA proposals. Although the statewide list will be all inclusive, it is not likely that all species on the list will benefit from the establishment of new, or the expansion of existing, MPAs. For example, a species may be in naturally low abundance within this portion of its geographical range.

The Department, with the assistance of the science team, will develop scientifically based expectations of increases in abundance of focal species for each MPA. These expectations, while not hard targets or performance goals, will help managers determine the efficacy of MPAs. If expected increases are not realized, the process of adaptive management will allow for changes in the MPA design.

3.6 Biogeographical Regions

In calling for a statewide network of MPAs, to the extent possible, the MLPA recognizes that the state spans several biogeographical regions, and identified these, initially, as follows [FGC subsection 2852(b)]:

- the area extending south from Point Conception
- the area between Point Conception and Point Arena
- the area extending north from Point Arena

In the same provision, the MLPA provides authority for the master plan team required by FGC subsection 2855(b)(1) to establish an alternate set of boundaries. The master plan team, convened by the Department in 2000, determined that the three regions identified in the MLPA were not zoogeographic regions; scientists recognize only two zoogeographic regions between Baja California and British Columbia with a boundary at Point Conception. Instead of the term "biogeographical region," the team adopted the term "marine region" and identified four marine regions:

- North marine region: California-Oregon border to Point Arena (about 210 linear miles or 183 linear nautical miles of coastline);
- North-central marine region: Point Arena to Point Año Nuevo (about 180 linear miles or 156 linear nautical miles of coastline);
- South-central marine region: Point Año Nuevo to Point Conception (about 233 linear miles or 203 linear nautical miles of coastline); and
- South marine region: Point Conception to the U.S./Mexico border, including the islands of the southern California Bight (about 280 linear miles or 243 linear nautical miles of coastline).

Three of the above four regions (those north of Point Conception) fall within the larger zoogeographic region accepted by scientists. These sub-regions were used more or less as subdivisions of the greater zoogeographic region by the former master plan team. Technically, the requirement of replicate SMRs encompassing a representative variety of habitat types and depths would only apply to the two recognized zoogeographic regions within the state.

However, based on the concept of a network of MPAs, in whatever way it is defined, and the fact that it would likely require unusually and unacceptably large SMRs to incorporate a wide variety of habitat types if only two (the minimum definition of “replicate”) SMRs were established in each zoogeographic region, it is likely that a statewide network will contain more than two SMRs in each biogeographical region.

MPAs in different biogeographical regions will affect different suites of species. Thus replication and network design may be considered separately for relatively distinct stretches of coastline. Biogeographical regions can be distinguished based upon data of two types: the location of species’ borders along the coastline, and surveys of species’ distribution and abundance. Historically, the locations of species’ borders (i.e., places where multiple species terminate their ranges), have been used to define biogeographical regions or provinces. However, regional boundaries typically are set by only a small subset of the species distributed up and down the coast from these “breakpoints.”

The abundances and diversity of species at locations along the coast are much more reflective of differences in biological communities and provide the best evidence of biologically distinct regions from both structural and functional standpoints. Historically, such data on abundance and biological diversity have not been available at enough locations along most coastlines for broad scale, geographic analyses. As a result, definitions of biogeographical regions have been forced to rely on a less meaningful measure of biological differences – the location of species’ borders.

Biogeographers have divided all major oceans into large *biogeographic provinces*. California’s coastline spans two of these large-scale provinces – the Oregonian and the Californian Provinces – with a boundary in the vicinity of Point Conception. This prominent biogeographical boundary has been recognized for more than half a century. More detailed analyses of species’ borders also have led to the identification of regional scale boundaries between biogeographical sub-provinces.

Biogeographers commonly have used distributional data for subgroups of taxonomically related species (e.g., snails, seaweeds, or fish) to set biogeographical boundaries; interestingly, the boundaries for sub-provinces often differ among taxonomic groups because different types of species respond to different physical and biological characteristics in different ways (Airamé, Gaines, and Caldow 2003). Two locations, however, emerge as prominent boundaries for key coastal species. Seaweeds, intertidal invertebrates, and nearshore fishes have comparable numbers of species’ borders in the vicinity of Monterey Bay as they do at Point Conception. In addition, coastal fishes have an important sub-province boundary at Cape Mendocino.

Scientific data do not support a significant biological break between biogeographical regions at Point Arena, as identified in earlier MLPA documents. Therefore, on the basis of the distribution of species’ borders for key coastal species groups, there are three biogeographical regional boundaries and four regions along the California coast:

- U.S./Mexico border to Point Conception
- Point Conception to Monterey Bay
- Monterey Bay to Cape Mendocino
- Cape Mendocino to the California/Oregon border

In the past decade, detailed data have become available on species abundances and diversity from a large number of locations along California's coast. This wealth of information on actual species assemblages now provides the opportunity to define biogeographical regions on the basis of actual ecosystem compositions, rather than the presumed composition of ecosystems inferred from species' borders. These ecosystem-based data are a better scientific fit with the goals of the MLPA. Summaries of species abundance and diversity data, especially for shallow water species (<30 m depth), suggest that there are four points of transition along the California coastline that demarcate distinct marine assemblages: Point Conception, Monterey Bay, San Francisco Bay, and Cape Mendocino.

Three of these locations are identical to those defined above solely on the basis of species' borders for prominent groups. The new boundary that emerges from abundance and biodiversity data is San Francisco Bay. The region between Monterey Bay and Cape Mendocino has two distinct biological assemblages on coastal reefs even though this is not a region characterized by large numbers of species' borders. The difference in assemblages on either side of San Francisco Bay appears to be caused by changes in the types of rock that form nearshore reefs. Since the type of rock is used to defined bottom habitats for MPA designation, this transition in species composition could be addressed in MPA designs using habitat considerations or, alternatively by designating the Monterey Bay to San Francisco Bay segment as a distinct biogeographical region.

Based on this review, there are four possible definitions of the biogeographical regions that will serve as the basic structure of the statewide network of MPAs. These options are as follows:

- three biogeographical regions defined in the MLPA
- two biogeographic provinces recognized by many scientists with a boundary at Point Conception
- four marine regions identified by the former master plan team, with boundaries at Point Conception, Point Año Nuevo, and Point Arena
- biogeographical regions recognized by scientists who have identified borders based on species distributional patterns or on abundance and diversity data with boundaries at Point Conception, Monterey Bay and/or San Francisco Bay, and Cape Mendocino

Accepting the strong scientific consensus of a major biogeographical break at Point Conception, the task force recommended that the Commission adopt the two biogeographic provinces as the biogeographical regions for purposes of implementing the MLPA. The task force recommended that the more refined information on other breaks be used in designating study regions and in designing networks of MPAs. The Commission adopted these recommendations in August 2005 within the master plan framework, and they are not changed in this master plan.

3.7 Types of MPAs

The MLPA recognizes the role of different types of MPAs in achieving the objectives of the Marine Life Protection Program [FGC subsection 2853(c)]. While the MLPA does not define the different types, the MMAIA defines all types of MMAs including the three MPAs (SMR, SMP, and SMCA) and one MMA (state marine recreational management area) used in the master plan for MLPA implementation. (See Appendix B for the text of the MMAIA as amended.)

Besides somewhat different purposes, which are described below, each type of MPA represents a different level of restriction on activities within MPA boundaries. These restrictions and purposes suggest how each designation can be used effectively in a network of MPAs.

3.7.1 State Marine Reserve

As defined in the MMAIA, an SMR prohibits injuring, damaging, taking or possessing any living, geological, or cultural resources and must maintain the area "to the extent practicable in an undisturbed and unpolluted state" while allowing "managed enjoyment and study" by the public [PRC subsection 36710(a)]. The responsible agency may permit research, restoration, or monitoring. Such activities as boating, diving, research, and education may be allowed, to the extent feasible, so long as the area is maintained "to the extent practicable in an undisturbed and unpolluted state." Such activities may be restricted to protect marine resources. It specifically allows the agency to permit scientific activities. The definition of "marine life reserve" in the MLPA is consistent with this definition.

The MLPA and MMAIA thus require striking a balance between protection and access in marine reserves. The form that this balance takes in an individual marine reserve will depend upon the goals and objectives of that reserve. While the MLPA specifically precludes commercial and recreational fishing from marine reserves, it also authorizes restrictions on other activities, including non-extractive activities (e.g., diving, kayaking, and snorkeling). Any such restrictions, however, must be based on specific objectives for an individual site and the best readily available science. It is important to note that this statement does not imply that navigation will necessarily be restricted though MPAs or that other non-extractive activities will be regulated, although in some instances the latter may be necessary. For example, it may be necessary to protect populations of sensitive marine birds or mammals in their nesting or breeding areas by prohibiting access to some areas.

The MLPA sets other requirements for the use of marine reserves. At FGC subsection 2857(c)(3), the MLPA requires "[s]imilar types of marine habitats and communities shall be replicated, to the extent possible, in more than one marine life reserve in each biogeographical region." Consistent with this approach, this master plan framework foresees that in each biogeographical region described above, representative habitat across a range of depths should be represented in at least two SMRs in order to assure the replication of habitats required by the MLPA. It should be noted that several of habitat types occur in only one depth zone, while others may occur in three or four depth zones. Experience demonstrates that individual MPAs generally include several types of habitat in different depth zones, so the overall number of SMRs required to replicate the various habitat types may be less than the total combination of depth zones and habitats replicated across each region.

3.7.2 State Marine Park

As defined in the MMAIA, an SMP prohibits injuring, damaging, taking or possessing for commercial use any living or nonliving marine resources. Other uses that would compromise the protection of living resources, habitat, geological, cultural, or recreational features may be restricted. All other uses are allowed, consistent with protecting resources.

SMPs differ from SMRs to different degrees in their purposes as well as the type of restrictions. Unlike SMRs, SMPs allow some or all types of recreational fishing. The types of restrictions on fishing may vary with the focal species, habitats, and goals and objectives of an individual SMP within a region. Where the primary goal is biodiversity conservation, restrictions on fishing may be different from those in an SMP where the primary goal is enhancing recreational opportunities.

3.7.3 State Marine Conservation Area

In an SMCA, activities that would compromise the protection of species of interest, the natural community,[14] habitat, or geological features may be restricted. Research, education, and recreational activities, as well as commercial and recreational fishing may be permitted.

Marine conservation areas also differ from SMRs in their purpose as well as the type of restrictions. This type of MPA allows some level of recreational and/or commercial fishing. The restrictions on fishing may vary with the focal species, habitats, and goals and objectives of an individual MPA within a region, and may, for instance, be in the form of restrictions on the catch of particular species or on the use of certain types of fishing gear. Marine conservation areas may be useful in protecting more sedentary, benthic species, while allowing the harvest of pelagic finfish species.[16] Another use of a marine conservation area would be to allow the continued use of traps (which typically have relatively low bycatch rates and are more efficient for harvesting invertebrates) while prohibiting the harvest of finfish species of concern by hook-and-line or by trawls (which typically have relatively high bycatch rates). At present the large fishery closures known as the Cowcod Conservation Areas and the Rockfish Conservation Area may function as *de facto* marine conservation areas in that bottom fishing for finfishes is prohibited but other types of fishing are allowed, though the specific regulations in these areas are subject to change dependent on stock assessments.

[14] Natural community is defined in FGC section 2702(d) as a distinct, identifiable, and recurring association of plants and animals that are ecologically interrelated.

[16] Pelagic Finfish are defined in California regulation as: northern anchovy (*Engraulis mordax*), barracudas (*Sphyraena spp.*), billfishes* (family Istiophoridae), dolphinfish (*Coryphaena hippurus*), Pacific herring (*Clupea pallasi*), jack mackerel (*Trachurus symmetricus*), Pacific mackerel (*Scomber japonicus*), salmon (*Oncorhynchus spp.*), Pacific sardine (*Sardinops sagax*), blue shark (*Prionace glauca*), salmon shark (*Lamna ditropis*), shortfin mako shark (*Isurus oxyrinchus*), thresher sharks (*Alopias spp.*), swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*), tunas (family Scombridae), and yellowtail (*Seriola lalandi*).

3.7.4 State Marine Recreational Management Area

In a state marine recreational management area, activities which would compromise the recreational value of the area are restricted. Recreational opportunities may be protected, enhanced, or restricted, while preserving basic resource values of the area. While not specifically an MPA, these MMAs are useful for consideration in areas where certain recreational use is allowed while extraction of subtidal living marine resources is prohibited. Specifically, these areas can be used where allowing waterfowl hunting is consistent with the desired level of subtidal resource protection. The use of this designation can specifically allow hunting, while preserving the subtidal resources in a manner similar to a SMR.

3.7.5 Combined use of marine reserves, marine parks and marine conservation areas

The combination of the use of marine reserves, marine parks, and marine conservation areas has an especially valuable role to play in designing a network that accommodates a spectrum of uses (NRC 2001; Salm, Clark, and Siirila 2000). In the design of MPAs, plans that use all three types of MPAs may allow separation of incompatible uses (NRC 2001). For instance, a marine reserve could be buffered with a marine park in which some types of recreational fishing are regulated but allowed, or with a marine conservation area where limited recreation and commercial fishing are allowed. The buffer zone may allow the full benefit of spillover to be realized in the limited-take area.

This approach may, however, prove to be problematic relative to the enforcement and public understanding of different regulations within contiguous areas. Confusing differences in regulations in a small spatial area can lead to unintentional infractions and a degradation of the function of the MPA. Care must be taken to ensure that regulations are understandable and observed by the public and enforced as necessary.

3.8 Levels of Protection for MPA Classifications

The science team recognized that there is great variation in the type and magnitude of activities that may be permitted within the three types of MPAs, in particular SMPs and SMCAs. This variety intentionally provides designers of MPA network components with flexibility in proposing MPAs that either individually or collectively fulfill the various goals and objectives specified in the MLPA. However, this flexibility can result in complex and possibly confusing levels of protection afforded by any individual MPA or collection of MPAs. In particular, SMCAs allow for many possible combinations of recreational and commercial extractive activities. Therefore, MPA network component proposals with similar numbers and sizes of SMCAs may in fact differ markedly in the type, degree, and distribution of protection throughout the study region. Thus, the purpose of categorizing MPAs by their relative level of protection is to simplify comparisons of the overall conservation value of MPAs within and among proposed network components. The science team's methodology for categorizing MPAs by their relative level of protection is outlined by study region in Appendix R.

3.8.1 Rationale for categories of protection

MPA proposals should be evaluated particularly with respect to five of the six MLPA goals: 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6.

- Goal 1 addresses protection of the natural diversity and abundance of marine life, and the structure, function, and integrity of marine ecosystems.
- Goal 2 aims to help sustain, conserve, and protect marine life populations, including those of economic value, and rebuild those that are depleted.
- One aspect of Goal 3 that should be evaluated is the opportunity to study marine ecosystems that are subject to minimal human disturbances. As related to this goal, proposals should be evaluated with respect to the replication of appropriate MPA designations, habitats, and control areas.
- Goal 4 pertains to the protection of marine natural heritage, including protection of representative and unique marine life habitats in central California waters.
- Goal 6 aims to ensure that MPAs are designed and managed, to the extent possible, as a network.
- Goal 5 seeks to ensure that MPAs have clearly defined objectives, effective management, adequate enforcement, and are based on sound scientific guidelines. The first three parts of goal 5 are not evaluated scientifically and the last is why the master plan includes significant discussion of scientific guidelines.

The likelihood that any particular MPA or collection of MPAs will meet any of these goals is based in large part on the type and magnitude of removal or mortality (collectively referred to as "take") of living marine resources that occur within the MPAs. Three forms of take include (1) direct removal of a species from an MPA, (2) unintended incidental removal of a species in the process of targeting another species (referred to as "bycatch"), and (3) perturbation of the ecosystem in such a way that it leads to increased mortality of a species (e.g., alteration of habitat that leads to reduced refuge from predators). Take is not limited to fishing activities. For example, coastal power generating stations impinge fishes and invertebrates and entrain their larvae in the process of drawing ocean water for cooling systems. Likewise, many minor seawater intakes and sewage outfalls occur along the coast. The impacts of seawater intakes and sewage outfalls can be diffuse in nature, and can affect ecosystems both locally and regionally.

For the analysis of proposed MPA packages, pollutant sources and entrainment/impingement from coastal power plants, both of which may influence proposed MPAs, is not considered. This is largely a result of limited time and resources rather than a known lack of potential impact. It is recommended that the potential impact of water quality on MPAs is an important element which deserves further consideration. It is recommended that the science team work with the scientific staff of the State Water Resources Control Board and the Regional Water Quality Control Board to more fully evaluate potential water quality impacts if requested to do so by the task force.

Additionally, commercial kelp harvest can reduce habitat availability and may directly and indirectly increase mortality of juvenile fishes. Similarly, mariculture may affect the marine ecosystem. Thus, the level of protection and conservation value afforded by any particular MPA depends very much on the type and magnitude of fishing and other human activities that will be allowed within the MPAs.

State marine reserves provide the greatest level of protection to species and to ecosystems by allowing no take of any kind (with the exception of scientific take for research, restoration, or monitoring). The high level of protection created by an SMR is based on the assumption that no other appreciable level of take or alteration of the ecosystem is allowed (e.g., sewage discharge, seawater pumping, kelp harvest). In particular, SMRs provide the greatest likelihood of achieving MLPA goals 1, 2, and 4.

All other MPA designations (SMCA and SMP) allow some level of extraction of one or more species. The indirect effects of this extraction are poorly understood, both with regard to how other species in the ecosystem are affected (e.g., predators, prey, competitors), as well as incidental take of other species (i.e., bycatch). Because of this uncertainty, SMRs can provide managers with a greater certainty in meeting the objectives of ecosystem-wide protection (Goal 1) and provide them with comparisons to other types of MPAs to better understand the consequences of the direct and indirect effects of extraction allowed in those MPAs.

State marine parks are designed to provide recreational opportunities and therefore can allow some or all types of recreational take of a wide variety of fish and invertebrate species by various means (e.g., hook and line, spear fishing). Because of the variety of species that potentially can be taken and the potential magnitude of recreational fishing pressure, SMPs that allow recreational fishing provide low protection and conservation value relative to other, more restrictive MPAs (e.g., SMRs and some SMCAs). Although SMPs have lower value for achieving MLPA goals 1 and 2, they may assist in achieving other MLPA goals.

State marine conservation areas potentially have the most variable levels of protection and conservation of the three MPA designations because they allow any combination of commercial and recreational fishing, as well as other extractive activities (e.g., kelp harvest). Coastal MPAs (i.e., MPAs within state waters) are most effective at protecting species with limited range of movement and close associations to seafloor habitats. Less protection is afforded to more wide-ranging, transient species like salmon and other pelagic finfish. This may lead to proposals of SMCAs that prohibit take of bottom-dwelling species, while allowing the take of pelagic finfish. However, fishing for some pelagic finfish, like salmon near the bottom or in relatively shallow water, increases the likelihood of taking bottom species that are targeted for protection (e.g., California halibut, lingcod, and rockfishes). Rates of bycatch are particularly high in shallow water where bottom fish may move close to the surface and become susceptible to the fishing gear. In addition, for recreational salmon fishing, the practice of “mooching” has a potentially higher bycatch rate than that of trolling.

3.9 Setting Goals and Objectives for MPAs

Whether MPAs within a region are reserves, parks, or conservation areas, or some combination of the above, the MLPA specifies that all MPAs have certain features. First, the MLPA requires that the Program and each MPA in the preferred alternative have specific identified objectives [FGC subsections 2853(c)(2) and 2857(c)(1)]. FGC subsection 2857(c)(1) states: “[I]ndividual MPAs may serve varied primary purposes while collectively achieving the overall goals and guidelines of this chapter.” The MLPA provides some options for what these objectives are. At FGC subsection 2857(b), the MLPA states that the preferred alternative may include MPAs that will achieve either or both of the following objectives:

(1) Protection of habitat by prohibiting potentially damaging fishing practices or other activities that upset the natural ecological functions of the area.