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Marine Life Protection Act Initiative
C/o California Resources Agency
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On behalf of United Anglers of Southern California (UASC) we submit the following attached external proposal based on data and guidelines as of May 12, 2009, for consideration in the South Coast Study Region process.

This is not our final plan in the series of Marine Protected Areas (MPA) product as there are several outstanding issues from the Science Advisory Team and the Blue Ribbon Task Force that have not been decided. The dissemination of information from the process is slow, creating less time for our fisheries advocacy team to interpret the reports. This hinders our ability to create reasonable, conservation-based MPAs with low economic impact for the study region. There continues to be considerable debate over habitat data, which is a critical component for ensuring that key and unique habitat have been included in the network in accordance with science guidelines.

These are some of the major issues that need to be resolved so that UASC can submit a complete revised external proposal:

1. Decision on military use areas.
2. Unknown habitat at San Clemente.
3. Promised DFG guidance on drawing near shore lines at less than 10 meters and greater than 30 meters.
4. DFG guidance regarding catch and release areas.
5. Continual movement in habitat mapping. UASC knows the habitat is there but the issue is how it gets counted, with small increments making huge differences on the hard bottom that is so rare inside State waters within this region.
6. Problems still exist in not directly recognizing the contribution of conservation options in the less than moderate/high levels of protection (LOP).

However, this proposal is well founded and scientifically based with what little information that has been provided, in accordance with the objectives of the Marine Life Protection Act, the Marine Managed Areas Improvement Act, and the Ocean Protection Act.

Great effort has been made to locate boundaries at locations that are equitable to other stakeholders such as commercial fishermen, parks, universities, and conservationists. The

boundaries have also been located for the purpose of preserving fishing opportunities for current and future generations of Californians with an eye to maintaining access to our ocean shorelines for recreational fishing.

United Anglers of Southern California is very much aware that the leading marine scientists in the nation have recommended that the effective implementation of a network of MPAs requires participation by the entire community of stakeholders. Conservation cannot succeed without a core constituency willing to actively support efforts on an ongoing basis. This requires the ability to assess new gear, new fishing practices and adjust regulations to achieve the overall objectives of habitat protection and sustainable fisheries.

We are confident that the attached proposal provides two new approaches to habitat protection explicitly suggested by the National Academy of Sciences report referred to in the California Master Plan for Marine Protected Areas that as of yet has not been considered in California's implementation of MPAs.

Signed,

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UNITED ANGLERS
OF
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

PROPOSAL FOR A NETWORK OF MARINE
PROTECTED AREAS FOR THE SOUTH COAST
STUDY REGION

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OVERALL RATIONALE FOR UNITED ANGLERS OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA PROPOSAL

Thank you for the opportunity to offer this external proposal to the MLPA process South Coast Study Region. The attached proposal is not a finished product because of the delay in receiving the necessary data, report evaluations and working guidelines that will be the core of the science evaluation process.

We would like to introduce two concepts for marine protected areas that have not yet been utilized in California's MLPA implementation. However, these approaches are core to the peer-reviewed science for the design of MPA networks referred to by the California Master Plan for Marine Protected Areas. The National Academy of Sciences (NAS) report, "Marine Protected Areas, Tools for Sustaining Ecosystems" provides guidance towards designing MPAs that include the use of catch and release fishing, gear restrictions and the implementation of larger background management areas to effectively create a network of protection. This proposal introduces all these concepts for utilization within the South Coast Region where there is strong support from recreational fishermen for such approaches.

MPAs are a subset of Marine Managed Areas. The latter have the ability to be more versatile and go beyond the capacities of MPAs. MMAs have been successfully used federally in the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary and to a lesser extent in the first two phases of the MLPA.

Justification for the Use of Area-Management and MPAs of a Lower Level of Protection.

UASC has included three MPAs with SAT-rated lower protection in its external proposal.

We have done this for a number of reasons.

- 1) Increased stakeholder buy in
- 2) Increased conservation
- 3) Informed adaptive Management
- 4) Increase the ability of a MPA network to achieve the objectives of the act.

Using methods recommended by the National Academy of Sciences, we offer two different approaches to accomplish these goals. The objective here is to increase conservation while simultaneously easing the socio-economic impact of fully- protected areas.

The NAS has concluded that you cannot achieve all conservation goals by simply protecting marine areas. A principle criterion for the design of successful MPAs requires the equitable engagement and support of all stakeholder groups.

UASC proposes two types of MPAs.

- 1) MPAs that substantially meet equivalent conservation goals of fully protected marine areas

2) MPAs that support the entire network and increase the likelihood of achieving the stated conservation goals.

Catch and Release as a Conservation Tool

The first group of MPAs utilizes a catch and release strategy for all fish likely to benefit from an MPA while permitting targeting pelagic fish close to shore. This format is identical to the North Central Coast where salmon trolling and crab trapping are allowed and scored a moderate high level of protection. All incidental catch would be released.

In the South Coast the SAT failed to provide a level of protection (LOP) of at least moderate high for a catch and release strategy because of the lack of data related to quantity and survivability of associated catches.

In support of catch and release we offer the recently published California Department of Fish and Game /Sea Grant brochure titled, "Bring that Rockfish Down." This pamphlet not only describes how to properly release non-targeted fish but also goes on to state that 83% of fish caught between 217 and 350 feet survive when both promptly and correctly returned to the sea. This percentage is known to climb substantially with fish taken from shallower depths.

From the Monterey Bay Aquarium Web-site under Seafood Watch-How Fish are Caught or Farmed, comes the following statement:

"Hook and lining is an environmentally responsible fishing method. Fishermen can quickly release unwanted catch from their hooks since lines are reeled in soon after a fish takes the bait."

UASC believes that a catch and release strategy can be utilized to provide moderate high levels of protection to habitat. These MPAs would be designed to obtain such information and provide a basis for adaptive management.

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Charles F. Holder Catalina State Marine Recreational Management Area

The second approach UASC is offering to help achieve the objectives of the act is a background area- based approach designed to address known impacts of fishing and provide a better opportunity for the MPA networks to be successful.

This approach is not novel to California's MPA network and is described and mapped by the NAS in their work on MPA design referenced in the California draft master plan for MPAs.

The Charles F Holder, Catalina State Marine Recreational Management Area (SMRMA) is the example area for this second approach in our array at Catalina Island.

The NAS has explicitly identified the use of larger zones within which ecological and fishery reserves can be placed as being the very definition of what a network entails. The approach

was employed in the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary using the sanctuary as the background of the network.

Early monitoring in the Channel Island MPAs suggested a loss of up to 30% of fish anticipated to benefit from the MPAs. The studies, done using acoustic tools, have not yet determined the causes of these losses. However, after a review of fish life histories, other studies have suggested that finfish losses from temperate marine protected areas are likely a foregone conclusion. If these fish are not being poached or eaten by creatures in the MPAs but instead swimming away, any opportunity for growing larger specimens to achieve the objectives of the act may be lost without a large zone approach.

UASC carefully selected a background management area to dovetail with existing interests in the region. Catalina Island is the birthplace of big game sportfishing and Charles F. Holder is considered the father of same. The island remains to this day a favorite fishing destination for both local and visiting anglers. Having withstood one hundred plus years of steady fishing pressure, Catalina continues to provide superb angling opportunities. This by itself is a testimony to the quality of management the island has historically enjoyed. Also note these same regulations have been conceived and championed almost exclusively by recreational anglers.

Our approach to Catalina is both creative and introspective in that it looks at both the risks and the opportunities the island has to offer. The popularity of fishing here has the potential to affect targeted fish populations. Among the species likely to benefit from an area-based management program are two favorites of the recreational fishing community. Kelp Bass and sheephead are extensively managed but not on a spatial basis and not to provide the highest level of production from the fishery.

Farnsworth Bank State Marine Conservation Area

The Farnsworth bank is an integral part of the Catalina Island historical fishing legacy. George Farnsworth was one of the island's most renowned fishing guides who discovered the bank and named it after his father. The area has been and continues to be one of the most productive regions at the island. Recreational anglers readily acknowledge the advantages of providing high levels of protections here, especially on behalf of bottom-dwelling species such as the purple hydra corals. However, maintaining access to the big game fish such as marlin, swordfish, tuna, yellowtail and white seabass is essential to fishermen. Allowing fishing to continue in these storied grounds is totally compatible with high levels of protection for the geographical region and its full- time inhabitants.

Implementation Issues

First, some questions have arisen about the appropriate use of a non-MPA area management region and in particular a State Marine Recreational Management Area. The act clearly

provides for recommendations of fishery management measures and the use of “generic” areas to achieve the goals of the act. The act provides that marine reserves be the centerpiece of area management but allows far broader tools for accomplishing the goals of the act beyond marine reserves.

Second, the use of a SMRMA could have other potential benefits that may in the presence of a lack of funding for enforcement and monitoring provide an avenue for additional monies.

Third, if the additional benefits of a SMRMA are not desired by policy makers, the act provides the latitude to include room for management measures to help ensure the success of the network.

Fourth, the evaluation process and modeling designed and utilized by the SAT very clearly shows a very large conservation benefit to the MPA network.

The reasons we believe the area at Catalina can better achieve the goals of the act are as follows:

- 1) The finfish likely to benefit at Catalina that are subject to intensive fishing effort are kelp bass and sheephead and this effort is primarily recreational.
 - a. Kelp bass is allocated 100% to recreational fishermen.
 - b. Sheephead are allocated primarily to recreational fishermen.
 - c. What commercial interest there is in Catalina’s sheephead is primarily for the smaller specimens.
- 2) Slot limits place an upper limit and the size restriction on fish that can be retained. This has a rich history of success at building fish biomasses while providing a more satisfactory sport, and increasing the population of larger specimens. The California Department of Fish and Game for example has heralded their success with slot limits for sturgeon. On the East Coast, slot limits have re- built large populations of oversized mature redfish.

The Charles F. Holder, Catalina State Marine Recreational Management Area

The Charles F. Holder Catalina State Marine Recreational Management Area (SMRMA) is offered for consideration in the Marine Life Protection Act process to serve a large number of objectives that are accorded by Marine Managed Areas and to recognize the value of these approaches in designing a network of MPAs for the South Coast Study Region (SCSR). Catalina Island sits centrally in the SCSR and has a rich cultural fishing history combined with huge recreational fishing utilization.

The shape of the SMRMA includes all State waters surrounding the island. Implementation of the SMRMA would include at least two new management measures that have a record of successfully addressing issues likely to contribute to fulfilling MLPA objectives. These management approaches have a robust history of success in filling out age classes that have

been implicated as a concern about indirect fishery impacts on habitats. The SMRMA in conjunction with catch and release areas directly addresses both aspects of this concern of age structure changes and population density.

Why a SMRMA within the MLPA process?

Considering the effort at Catalina, the island in the view of some might support several highly restrictive MPAs. Such an approach to management at Catalina would have devastating economic effects both on the town of Avalon and to the many businesses on the mainland and on the island that provide the means to enjoy this exceptional destination. Additionally, compression of recreational effort at Catalina could have far-reaching negative consequences for the larger ecology of the island. Additionally, a SMRMA could provide an opportunity to obtain funds for proper management and enforcement here. A SMRMA provides opportunity to adjust regulations, attempt new management and conservation ideas, experiment, and either pull back or expand as we learn what does or doesn't work. A SMRMA is not the draconian inflexible measure that some of the other restrictive MPAs are. It has the potential to be our most successful tool in an effort to manage our marine resources.

In Conclusion

UASC would like to thank the Blue Ribbon Task Force for this opportunity to present our external proposal and we hope you find it creative, insightful and full of clear ideas as to how best manage our wonderful ocean.

UASC External Proposal B Version 2 Boundaries					
<u>MPA</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>Other</u>
Goleta SMR	Coast	34deg 24min	119deg 45.5min	119deg 48.5min	
Goleta SMCA	34deg 24min	State line	119deg 45.5min	119deg 48.5min	
Big Sycamore SMR	Coast	State line	119deg 0 min	119deg 5 min	
Big Sycamore SMP	Coast	34deg 3min	Coast	119deg 0 min	
Palos Verdes SMCA	Line under other	State line	118deg 21min	118deg 24min	Line connecting 118deg24min/33deg 44min to 118deg 21min/33deg 43min
Portuguese Bend SMCA	Coast	Line under other	Coast	118deg 24min	line above then extending east to shore along 33 deg 43min latitude
Laguna Coast SMCA	33 deg 32 min	33 deg 30 min	Line under other		Line connecting 117deg 48min/33deg 32min to 117deg 46 min/33deg 30min
Laguna SMR	Coast	Line under other	117deg 46 min	117deg 48 min	Line connecting 117deg 48min/33deg 32min to 117deg 46 min/33deg 30min
Del Mar SMR	31 deg 58.5min	32deg 56 min	coast	117deg 17.5min	(Note: Line separating to MPAs to be drawn by DFG to approximate 30 meter depth contour in accordance with the standards they have utilized in the past)
Del Mar SMCA	31 deg 58.5min	32deg 56 min	117deg 17.5min	state line	(Note: Line separating to MPAs to be drawn by DFG to approximate 30 meter depth contour in accordance with the standards they have utilized in the past)
Farnsworth Bank Pt A	33 deg 21 min	State line	Line under other	118deg 28min	Line connecting 118deg30min/33deg21min to 118deg28min/33deg19min
Farnsworth Bank Pt B	33 deg 21 min	Line under other	Coast	118deg 28min	Line connecting 118deg30min/33deg21min to 118deg28min/33deg19min
Pt Fermin SMP	coast	33deg 42.27min	118deg16.72min	coast	Boundaries as determined by DFG as east west line tip of Pt Fermin; north south line off end of breakwater spur
Arrow Pt to Lionhead	33 deg 29min	Coast	Line under other	118deg 32.3min	Line connecting from 118 deg 32min/33deg 29min to Lionhead Pt; West boundary as determined by DFG as north/south line off Arrow Pt
Catalina Marine Science Center SMR	33 deg 27min	Coast	118deg 27min	118deg 29.28min	West boundary as determined by DFG as north/south line off Pt between Big and Little Fishermen's Cove plus line connecting points across Little Fisherman's Cove