

**California MLPA Master Plan Science Advisory Team
Draft Responses to Science Questions Posed at the
December 11-12, 2007 NCCRSB Meeting
*Revised December 31, 2007***

1. **What level of protection would an SMCA at the southeast Farallon Islands receive if that SMCA included the use of a seasonal special closure to protect critical periods for seabirds and marine mammals while allowing uses such as commercial abalone diving during less critical times of the year, noting that the allowed uses would strictly adhere to the frameworks set forth in fishery management plans and the Abalone Recovery Management Plan (ARMP)?**

Background: Members of the MLPA North Central Coast Regional Stakeholder Group and the public are concerned that a state marine reserve at the Farallon Islands would negate the potential for a future commercial abalone fishery at the islands. Therefore, they would like to consider designing a state marine conservation area that could incorporate other stakeholder concerns, such as protections for seabirds and marine mammals, while allowing for extractive uses that minimize habitat damage and conform to existing management plans. Note that in one of the draft marine protected area MPA proposals a stipulation was inserted that states if, through the mechanisms provided in the ARMP, a commercial abalone fishery was allowed at the Farallon Islands, any MPA would be reexamined for possible allowance of the commercial take of abalone.

Draft response: A response to this question is still being formulated.

- a) What provisions are there to ensure that the potential for a future commercial abalone fishery at the Farallons is not ruled out with the designation of a state marine reserve?

Draft staff response: A response to this question is still being formulated.