

MINUTES
Recreational Abalone Advisory Committee (RAAC)
Saturday, November 8, 2014
10:00 AM – 3:30 PM

Location: California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Field office, 5355 Skylane Blvd. Suite B, Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Contact Person: Ian Taniguchi, Senior Environmental Scientist, 4665 Lampson Ave. Suite C, Los Alamitos, CA. 90720 Phone: (562) 342-7182 Email: itaniguchi@dfg.ca.gov

Committee Web Page: <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/raac/index.asp>

1.0 Introductions and announcements (Taniguchi)

1.1 Introductions – present in person:

RAAC Members: Ian Taniguchi, Capt. Steve Riske, Peter Haaker, Steve Benavides, Rocky Daniels, Brooke Halsey, Ed Schulze (alternate), Chris Voss – on phone conference after lunch

Others: CDFW - Dr. Laura Rogers-Bennett, Dr. Jim Moore, Christy Juhasz, Jerry Kashiwada, Lt. Jim Jones

Acting Secretary - Carol Rose

Public - Jack Liikins

1.2 Handouts – budget, Enforcement Report

1.3 General: decided as only one unofficial person present, open discussion

2.0 Budget update 2013/14 and 2014/15 (Taniguchi)

2.1-Long and involved discussion on budget data presented. Some numbers confusing and seemed incorrect. There were questions on the overhead that is charged to the abalone account in the budget and the charge for facilities costs for the Law Enforcement Division staff. There was discussion about the adequacy of the current card fee to cover the current abalone budget into the future.
to write letter to Director asking for clarity on budget line items – Motion/Second/Passed Unanimously (MSPU) - Steve B and Brooke to write draft.

3.0 Enforcement report 2013-14 activities (Riske) extensive report presented. There were 3 check points. Changes this year: reduced annual bag limit (18); and further restriction in Sonoma/Marin annual bag limit (9); Ft Ross closed; 8:00 AM start time; fewer cases in MPAs and few cases in Ft Ross. Report compliance pretty good – some honest mistakes but also cases of abuse – altered cards/reusing tags. Courts generally supportive with good cases. More people using other person's ID which is more difficult to detect, and people don't have to carry photo ID in the 'field.' M/S/PU to recommend to Director that fisher must have photo ID & fishing license in the 'field.' Rocky Daniels will write draft letter to that effect.

Lobster card return or fine was test case. Fine is \$20 to get next year's card. Will likely be instituted for abalone cards. Steve also presented info on several cases made over the year including one where a guilty man is spending time in state prison and the recent bust with 59 abalone. The SOU (Special Operations Unit) is aggressive on charges and very dedicated – long days spent. Wardens go to local DAs yearly to emphasize the value of the marine resource especially abalone so that the counties understand the importance to prosecuting these wildlife cases.

4.0 Red abalone FMP development (Taniguchi)

4.1 Phase I public Workshops summary

Workshops held at Sacramento, Mendocino, Santa Rosa and San Rafael. Many RAAC members attended as did goodly number of public. General comments made – explore measuring entire abalone population not just at index sites; consider zonal management; collaborate for funding; prefer more fishing opportunities.

4.2 Angler survey

Want survey done by end of first quarter of next year. Draft survey presented to RAAC to get initial feedback on questions and content.

Want to get large cross section of fishery participants for data – will send to random group from 2014 ab tag holders but survey will be on CDFW website for ALL to answer.

Survey starts with general information, then to fishing priorities, and last is preference for possible fishery management changes with corresponding tradeoffs if implemented.

General comments – need to watch words used and context – more simplistic format needed or simpler questions–

Plan to use focus groups to gather further initial input on survey questions before starting the survey – send any additional feedback through Ian.

5.0 RAAC representatives policy discussion

There had been ongoing discussion about non attending RAAC members, and a letter was sent to the two representatives who had not attended – Rocky Daniels (north area) and Richard Pogre (central area). Rocky responded with his intention to be active, while no response was had from Richard Pogre. As Carol Rose (central area) has resigned due to her move to north area, there are now 2 openings in the central area. The Director will send a letter requesting nominations for the positions. Carol said the Central California Council Diving Clubs (CenCal) would definitely nominate Dennis Haussler for one position. He is an extremely active diver, living and owning a business in Redwood City. He also hunts. Nominations should be sent to the Director with CC to Ian and Regional Manager.

Comments were made to the effect recommending criteria be set for removal of inactive members, but it was said that the CDFW would have to set up any criteria. Ian said the CDFW gives little administrative support to/for the Committee. The group unanimously accepted Carol Rose to act as secretary. M/S/PU to request the Director remove Richard Pogre from the Committee

6.0 Abalone assessment updates

6.1 Withering Syndrome (WS) resistance update (Moore) report highlighted sampling for the Rickettsiales-like prokaryote (RLP) which causes WS can be done from abalone guts. There is a significant increase in Bodega Bay from 2010 to 2014, but there is a phage (a hyper parasite) infecting RLP which reduces the WS impact of RLP. RLP is moving north slowly, but the phage is also.

Northern California index surveys 2014 (Rogers-Bennett) The best time for surveying is June – Nov. The index transects survey about 50% of the fishery. There were invasive surveys for juveniles at Van Damme. There is a new index site in Mendocino at Russian Gulch.

Van Damme ARMs replacement (Rogers-Bennett) The Van Damme Abalone Recruitment Modules (ARMs) were replaced over past two years. The original ARMs were more than 10 years old and deteriorating, so they were replaced with stainless steel. Goals are to ID patterns of reproduction, correlate reproduction trends, predict future populations, etc. Note: It takes 12 years from larvae settlement to 7", and 98% of the catch comes from Sonoma and Mendocino counties.

7.0 Other Business - none

8.0 Public Expression

Concern or suggestion regarding zonal management and the need for controlling the number of cards/tags per zone such as used for deer and water fowl.

Use both fishery dependent data from cards along with fishery independent data (ie. Surveys) to derive area zones.

Committee needs better communication – get Carol emails for contact list

Request to have telephone connection to RAAC meetings to allow attendance of public unable to travel to meeting site

Request for Question and Answer forum periodically for abalone issues to clarify often erroneous statements circulating in the Internet abalone chat forums.

Will be conference call on budget

9.0 Wrap up, next meeting and Adjournment

Next meeting Saturday March 14 in Santa Ana at Steve Benavides office – near Orange County Airport

Respectfully submitted – Carol Rose, Secretary
November 13, 2014

ADDENDUM:

After the meeting, it was determined the budget document presented was in fact 2013-2014. As a result, a phone conference meeting was held on Friday November 14, 2014, at 1pm. Attending were Ian, Peter Haaker and Steve Benavides. Several of the confusing issues were solved with one yet to be clarified in the letter written by Steve Benavides and Brooke Halsey.