

Marine Life Protection Act Initiative



Science Advisory Team and Regional Stakeholder Group: Working Together

Presented to the MLPA North Coast Regional Stakeholder Group
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Science Guidance for the Planning Process



- **MLPA Master Plan Science Advisory Team (SAT) provides science guidance to the marine protected area (MPA) planning process**
 - Applies science guidance in the *California Marine Life Protection Act Master Plan for Marine Protected Areas* to the north coast study region
 - Assembles and reviews relevant data for MPA planning and evaluation
 - Answers science related questions from the task force, regional stakeholder group and public
 - Evaluates potential ecological and economic impacts of proposed MPA network components



Communication with SAT Sub-team

- **SAT formed SAT Sub-team to the MLPA North Coast Regional Stakeholder Group (NCRSG)**
- **Attend NCRSG meetings to provide direct line of communication between SAT and NCRSG**
- **Six SAT Sub-Team Members**
 - Eric Bjorkstedt (SAT Co-Chair)
 - Dominic Gregorio
 - Ron LeValley (SAT Co-Chair)
 - Karina Nielsen
 - Craig Strong
 - Will White



Science Evaluations

- **SAT to provide evaluations**
 - Habitat representation and habitat replication
 - MPA size and MPA spacing
 - Bioeconomic modeling
 - Birds and mammals
 - Potential impacts to commercial and recreational fisheries
 - Water quality (a secondary evaluation)
- **First set of evaluations to NCRSG March 24**



How to Convey Science Questions

- Give public comment during MLPA workshops and BRTF, RSG and SAT meetings
- Send a comment to MLPAComments@resources.ca.gov
- Staff attend and record questions at all MLPA meetings, workshops and office hours
 - If needed, work with staff to ensure the recorded questions capture intent
- Staff review public comments submitted to MLPAComments@resources.ca.gov and send science questions to the SAT



Responses to Science Questions: Step 1

- Staff reviews submitted questions to ensure relevant to MPA planning and/or evaluation
- Less relevant questions, or those that require resources beyond capacity of MLPA staff or SAT, assigned a lower relative priority
- When possible, staff will respond to questions directly
- Staff may respond to question with existing relevant SAT guidance, if available



Responses to Science Questions: Step 2

- If staff cannot respond to questions:
 - **policy questions** or policy components of questions conveyed to appropriate entity (i.e., MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force, California Department of Fish and Game)
 - **science questions** or science components of questions conveyed to SAT co-chairs and processed as described in step 3



Responses to Science Questions: Step 3

- SAT co-chairs prioritize and forward science questions to appropriate **SAT work group**
- Work group prepares draft response for discussion with full SAT
- **Work groups** may seek assistance of other knowledgeable SAT members, outside experts, and I-Team staff in developing a response



Responses to Science Questions: Step 3

- Existing SAT work groups
 - Evaluation
 - Modeling
 - Levels of Protection
 - Water Quality
 - Birds and Mammals
 - Species Likely to Benefit
 - Habitats
 - Tribal
 - Socioeconomic
- New work groups formed as needed



Responses to Science Questions: Step 4

- Draft responses presented at following SAT meeting for discussion and potential approval
- SAT may require additional time to address particularly complex issues
- SAT work groups, with approval by the SAT co-chairs, may release draft responses before next SAT meeting to facilitate timely development of MPA proposals



Responses to Science Questions: Step 5

- Responses typically in the form of a written document
- Adopted SAT responses delivered to the BRTF, NCRSG, external array proponents and general public during MLPA public meetings
- Written responses posted to the MLPA website at www.dfg.ca.gov/mlpa