

## **MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

### **CA Fish and Game Commission**

Committee Chairs: Commissioner Rogers and Commissioner Sutton

#### **Meeting Summary**

October 12, 2010 (Tuesday)

Harbor Classroom  
125 Harbor Way, Santa Barbara, CA 93101  
Second floor of Marine Center Building

#### 1. Informational updates

The Commission's Marine Advisor provided an updated on items previously considered by the MRC. The regulatory package for additional data collection and transferable permits for the southern rock crab trap fishery has been approved by the Office of Administrative Law and the effective date of the regulations will be November 4, 2010. Both Legislative bills recommended by the MRC and supported by the Commission, AB 2125 (Ruskin): Coastal resources: marine spatial planning and AB 2376 (Huffman): Fish and wildlife: strategic vision, have been signed by Governor Schwarzenegger.

##### a. California Department of Fish and Game

Deputy Director Sonke Mastrup reported on the major cuts to the Department's budget in the new State budget. The Executive Order on hiring freezes and no overtime remain in effect and continue to challenge the Department's ability to fulfill their mandate.

Marine Region Manager Marija Vojkovich reported on the numerous major projects within the Marine Region that relate to the MRC. The Marine Region is working on a stock assessment for California halibut to help inform a possible Fishery Management Plan (FMP). The stock assessment is on track to have initial results by the end of the year and will then begin the peer review process.

A herring FMP is also in the works, with potential funding from Cosco Busan oil spill mitigation funds. This may include many components that the industry is already working on, including a redesign of the permit system and limited entry program.

The lobster stock assessment is on track to have results by January 2011. Prior to completing the stock assessment, the Marine Region will hold a workshop to discuss data with interested stakeholders. The stock assessment model will undergo peer review and will be used to help inform a FMP. Funding for the FMP is still being sought.

Preliminary returns for salmon are very promising in a number of locations. All are hopeful that the returns will continue to be positive and show improvement over the previous several years.

The California Recreational Fisheries Survey (CRFS) is moving completely within the Department. It is anticipated that new changes will make the data collection and reporting program more efficient and provide more of a direct link to inform the management of state managed species. The program will move fully in-house on January 1, 2011 and is anticipated

to be completely up and running by the start of peak recreational fishing season in May. The Automated License Data System (ALDS) is also anticipated to be fully functional by January 1, 2011.

b. California Ocean Protection Council

The OPC will be launching the next strategic planning process to develop a clear, strategic vision for California's ocean and coastal resource management. The OPC will work closely with the OPC Steering Committee, the OPC Science Advisory Team and interested stakeholders to identify the substantive issue areas that will comprise the focus of OPC efforts over the next five years. These areas will encompass critical ocean threats and potential solutions where the OPC's particular role in coordinating agencies, recommending policies, and funding projects is essential and will have high impact.

The Sustainable Seafood panel developed pursuant to AB 1217 will have their next meeting in Monterey on October 13 and 14. This will be the third meeting of the group and it is anticipated that a draft protocol will be on the November OPC agenda, and open for public comment.

The Collaborative Fisheries Research Organization has hired Dr. Pete Nelson as its Executive Director. Based in Santa Cruz, Dr. Nelson is currently developing an Executive Steering Committee and identifying research priorities. This OPC is considering allocating funding (up to \$1.5 million) at its next meeting. The proposed authorization will enable Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission to continue to build capacity within the Collaborative Fisheries Research Organization through enhanced science, outreach, and infrastructure support. These activities will be critical to successful program development and fund-raising, particularly in the early stages.

The authorization will also allow the CFR organization to coordinate with Sea Grant to develop, solicit, and fund CFR projects with the goal of creating partnerships between fishermen and scientists to develop and collect fishery data necessary to the Department, the Fish and Game Commission, the Pacific Fisheries Management Council, and OPC to adequately manage California fisheries.

2. Report on recent north coast abalone survey results and potential management discussions

Ian Taniguchi from the Department of Fish and Game provided an update on the status of the north coast red abalone fishery. Surveys conducted this past summer indicate that abalone densities and recruitment levels are approaching the triggers for management actions defined in the [Abalone Recovery and Management Plan](#) (ARMP). The Fort Ross State Park area is of particular concern due to the high levels of take associated with it being the first ocean access site along Highway 1 in Sonoma County and the protection it affords from large ocean swells in the early season. The catch at Fort Ross over the past three years represents between 17% and 21% of the overall annual catch.

The overall average index site abalone density remains very close to the trigger points outlined in the ARMP and the Department does not foresee the situation improving in the next 3 to 5 years. Recruitment of abalone into the smaller size ranges detected by the survey is below the level for good recruitment and it is uncertain how this will affect the fishery into the future. Considering these factors, the Department recommended a regulatory change to reduce the level of take in the fishery as a precautionary and proactive action to help avoid reaching the ARMP mandated triggers in the near future.

A series of possible regulatory options were discussed, including those submitted by interested stakeholders. After discussion, the MRC directed the Department to work with the Commission's Marine Advisor and interested stakeholders to prepare a regulatory notice and regulatory package focused on reduced fishing hours by an early morning closure and a site specific effort reduction at Fort Ross by closing this site for 2 months of the open season. It is anticipated that the notice of intent to change regulations will be considered by the Commission at their November meeting.

3. Report by MPA Monitoring Enterprise on development of South Coast MPA Monitoring Plan

Dr. Cheri Recchia, Executive Director of the MPA Monitoring Enterprise discussed the ongoing efforts to develop the South Coast MPA Monitoring Plan and MPA Baseline Program. A series of workshops was held in the region in July to introduce the MPA Monitoring Enterprise, describe the planning process, and invite input on MPA monitoring perspectives and priorities. Another series of workshops will be held in early November to gather input on the draft monitoring metrics. Water quality consultations are being held and feedback is being incorporated into revisions of the monitoring metrics.

It is anticipated that the baseline RFP will be released in early December and the draft plan will be released for public review in the first part of 2011. Following revisions, it is anticipated the plan will be submitted to the Commission in spring.

4. Presentation: Analysis of the Fisheries for Barred Sand Bass and Kelp Bass off Southern California 1963 – 2008 (Dr. Larry Allen - Southern California Marine Institute, Dr. Brad Erisman - Scripps Institution of Oceanography)

An informational presentation was given by Dr. Brad Erisman of the Scripps Institution of Oceanography assessing fisheries for barred sand bass and kelp bass. A variety of fisheries dependent and independent data sources were analyzed in relation to life history traits to provide an estimate of the status of the populations and susceptibility to overfishing. The MRC and Department agreed that further discussions need to take place to evaluate the need for potential management changes to these fisheries.

5. Discussion regarding incidental take in California fisheries

The Commission's Marine Advisor, Dr. Craig Shuman, led a discussion on the incidental take of black sea bass and Kellet's whelk. Following discussion, the MRC directed its Marine Advisor to work with the Department to request that the Commission designate Kellet's whelk as an emerging fishery and work with stakeholders to develop management measures for the Commission's consideration.

6. Proposal by Southern California Trawlers Association for resumption of seasonal trawling for California halibut in Monterey Bay

Background of the statutory requirements and the Commission's previous actions regarding trawling for California halibut was provided by Dr. Shuman. This was followed by a proposal from Mike McCorkle for a resumption of seasonal trawling for California halibut in Monterey Bay. Subsequent discussion centered on questions regarding the Commission's authority to authorize trawling activities outside the California halibut trawl grounds as well as the work of the Monterey Bay Sustainable Fishing Working Group convened by Assemblymember Monning. The group is working to assess, among other things, the most sustainable way to catch halibut in Monterey Bay in an economically viable manner. The MRC determined that it did not have

enough information at this time to make a recommendation to the Commission and will track and support the efforts of the Sustainable Fishing Working Group.

7. Discussion regarding the use of mechanized equipment to pull hoop nets

Dr. Shuman presented a short summary of the use of mechanized equipment to pull hoop nets. The presentation highlighted a suite of associated issues ranging from accessibility to the use of mechanized bait and manual pull assisters. The presentation also noted the low return rate of lobster report cards. Following discussion, the MRC determined that the use of mechanized equipment was best addressed during the development of the lobster FMP. However, the MRC determined that the low return rate of the lobster report cards was an issue of concern that should be brought to the full Commission for consideration of possible regulatory action.

8. Presentation: A New Model for Fisheries Certification (Dr. Steve Gaines, Dr. Chris Costello – UCSB Bren School of Environmental Science and Management)

Dr. Steve Gaines and Dr. Chris Costello of the UCSB Bren School of Environmental Science and Management gave an information presentation highlighting their research on innovations on fisheries certifications. The presentation explored the challenges of current certification programs and offered innovative solutions to reduce uncertainty about stock status in a cost effective manner, assign credit for MPAs, and explore changes to fisheries management to make the management system more sustainable.

9. The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.