

**TITLE 14. Fish and Game Commission
Notice of Proposed Changes in Regulations**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Fish and Game Commission (Commission), pursuant to the authority vested by sections 200, 202, 205(c), 220, 240, 1590, 1591, 2860, 2861, and 6750 of the Fish and Game Code; and sections 36725(a) and 36725(e) of the Public Resources Code, and to implement, interpret or make specific sections 200, 202, 205(c), 220, 240, 2861, 5521, 6653, 8420(e), and 8500 of the Fish and Game Code; and sections 36700(e), 36710(e), 36725(a) and 36725(e) of the Public Resources Code, proposes to amend Section 632, Title 14, California Code of Regulations, relating to marine protected areas.

Informative Digest/Policy Statement Overview

The Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) (Fish and Game Code Sections 2850-2863) established a programmatic framework for designating Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in the form of a statewide network. The Marine Managed Areas Improvement Act (MMAIA) (Public Resources Code Sections 36600-36620) standardized the designation of marine managed areas (MMAs), which include MPAs. The overriding goal of these acts is to ensure the conservation, sustainable use, and restoration of California's marine resources. Unlike previous laws, which focused on individual species, the acts focus on maintaining the health of marine ecosystems and biodiversity in order to sustain resources.

Existing regulations in Section 632, Title 14, California Code of Regulations (CCR), provide general provisions, definitions, and site-specific area classification, boundary descriptions, commercial and recreational take restrictions, and other restricted/allowed uses for MPAs, MMAs and special closures.

The proposed regulations will clarify take regulations and correct errors and inconsistencies.

Amendment to Subsection 632(a)

This subsection will be amended by moving the subsection header (a) General Rules and Regulations up to incorporate the Section 632 introductory paragraph.

Amend subsections 632(a)(1)(A), (B) and (C)

These subsections will be amended to correctly state and clarify that the Department (not the Commission) has the authority to issue scientific collecting permits.

Amend subsection 632(a)(3) and subsections 632(b)(98), (117), (120), (125), (129), (130), (138), and (144)

The definition of Pelagic Finfish will be amended to specifically add Pacific bonito and thereby clarify that this species is a pelagic finfish under the tuna family. As a result, references to Pacific bonito will be removed when pelagic finfish are allowed to be taken in the area specific regulations. When Pacific bonito are an exception to take, the reference will remain.

Amend subsection 632(a)(8)

This subsection will be amended to clarify that spearfishermen may transit, with or without catch, through MPAs and other MMAs. The proposed regulation will specify that while transiting

MPAs and MMAs that prohibit spearfishing or while in possession of species not identified as allowed for take in the MPA or MMA being transited, spearfishing gear shall be in an unloaded condition, not carried in hand, and the diver shall remain at the surface.

Amendments to subsection 632(b)

This subsection will be amended by stating that certain Fish and Game Code sections listed in subsection 632(b) are “superseded” rather than “made inoperative” as they apply to designations in Subsection 632(b).

Numerous references to “lobster” and “squid” will be changed to indicate the proper names “spiny lobster” and “market squid”. [Subsections 632(b)(68), (108), (112), (131), (133) and 136)]

Provisions will be added to establish a maximum five percent by weight allowance for the incidental take of non-target species landed or possessed on commercial vessels targeting market squid, pelagic finfish, or coastal pelagic species. [Subsections 632(b)(40), (66), (73), (74), (117), (120), (129), (130), (133), (136), and (147)]

Commercial methods of take for coastal pelagic species, which includes market squid, will be added to reflect actual fishing practices by allowing the use of brail gear and light boats. [Subsections 632(b)(117), (120), (129), (130), (133), and (136)]

The regulations for the Bodega Head State Marine Reserve (SMR) [subsection 632(b)(39)] will clarify that the director of the Bodega Marine Life Refuge may authorize certain activities and take, pursuant to sections 10502.7 and 10565 of the Fish and Game Code, only within the formerly-designated Bodega Marine Life Refuge, not the entire SMR. The regulation for this SMR will also clarify that pursuant to Section 10661 of the Fish and Game Code, regents, officers, employees and students of the University of California may take, for scientific purposes, any invertebrate or marine plant without a permit from the Department, only within the formerly-designated Bodega Marine Life Refuge, not the entire SMR.

The Lovers Point SMR [subsection 632(b)(76)] will be renamed the Lovers Point-Julia Platt SMR.

Commercial kelp harvesting regulations in the Naples SMCA [subsection (b)(98)] will be clarified and made consistent with Section 165, Title 14, CCR.

Blue Cavern (Catalina Island) SMCA [subsection 632(b)(124)] will be renamed Blue Cavern (Catalina Island) Onshore SMCA, and Bird Rock (Catalina Island) SMCA [subsection 632(b)(125)] will be renamed Blue Cavern (Catalina Island) Offshore SMCA.

The northern boundary of Lover’s Cove SMCA [subsection 632(b)(128)] will be moved to line up with the end of the Cabrillo Mole.

The limitation of take “below the mean lower low tide line” for recreational take in the Dana Point SMCA [subsection 632(b)(136)] will be removed. The commercial fishing regulations for this SMCA will clarify that trap gear is allowed for the commercial take of spiny lobster.

The western boundary of the San Dieguito Lagoon SMCA [subsection 632(b)(140)] will be specified by latitude and longitude coordinates, and take regulations for this SMCA will be modified to remove the fishing allowance from the Grand Avenue Bridge.

In addition, the following subsections under 632(b) will be amended for clarity and consistency:

- (30) Sea Lion Cove State Marine Conservation Area.
- (40) Bodega Head State Marine Conservation Area.
- (98) Naples State Marine Conservation Area.
- (109) Gull Island (Santa Cruz Island) State Marine Reserve.
- (117) Point Dume State Marine Conservation Area.
- (120) Abalone Cove State Marine Conservation Area.
- (124) Blue Cavern (Catalina Island) State Marine Conservation Area.
- (129) Farnsworth (Catalina Island) Onshore State Marine Conservation Area.
- (130) Farnsworth (Catalina Island) Offshore State Marine Conservation Area.
- (138) Swami's State Marine Conservation Area.

Benefits of the Proposed Action

The proposed amendments will clarify the restrictions and allowable activities in these MPAs; provide greater ease of public understanding and enforceability; correct boundary descriptions; remove unnecessary regulations; and provide consistency in format.

Evaluation of Incompatibility With Existing Regulations

The proposed regulations are consistent with regulations concerning sport and commercial fishing and kelp harvest found in Title 14, CCR. The State Water Resources Control Board may designate State Water Quality Protection Areas and the State Park and Recreation Commission may designate State Marine Reserves, State Marine Conservation Areas, State Marine Recreational Management Areas, State Marine Parks and State Marine Cultural Preservation Areas; however, only the Fish and Game Commission has authority to regulate commercial and recreational fishing and any other taking of marine species in Marine Managed Areas. Commission staff has searched the California Code of Regulations and has found no other regulations pertaining to authorized activities in marine protected areas and therefore has determined that the proposed amendments are neither inconsistent nor incompatible with existing state regulations.

NOTICE IS GIVEN that any person interested may present statements, orally or in writing, relevant to this action at a hearing to be held in the Resources Building, First Floor Auditorium, 1416 Ninth Street, Sacramento, California, on Wednesday, February 5, 2014, at 8:00 a.m., or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard.

NOTICE IS ALSO GIVEN that any person interested may present statements, orally or in writing, relevant to this action at a hearing to be held at the Crowne Plaza Ventura Beach Hotel, 450 E. Harbor Blvd., Ventura, California, on Wednesday, April 16, 2014, at 8:00 a.m., or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard. Written comments may be submitted at the address given below, or by fax at (916) 653-5040, or by e-mail to FGC@fgc.ca.gov. Written comments mailed, faxed or e-mailed to the Commission office must be received before 5:00 p.m. on April 11, 2014. All comments must be received no later than April 16, 2014, at the hearing in Ventura, CA. If you would like copies of any modifications to this proposal, please include your name and mailing address.

The regulations as proposed in strikeout-underline format, as well as an initial statement of reasons, including environmental considerations and all information upon which the proposal is based (rulemaking file), are on file and available for public review from the agency representative, Sonke Mastrup, Executive Director, Fish and Game Commission, 1416 Ninth Street, Box 944209, Sacramento, California 94244-2090, phone (916) 653-4899. Please direct requests for the above mentioned documents and inquiries concerning the regulatory process to Sonke Mastrup or Sherrie Fonbuena at the preceding address or phone number. **Dr. Craig Shuman, Regional Manager of the Marine Region, Department of Fish and Wildlife, phone (805) 568-1246, has been designated to respond to questions on the substance of the proposed regulations.** Copies of the Initial Statement of Reasons, including the regulatory language, may be obtained from the address above. Notice of the proposed action shall be posted on the Fish and Game Commission website at <http://www.fgc.ca.gov>.

Availability of Modified Text

If the regulations adopted by the Commission differ from but are sufficiently related to the action proposed, they will be available to the public for at least 15 days prior to the date of adoption. Any person interested may obtain a copy of said regulations prior to the date of adoption by contacting the agency representative named herein.

If the regulatory proposal is adopted, the final statement of reasons may be obtained from the address above when it has been received from the agency program staff.

Impact of Regulatory Action/Results of the Economic Impact Analysis

The potential for significant statewide adverse economic impacts that might result from the proposed regulatory action has been assessed, and the following initial determinations relative to the required statutory categories have been made:

- (a) Significant Statewide Adverse Economic Impact Directly Affecting Businesses, Including the Ability of California Businesses to Compete with Businesses in Other States:

The proposed action will not have a significant statewide adverse economic impact directly affecting business, including the ability of California businesses to compete with businesses in other states because the proposed amendments make clarification and consistency changes to the current regulations; make minor boundary adjustments; rename existing MPAs; and add specified methods of take and incidental take allowance consistent with commercial fishing practices.

- (b) Impact on the Creation or Elimination of Jobs Within the State, the Creation of New Businesses or the Elimination of Existing Businesses, or the Expansion of Businesses in California; Benefits of the Regulation to the Health and Welfare of California Residents, Worker Safety, and the State's Environment:

The Commission is not aware of any impacts the proposed action would have on creation or elimination of jobs or businesses in California or on the expansion of businesses in California.

The Commission does not anticipate any benefits to the health and welfare of California residents or to worker safety.

The existing regulations, and proposed amendments, benefit the environment by protecting habitat and biodiversity in MPAs.

(c) Cost Impacts on a Representative Private Person or Business:

The Commission is not aware of any cost impacts that a representative private person or business would necessarily incur in reasonable compliance with the proposed action.

(d) Costs or Savings to State Agencies or Costs/Savings in Federal Funding to the State: None.

(e) Nondiscretionary Costs/Savings to Local Agencies: None.

(f) Programs Mandated on Local Agencies or School Districts: None.

(g) Costs Imposed on Any Local Agency or School District that is Required to be Reimbursed Under Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division 4, Government Code: None.

(h) Effect on Housing Costs: None.

Effect on Small Business

It has been determined that the adoption of these regulations may affect small business. The Commission has drafted the regulations in Plain English pursuant to Government Code sections 11342.580 and 11346.2(a)(1).

Consideration of Alternatives

The Commission must determine that no reasonable alternative considered by the Commission, or that has otherwise been identified and brought to the attention of the Commission, would be more effective in carrying out the purpose for which the action is proposed, would be as effective and less burdensome to affected private persons than the proposed action, or would be more cost effective to affected private persons and equally effective in implementing the statutory policy or other provision of law.

FISH AND GAME COMMISSION

Sonke Mastrup
Executive Director

Dated: January 14, 2014