Overview of Draft MPA Proposals for the MLPA North Central Coast Study Region

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Marine Life Protection Act Initiative

Study Region

- North Central Coast
  - Alder Creek / Point Arena to Pigeon Point
  - Farallon Islands
  - Not including SF Bay

- Area: 763 square miles
- North-south extent: 146 miles
- Adjacent to central coast study region; adopted Año Nuevo State Marine Conservation Area is 2 miles south of Pigeon Point

Existing MPAs

- 13 existing MPAs (10 state marine conservation areas, 2 state marine parks, 1 state marine reserve)
- 11 are smaller than 2 square miles in area
- Cover 3.51% of the study region (26.82 square miles), < 0.04% of area in marine reserves (0.29 square miles)
- Existing MPAs do not meet SAT habitat representation or size and spacing guidelines

Habitats of the North Central Coast

- Shallow (<100 meters) hard/soft habitats (little deep habitat)
- Estuarine habitats (Tomales Bay, large esteros, smaller estuaries)
- Bull Kelp (mapped only in northern portion of region)
- Farallon Islands
- Unique oceanographic features (upwelling, San Francisco Bay outlet, retention zones)
Information-rich Planning Process

MLPA requires use of the “best readily available science…..” [Fish and Game Code, Section 2855(a)]

- Spatial data layers (features that can be mapped) – e.g., habitats, bird/mammal rookeries, fisheries data, access, public/private lands, etc.
- Contextual information and maps in regional profile
- Contract surveys
  - Commercial fisheries, areas of importance
  - Recreational fisheries, areas of importance
  - Non-consumptive use patterns
- Local knowledge and information as provided by stakeholders and public
- Scientific input from science team and other regional experts

Draft MPA Proposals – Round 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Draft MPA Proposals</th>
<th>Revised External Proposals</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proposal 1 (EC)</td>
<td>Draft External Proposal A (XA)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proposal 2 (JD)</td>
<td>Proposal B (converged w/ Prop 2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proposal 3 (TC)</td>
<td>Proposal C (converged w/ Prop 4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proposal 4 (JC)</td>
<td>Proposal D (did not resubmit)</td>
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+ Proposal 0 (existing MPAs)

Area Analysis of Draft MPA Proposals

Draft MPA Proposals and Existing MPAs (Proposal 0) by Designation

Note: For the purposes of the summary by designation, area within SMRMAs has been included under “SMR.”
### Area Analysis of Draft MPA Proposals

**Draft MPA Proposals and Existing MPAs (Proposal 0)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposal</th>
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### Key Considerations

- Goals in the Marine Life Protection Act
- Master plan science guidelines and science team evaluations (MLPA goals 1, 2, 4, 6)
  - Habitat representation and replication
  - Size and spacing
  - Marine mammals and birds
- Recreational, educational and study opportunities (MLPA Goal 3)
- DFG feasibility analysis
- Existing MPAs and other regulations

### Key Considerations

Tradeoffs among….

- Ecosystem protection, biodiversity value
- Potential socioeconomic impacts
  - Recreational fishing
  - Commercial fishing
- Weather and safety issues
- Access; public/private lands
- Existing uses (e.g., mariculture leases)
- Native American tribal uses
- And many more …..

### Recreational Fishing Considerations

**Example: Bodega Head**

- Extensive rocky habitat extends offshore; relatively rare deep rock habitat
- Smaller boats rely on nearby fishing grounds
- Important salmon, crab, rockfish fisheries (recreational and commercial)
- Recreational and commercial fishing contribute to local economy
Recreational Fishing Considerations

Example: Russian River and Pescadero Estuaries

- Seabird and marine mammal colonies; estuarine habitats
- Salmon aggregations at the mouth of the Russian River Estuary; fishing opportunity during aggregation
- Catch and release steelhead fishery in Pescadero Creek Estuary

Fishing and Ecotourism Considerations

Example: Farallon Islands

- Island and deep water habitats
- Globally significant marine mammal rookeries and seabird colonies .... ecotourism opportunities
- Regionally important for recreational rockfish and many commercial fisheries (e.g., "party boat" rockfish landings)

Commercial Fishing Considerations

Example: Point Reyes

- Biologically rich area; seabird and marine mammal colonies
- Ports of Bodega and Bolinas both fish Point Reyes area; important to local economy
- Soft bottom habitats important for crab and California halibut
- Salmon trolling occurs along "tracks" offshore

Commercial Fishing Considerations

Example: Point Arena

- Upwelling region with rocky reef, kelp, and rich nearshore resources
- Small port of Point Arena in area with significant weather and access limitations
- Rockfish, urchin, salmon, and crab fisheries impact local economy
- Near-shore rocky reefs and offshore sandy areas important for fisheries
Safety and Weather Considerations

Example: Duxbury Reef

- Extensive rocky intertidal and rocky near-shore habitats
- Small Bolinas port dependent on nearby fishing resources – crab, halibut, salmon, etc.
- Small fleet with smaller vessels limits fishing options
- Duxbury Reef and Point Reyes located upwind (northwest) of port

Access Considerations

Example: Sea Ranch to Salt Point

- Abundant kelp and rocky reef throughout subregion; access is limiting factor
- Economically important recreational abalone fishery
- Siting of MPAs that limit “take” adjacent to public versus private lands

Existing Mariculture Lease Considerations

Example: Tomales/Drakes Bay

- Rich estuarine ecosystems with many habitats and high biodiversity value
- Existing mariculture operations
- SAT has assigned low level of protection to most mariculture activities
- Mariculture inconsistent with proposed designations of state marine reserve in specific locations (e.g., Drakes Estero)

Native American Use Considerations

Example: Point Arena

- MLPA Initiative has collected some limited information on areas of importance to tribal groups for traditional small scale gathering of marine resources
- Some areas of importance to tribes overlap with areas proposed by stakeholders for MPAs
Overlap Among Draft Proposals

- Despite all the various considerations and tradeoffs, significant geographic overlap among proposals
- Geographic overlap among all draft MPA proposals (n=5)
- Region divided into 1x1 kilometer grid, map shows number of proposals that include an MPA in each grid

Subregion 1: Point Arena - Horseshoe Point

- Upwelling, nutrient-rich waters; rocky reefs & kelp
- Point Arena – large persistent upwelling feature
- Saunders Reef (economic and ecological importance) – especially urchin and abalone fishery
- Proposals vary in siting MPAs adjacent to public or private land (Sea Ranch to Salt Point area)

Subregion 2: Horseshoe Point - Bodega Head

- Nearshore rocky reefs, kelp; offshore sandy habitat
- Numerous bird and mammal colonies
- Russian River, important estuary for salmon
- Salt Point, area of high recreational use
- Port of Bodega Bay, recreational and commercial fisheries

Subregion 3: Bodega Head - Double Point

- Ecologically important estuaries (Tomales, Drakes, Estero Americano, etc.)
- Point Reyes peninsula and Tomales Point with high densities of marine mammals, seabirds
- Tomales Bay and Point Reyes economically important for fisheries
- Aquaculture leases in Drakes Estero and Tomales Bay
Subregion 4: Double Point - Point San Pedro

- Duxbury Reef (economic and ecological importance)
- Bolinas Lagoon and small port at Bolinas
- San Francisco Bay outflow – unique habitat in region
- Bird colonies, mammal haul out and rookeries
- Commercial and recreational vessels from San Francisco ports

Subregion 5: Point San Pedro - Pigeon Point

- Shallow and broad sandy shelf; rocky habitat more limited
- Pescadero Marsh and lagoon
- Seabird and migratory waterfowl areas (Pescadero, Devils Slide)
- Port of Half Moon Bay – important recreational and commercial fisheries

Subregion 6: Farallon Islands

- Rocky islands, highly productive; shallow and deep rocky habitats
- Globally important habitat for seabirds, marine mammals, great white sharks
- Economically important fishing (commercial & recreational)
- Ecotourism (whale watching, bird watching, etc.)
- Anchoring/safety concerns

Summary

- Regional stakeholder group – has done an excellent job of considering goals, guidelines, and tradeoffs, and taking public comments into account
- High degree of geographic overlap among draft proposals - similar geographies have been identified by different multi-interest workgroups
- Draft proposals still differ in proposed boundaries and allowed uses – more work to refine and converge proposals
- MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force guidance will help aid regional stakeholder group’s progress