

California Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) Initiative
North Coast Study Region Basic Data Criteria
July 14, 2009

The MLPA Initiative welcomes the submittal of data relevant to the MLPA North Coast Study Region (California/Oregon border in Del Norte County to Alder Creek near Point Arena in Mendocino County) and will attempt to use these data to the greatest extent possible. Organizations interested in submitting data should note that some forms of data are more useful in the MLPA planning process than others. At a minimum, data should:

- be relevant to marine protected area (MPA) planning,
- be spatially explicit,
- have "metadata" that explain the data characteristics (source, methods, etc.), and
- be readily available by requiring minimal to no processing.

The most useful data, which are more likely to be incorporated into the MLPA process, have the following attributes:

- broad spatial extent, covering the entire study region, or at least a significant portion of the study region;
- an appropriate spatial resolution for the given data type;
- include analytical products showing aggregated summary data, as opposed to raw data;
- in a format compatible with our geographic information system (GIS) databases (e.g. ESRI shapefiles or geodatabases, Access or SQL databases, excel tables, etc.); and
- peer reviewed and complemented with comprehensive metadata.

In our effort to compile MPA planning data within specific applicable subjects (i.e. base data, benthic substrate data, water quality data, etc.), the MLPA Initiative will attempt to use the best readily available data provided, including some that do not meet the above criteria. However, it cannot be guaranteed that any specific dataset will be used within the process due to the limitations of certain data or the resources required to synthesize certain data. Some examples of data that are less easy to incorporate include:

- tabulated data (e.g. excel spreadsheets) that do not link to specific geographic locations (e.g. latitude/longitude locations),
- very large data sets that have not been incorporated into a summary map or document (e.g. a 50-year, monthly time series on sea surface temperature), and
- data that require significant additional conditioning for use in our spatial database (e.g. non-digital data or formats that require complex transformations).

Questions regarding data needs and uses should be directed to MLPA Initiative Principal Planner Evan Fox (evanwfox@gmail.com).