

**California MLPA Master Plan Science Advisory Team**  
**November 12, 2008 Meeting Summary**  
*(revised December 12, 2008)*

**Wednesday, November 12, 2008**  
**9:30 a.m.**

**Sheraton Gateway Los Angeles Hotel**  
**6101 West Century Boulevard**  
**Los Angeles, CA 90045**  
**and via simultaneous webcast**

*Note: Audio and video recordings of this meeting are available on the Internet at <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mlpa>. Please contact AGP Video Services at (805) 772-2715 to obtain DVD copies of these recordings.*

***SAT members attending:*** Larry Allen, Richard Ambrose, Eric Bjorkstedt, Mark Carr, Susan Chivers, Chris Costello, Paul Dayton, Kevin Fleming, Steve Gaines, Dominic Gregorio, Ray Hilborn, Steven Morgan, Steve Murray, Dan Pondella, Dan Robinette, Astrid Scholz, Stephen Stohs, Steve Wertz

***SAT members absent:*** John Largier, Pete Raimondi, Stephen Weisberg.

**Meeting Objectives**

- *Discuss California Fish and Game Commission request regarding the northern Channel Islands*
- *Discuss application of size and spacing guidelines to the MLPA South Coast Study Region*
- *Discuss and potentially adopt bioregions for the MLPA South Coast Study Region*
- *Discuss and potentially adopt the list of key and unique habitats in the MLPA South Coast Study Region*
- *Discuss restored habitats, habitat alterations, and artificial structures*
- *Review and begin developing the criteria and methods used in determining levels of protection for the MLPA South Coast Study Region*
- *Review and discuss criteria used to develop the species likely to benefit list for the MLPA South Coast Study Region*
- *Review and provide feedback on proposed presentations to the MLPA South Coast Regional Stakeholder Group*

The meeting agenda may be found on the MLPA website at [http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mlpa/meetings\\_sc.asp](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mlpa/meetings_sc.asp)

## **Summary of Actions**

The third meeting of the MLPA Master Plan Science Advisory Team (SAT) for the MLPA South Coast Study Region took place at the Sheraton Gateway Los Angeles Hotel on November 12, 2008. Actions taken at this meeting:

- SAT members approved presentations on the existing North Channel Islands marine protected areas (MPAs) to be delivered to the California Fish and Game Commission, as well as presentations on fish movement and habitats in the MLPA South Coast Study Region to be presented to the MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force and MLPA South Coast Regional Stakeholder Group.
- SAT members approved the five proposed bioregions for the MLPA South Coast Study Region.
- SAT members approved the proposed key and unique habitats.
- The work groups for levels of protection, species likely to benefit, and restored habitats will continue to refine their guidance documents and the criteria used to create them.

## **Meeting Summary**

### ***1. Welcome, Introductions and Review of Agenda***

On November 12, 2008, the third meeting of the MLPA Master Plan Science Advisory Team (SAT) for the MLPA South Coast Study Region was held in Los Angeles.

### ***2. Updates***

Initiative staff reviewed the process of receiving and answering questions to the SAT, and SAT members were instructed on how to use the new ex parte communication forms to help achieve the goal of transparency, consistent with the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act.

Staff also announced meeting dates for the remainder of the process; some future SAT meetings will be two days long, with one day being a conference call. The next SAT meeting date is December 17, 2008, and future proposed dates are January 23 & 27, February 24, April 1 & 3, May 5, June 18, and October 6, 2009.

### ***3. California Fish and Game Commission Request Regarding the Northern Channel Islands***

#### ***A. Northern Channel Islands portion of evaluation of existing MPAs***

The California Fish and Game Commission requested that the SAT conduct an evaluation of the existing marine protected areas (MPAs) in the northern Channel Islands (including Santa Barbara Island) using the evaluation methods outlined by the SAT. SAT member Mark Carr showed a draft presentation of this evaluation, which showed that the existing MPAs meet the size and spacing and habitat representation guidelines fairly well. SAT members unanimously

approved the evaluations for presentation to the California Fish and Game Commission at its December meeting.

*B. Connectivity between the mainland and islands*

MLPA Initiative Science and Planning Advisor Satie Airamé presented an assessment of the connectivity among mainland and Channel Islands populations for several species. For shorter pelagic larval durations (PLDs), the mainland and islands were not connected, while for longer PLDs, the mainland was connected to the islands; the reverse was not true. SAT members voted (with one abstention) to approve, with some minor changes, the presentation for the California Fish and Game Commission.

*C. Presentation of information to the California Fish and Game Commission*

SAT members approved both the size, spacing and habitat evaluations PowerPoint and the connectivity PowerPoint for presentation at the December California Fish and Game Commission meeting in Sacramento. SAT members Mark Carr and Eric Bjorkstedt will make the presentations.

**4. Size and Spacing Guidelines for Marine Protected Areas in the MLPA South Coast Study Region**

*A. Size and spacing guidelines and application to the study region*

SAT member Steve Gaines presented information on the size and spacing guidelines and how they might be applied or modified for the MLPA South Coast Study Region, due to the unusual geography of the region and features such as the Channel Islands. SAT members discussed the role the modeling effort will play in this region, and how connectivity between the islands and the mainland, as well as among islands, may be considered in the guidelines.

*B. Update from the oceanographic workshop*

MLPA Initiative Science and Planning Advisor Satie Airamé presented a summary of the oceanography workshop held September 16, 2008, the day after the last SAT meeting. The meeting brought a number of leading oceanographers together to discuss currents and connectivity in the MLPA South Coast Study Region, and they produced preliminary maps of regional circulation and population connectivity. SAT members commented on how these maps could be expanded and improved, as well as the potential next steps for the modeling work group. Revised information on oceanography, connectivity, and modeling will be presented at the December 17, 2008 SAT meeting.

## **5. Bioregions in the MLPA South Coast Study Region**

### *A. Update from SAT Bioregions Work Group*

The SAT Bioregions Work Group proposed five bioregions within the MLPA South Coast Study Region based on differences in community composition:

- (1) West Islands (the extreme western mainland as well as San Miguel, Santa Rosa, and San Nicolas islands),
- (2) North Mainland (from approximately Point Conception to northern Santa Monica Bay),
- (3) Mid Islands (Santa Cruz, Anacapa, and Santa Barbara islands),
- (4) East Islands (Santa Catalina and San Clemente islands), and
- (5) South Mainland (from southern Santa Monica Bay to the California border with Mexico).

### *B. Habitat replication within bioregions*

SAT members discussed the difficulty of replication in some of the bioregions, and decided to include it as a caveat when discussing the bioregions with the regional stakeholder group.

### *C. Suggested bioregions and guidance for replication*

SAT members voted to adopt the five bioregions and inform the regional stakeholder group of potential difficulties with replication in some of the bioregions.

## **6. Key and Unique Habitats in the MLPA South Coast Study Region**

### *A. Update from the SAT Key and Unique Habitats Work Group*

The key and unique habitats work group presented a draft list of unique habitats in the MLPA South Coast Study Region: surfgrass, eelgrass, oil seeps and shallow hydrothermal vents, and *Pelagophycus oprra* (elk kelp) beds.

### *B. Draft list of key and unique habitats*

SAT members voted unanimously to adopt the draft list of key and unique habitats, with some minor revisions and extended explanations of the habitat selection.

### *C. Implications for evaluation methods*

SAT members discussed how key and unique habitats would be used in the MPA evaluation process. Key habitats are already used in evaluation methods for MPA proposals, but unique habitats will not likely be considered when assigning levels of protection or determining how well different MPA proposals meet the goals of the MLPA. A map of unique habitats will be provided to the regional stakeholder group for use when determining the placement of potential MPAs.

## **Public Comments**

Throughout the day, members of the public commented on pending SAT actions, proposed presentations, and the MLPA process in general. Members of the MLPA South Coast Regional Stakeholder Group commented several times that clarity in presentations is very important so group members can make good decisions during their meetings. Members of the public asked how the areas of the current northern Channel Islands MPAs outside of state waters would be taken into account when evaluating MPA proposals. Members of the public also thanked the SAT for the hard work and reminded members to focus on the science aspects of the MLPA and leave the policy issues for the MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force and California Fish and Game Commission.

### **7. Restored Habitats in the MLPA South Coast Study Region**

#### *A. Update from the work group*

SAT member Dan Pondella presented background information on restored habitats and artificial reefs in the MLPA South Coast Study Region. Since this topic involves a lot of policy questions beyond the scope of the SAT, two main questions were identified:

- 1) Is restored habitat consistent with the goals of the MLPA?
- 2) What are the impacts of certain activities like beach grooming?

#### *B. Projects and structures that affect habitat*

SAT members discussed how artificial structures might be used in the evaluation of MPA proposals, although almost all artificial reefs in the MLPA South Coast Study Region are too small to meet the minimum size guidelines for evaluation. SAT members agreed that the discussion of whether or not to count artificial structures similarly as natural ones is something that will need to be discussed in the levels of protection work group, and that more information was needed to see how artificial reefs function compared with natural reefs. Beach grooming generally occurs above the mean high tide mark, so it is outside the jurisdiction of the MLPA.

### **8. Levels of Protection in the MLPA South Coast Study Region**

#### *A. Update from the SAT Levels of Protection Work Group*

SAT member Mark Carr presented the levels of protection decision tree so that SAT members could review the criteria upon which levels of protection are based, and gave the example of lobsters in the MLPA South Coast Study Region.

#### *B. Criteria and methods used in establishing levels of protection*

SAT members discussed potential changes to the levels of protection criteria. Comments focused on how to use a more quantitative metric, and how to incorporate cumulative impacts in a single MPA. SAT members agreed that the current criteria are a good starting point, and

the levels of protection work group will work toward creating a more quantitative metric using scores based on the ecosystem impacts of a given activity.

## **9. Draft List of Species Likely to Benefit from Marine Protected Areas in the MLPA South Coast Study Region**

### *A. Update from the SAT Species Likely to Benefit Work Group*

SAT member Dan Robinette presented a draft list of criteria for developing the species likely to benefit from MPAs list. This workgroup has been compiling information and expanding the criteria used for placing species on the likely to benefit list.

### *B. Criteria used to develop list of species*

SAT members discussed the draft criteria and proposed several changes to the list. Some members were concerned about certain activities (such as trampling) and where those activities might fall on the list. Due to the number of revisions and clarifications necessary, the SAT decided to wait until the December 17, 2008 SAT meeting to vote on whether or not to approve the criteria for the species likely to benefit list. The work group will clarify some of the topics and provide an updated criteria list at the next meeting.

## **10. Proposed Presentations**

### *A. Adult movements and larval transport*

SAT member Mark Carr quickly reviewed a PowerPoint presentation on fish movement that will be presented to the regional stakeholder group by Dr. Jenn Caselle. SAT members commented on the presentation and voted unanimously to approve it, pending some minor changes.

### *B. Habitats in the MLPA South Coast Study Region*

SAT member Larry Allen reviewed a PowerPoint presentation on habitats that will be presented to the regional stakeholder group by Dr. Allen. SAT members commented on the presentation and unanimously approved it, pending some changes; staff will work with Dr. Allen to revise.

## **11. Next Steps**

Approved presentations will be made at the upcoming regional stakeholder group meeting (November 18-19, 2008) and California Fish and Game Commission meeting (December 11, 2008). SAT work groups will continue working on presentations and guiding documents. The next SAT meeting will be December 17, 2008.

### **Attachments**

1. Draft form for reporting ex parte communications
2. *Draft Analysis of Biogeographical Subregions in the MLPA South Coast Study Region* (Revised November 7, 2008)
3. *Draft Key and Unique Habitats in the MLPA South Coast Study Region* (November 6, 2008)
4. *Draft Background Information for Discussion of Projects and Artificial Structures that Affect Habitats in the MLPA South Coast Study Region* (November 4, 2008)
5. *Draft Criteria for the List of Species Likely to Benefit from Marine Protected Areas in the MLPA South Coast Study Region* (November 5, 2008)

### **Handouts**

- A. Summaries for September 10, 2008 and September 15, 2008 SAT meetings
- B. Calendar of meetings for the MLPA South Coast Study Region
- C. *Summary of Evaluation of Existing MPAs in the Northern Channel Islands of the MLPA South Coast Study Region: Habitat Representation/Replication and Size/Spacing* (November 9, 2008)
- D. PowerPoint presentation: *Connectivity in the MLPA South Coast Study Region* (Dr. Satie Airamé, Science and Planning Advisor, MLPA Initiative)
- E. PowerPoint presentation: *SAT Evaluations of Northern channel Islands MPAs* (Mark Carr, draft presentation to the California Fish and Game Commission for review)
- F. PowerPoint presentation: *A Framework for Determining Levels of Protection Designations as Used in the MLPA North Central Coast Study Region* (Mark Carr, on behalf of the SAT Levels of Protection Work Group)
- G. PowerPoint presentation: *Fish Adult Movement and Larval Dispersal: Science to inform marine protected area design* (Jenn Caselle, University of California, Santa Barbara and Mark Carr, draft presentation to the MLPA South Coast Regional Stakeholder Group)
- H. PowerPoint presentation: *Habitats in the MLPA South Coast Study Region as they relate to MLPA goals and SAT evaluation* (Larry G. Allen and Mark Carr, draft presentation to the MLPA South Coast Regional Stakeholder Group)