

**California Marine Life Protection Act Initiative
Master Plan Science Advisory Team
October 1, 2007 Meeting Summary
(revised October 22, 2007)**

**Aviation Library and Museum
International Terminal
San Francisco International Airport
9:30 a.m.**

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: Sarah Allen, Eric Bjorkstedt, Mark Carr, Dominic Gregorio, Ray Hilborn, John Largier, Gerry McChesney, Steven Morgan, Karina Nielsen, Pete Raimondi, Astrid Scholz, John Ugoretz. Steve Gaines attended by teleconference.

SAT members absent: Chris Costello, Caroline Hermans and Carl Walters.

MLPA staff present: Amy Brookes, Mary Gleason, Melissa Miller-Henson, Rebecca Studebaker, Jason Vasques, Ken Wiseman

Meeting Objectives

- Review, discuss and potentially approve list of key species likely to benefit from marine protected areas (MPAs) in the MLPA North Central Coast Study Region
- Review, discuss and potentially approve responses to science questions
- Review and discuss revised preliminary evaluation of existing north central coast MPAs
- Discuss and potentially approve framework for evaluating MPA proposals based on master plan science guidelines
- Receive report from work group on parallel approaches to evaluating MPA proposals and potentially approve parallel approach(es) for use in the MLPA North Central Coast Study Region

The meeting agenda may be found on the MLPA website at http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mlpa/meeting_100107.asp

Meeting Summary

1. Welcome, introductions and review of agenda

No changes were made to the agenda.

2. Updates

No updates were reported.

3. Species likely to benefit from MPAs in the MLPA North Central Coast Study Region

Mark Carr reported on behalf of the workgroup assigned to the task of developing this list, and a lengthy discussion among the SAT followed. Issues discussed included the problem of illegal harvesting, and the criteria for placing species in the 'Likely' or 'Most Likely' to benefit categories. The question came up of whether or not to include on the list species that most likely will not show a response to MPAs. A **summary of criteria** for determining 'Likely' or 'Most Likely' to benefit was agreed upon, whereby any of the following would indicate Likely status:

- Species is currently fished
- Prey is harvested
- Mortality associated with human activity other than fishing
- Predicted detectable responses of species inside relative to outside MPA
- Significant proportion of species' distribution occurs within the study region
- A significant level of exploitation indicates Most Likely status

Alterations to the list were: The two sole species and herring were moved from 'Most Likely' to 'Likely'; giant chiton will be added to the 'Likely' list; and rock prickleback will be added to 'Most Likely'.

In addition, the following changes were adopted: An explanation of what distinguishes 'Most Likely' from 'Likely' to be included with the lists and, wherever "marine reserve" appears in the document, 'marine protected area' will take its place.

The list of species likely and most likely to benefit was approved (with the caveat that the list is not final, and that criteria will be solidified).

4. Science questions from the MLPA North Central Coast Regional Stakeholder Group (NCCRSB)

Work groups reported on the progress of questions posed by the NCCRSB, and responses were discussed.

- Concerning the measurability of objectives, it was suggested to begin measuring early on to make up for the lack of 'before' data. The twofold nature of the question was addressed (sheer possibility vs. feasibility), and the need for considering the component of natural change was highlighted.
- The question about the subtidal zone was clarified as originating from a previous question about the Farallon Islands. The mean lower low tide line was suggested and seconded as a modification to the mean low tide line.
- It was suggested to include which species might decline as a result of MPA protection (due to increased abundance of predator populations).
- Whether the state has jurisdiction over serious ecological impacts other than fishing (such as drilling for oil and dumping dredge) in MPAs was discussed. It was confirmed that the MLPA limits extraction, and that nothing can be extracted from a marine reserve.

- Dominic Gregorio recommended as an upcoming agenda item the consideration of water quality problems that alter the effectiveness of MPAs, and volunteered to address this topic for the next meeting.
- A point was made that the regional stakeholder group members need to be very clear with the wording of their questions to communicate exactly what they want to know. For example, homogeneous was interpreted by SAT members to refer to substrate type, but later was thought to refer to depth. It was suggested and seconded that 'homogeneous' refers to depth, substrate, and oceanographic habitat.
- After some discussion due to confusion about cross-shore sizing guidelines for MPAs in the homogeneous parts of the study region, Mark Carr explained that the minimum longitudinal length for MPAs was based on adult movement, and that an MPA would never be less than that limit whether along the cross-shore or the long-shore extent.

Responses were approved (with some approved changes to be made).

5. Preliminary evaluation of existing north central coast MPAs

An overview was presented of what an evaluation of existing MPAs should look like, based on central coast study region evaluations. The presented guidelines are awaiting preliminary approval, with the possibility of future amendments. An important point was raised that estuaries are missing as types of habitat to protect, and should be added.

6. Evaluation framework for MPA proposals

A. Report from evaluation work group

Key issues raised were habitat representation, levels of protection, subregional division, and protection of forage, nursery, and breeding areas.

- The evaluation work group is working to define a minimum habitat area that would satisfy habitat representation requirements.
- After lengthy discussion of how to divide the study region into evaluation subregions, the SAT agreed on three: 1) Point Arena to North Beach Road at Point Reyes; 2) North Beach Road at Point Reyes to Pigeon Point; and 3) the Farallon Islands
- It was proposed that MPAs assigned to the Farallon Islands would be subject to the same size guidelines as those alongshore, but that these MPAs would not be subject to the same spacing guidelines.

B. Report from parallel approaches work group

A presentation by Will White illustrated several modeling approaches designed to predict performance of MPAs relative to various size and spacing options. Modeling results indicated that size is very important, suggesting larger MPAs may be more effective.

7. Public Comment

Issues raised included the impact of underwater noise pollution, and how this might be addressed in the MPA process. A question was put forward as to which aspects of water quality are of concern for the stakeholders. Several general suggestions were also made to the SAT:

- Consider the region between Point Arena and Stewart's Point for MPA status. Due to extremely windy conditions, this area cannot be heavily exploited, and thus an MPA designation would not disrupt the small, local economy.
- Encourage the regional stakeholder group members to be as clear and explicit as possible about what their expectations are for MPA performance over time, and to guard against the assumption of failure if a marked change is not seen (for instance, in an MPA that was chosen for its lack of fishing pressure).
- Ensure that an appropriate level of attention remains focused on the issue of species interaction, as this is an area where not a lot is known – make sure to mark unknown as 'unknown' and not zero.
- Use a matrix approach for levels of protection, with variables for biodiversity, ecosystem function, and habitat.
- Consider the San Mateo coast as a separate bioregion based on the particular substrate and different oceanographic conditions south of the Golden Gate Bridge.

8. Next steps

The next MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force meeting has been changed to November 19-20, 2007 in San Rafael.

The next SAT meeting is November 13, 2007 in Pacifica.

9. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at approximately 5:30 p.m.

Documents provided at or in preparation for the meeting

1. *Draft Preliminary Evaluation of Existing State Marine Protected Areas in the MLPA North Central Coast Study Region (revised September 24, 2007)*
2. *Draft Draft Work Group List of Species Likely to Benefit from Marine Reserves in the MLPA North Central Coast Study Region (revised September 28, 2007)*
3. *Draft Work Group Responses to Science Questions Posed by the NCCRSG at its July 10-11, 2007 Meeting (revised September 28, 2007)*
4. *Draft Work Group Responses to Science Questions Posed by the NCCRSG at its August 22-23, 2007 Meeting (revised September 28, 2007)*
5. *Draft Work Group Responses to Science Questions Posed by Santi Roberts/Oceana in a Letter Dated September 10, 2007 (revised September 28, 2007)*
6. MLPA master calendar, revised September 11, 2007