

**California MLPA North Central Coast Project**  
**Narrative Rationale for NCCRSR Proposal (Round 3) Proposal 2-XA**  
*Revised March 27, 2008*

**Narrative Rationale**

Ecosystem conservation is the primary goal of Proposal 2-XA. In designing this proposal, the creators seek to put together a package that achieves the preferred sizing of SAT guidance. An important component of the overall design is the establishment of a well-defined network of State Marine Reserves, strategically located in core areas of the North Central Coast Study Region. These areas include Point Arena, Black Point, Bodega Head, Point Reyes, Pillar Point, and the Farallon Islands. At each location a full, no-take SMR is used to provide the foundation for the overall network of MPAs. Adjacent State Marine Conservation Areas are incorporated to buffer and create a proper reserve network. SMCAs allow for fishing of certain species, such as Chinook salmon and Dungeness crab, while providing additional protection to marine ecosystems and without disturbance to the adjacent key habitat of SMRs.

The MLPA places an emphasis on the use of no-take marine reserves. In recognition of this, Proposal 2-XA is designed with at least one State Marine Reserve in each SAT evaluation sub-region that extends from the inter-tidal to the state water boundary. To complement this design, SMCAs are located adjacent to the SMRs using the same general design. MLPA is also clear that MPAs should be co-located with areas that are open to fishing so as to facilitate comparative analysis of the efficacy of reserves and MPAs. To accomplish this, several complexes are designed to include portions of reef that are left open to fishing. This design should provide abundant research opportunities to study the assumptions of "spill over" and larval and adult movement in and out of MPAs. The two primary locations of this design are at Bodega Bay and near Half Moon Bay.

While ecosystem conservation is the top priority of Proposal 2-XA, the contributors have been very careful to consider the potentially serious socioeconomic consequences associated with fishery closures. To that end, the design of Proposal 2-XA aims to strike a balance between conservation benefit and socioeconomic impact across numerous fisheries, both commercial and recreational. This is no small task. Because the fishing community consists of such a wide variety of different interests, finding the balance between the SAT guidance and stakeholder preferences is challenging, yet in the end we believe Proposal 2-XA is exactly what MLPA intended.

Cross interest support is important for any successful network of MPAs. To that end, Proposal 2-XA has accomplished something truly remarkable. Not only is there wide-spread support from the consumptive fishing community; including recreational private boaters, Commercial Passenger Fishing Vessels, pier and shore anglers, kayak anglers, spear divers, abalone divers, commercial salmon trollers, crab fishermen, urchin divers, commercial rockfish fishermen, and halibut fishermen, but Proposal 2-XA and/or many of its individual components has support from conservationists and environmental organizations as well. Proposal 2-XA has achieved the previously unattainable goal of bringing numerous stakeholders together in support of a single conservation-based package of Marine Protected Areas and should serve as a model for future MLPA implementation.

**Special Closure Narrative**

After completing the primary task of developing an MPA network proposal, it is the intention of Proposal 2-XA to recommend the use of special closures both sparingly and selectively in accordance with BTRF guidance. The use of special closures are intended to provide geographically specific protection to seabird breeding sites and marine mammals rookery sites that are not fully addressed by MPAs.

It is the strong belief of Proposal 2-XA NCCRSR members that education is the most important component of a special closure plan intended to prevent disturbances to marine mammal rookeries and seabird breeding sites. Without a strong educational outreach, the intentions of special closures cannot

be achieved. To that end, Proposal 2-XA recommends a closure distance of 300 feet. At distances greater than 300 feet, Proposal 2-XA is concerned that the diminished ability to view the seabirds and marine mammals at these sites will deter user groups from making the effort. Educational opportunities will be lost, and without education, non-disturbance advocates will be unable to gain compliance with special closures.

Proposal 2-XA placed special closures in five locations identified as crucial habitat by the Gulf of the Farallons National Marine Sanctuary. From north to south these are: Point Resistance, Stormy Stack at Double Point, The North Farallon Islands (all 4), The Southern Farallon Islands (except eastside safe anchorage) and Egg Rock at Devil's Slide. The special closures are recommended at 300 feet around all 5 locations except for a slight deviation at the South Farallon Islands where, on the east side (leeward) from Fisherman' Bay to the South Anchorage, the 300 stand off will not be in place. At this location it is essential that vessels are able to approach the leeward side of the South Islands in order to get out of the weather. The uniform distance of 300 feet provides a consistent and easily-understood policy. The 300 foot delineation not only allows the necessary proximity for wildlife viewing, but allows for greater vessel safety than would a larger stand off distance that required vessels to operate in a narrow corridor at the North Farallon Islands.