

California MLPA Initiative South Coast Study Region
Summary of Key Guidelines for Creating Marine Protected Area
Proposals and MPA Proposal Evaluation Approaches
Revised June 24, 2009

Summary of Key Guidelines for Creating Marine Protected Areas

The following guidelines have been summarized from several documents provided to the MLPA South Coast Regional Stakeholder Group (SCRSG). Note that key guidelines most relevant to MPA planning by the SCRSG are summarized; this is not intended to be a detailed synthesis of these documents. Please refer to the original documents, which can be found online, for a more complete explanation of the guidance. Summarized documents include:

- California Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) (http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mlpa/mlpa_language.pdf)
- *California Marine Life Protection Act Master Plan for Marine Protected Areas* (January 2008 revised draft) (<http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mlpa/masterplan.asp>)
- *Draft Methods Used to Evaluate Marine Protected Area Proposals in the MLPA South Coast Study Region* (May 4, 2009 draft) (http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mlpa/pdfs/agenda_061809c1.pdf)
- *Action of the California Fish and Game Commission Regarding Marine Protected Areas at the Northern Channel Islands and Santa Barbara Island in the MLPA South Coast Study Region* (http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mlpa/pdfs/agenda_011309c1.pdf)
- *Summary of MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force Policy Guidance to the Central Coast and North Central Coast Regional Stakeholder Groups* (staff memorandum revised December 4, 2008) (http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mlpa/pdfs/agenda_121008b.pdf) and *Summary of Key Guidance for Developing Round 2 Draft MPA Proposals* (http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mlpa/pdfs/agenda_042809l1.pdf)
- Regarding military use areas, the *Actions of the MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force Taken on May 19, 2009* (http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mlpa/pdfs/agenda_052109a1.pdf)
- *California Department of Fish and Game Feasibility Criteria and Evaluation Components for Marine Protected Area Proposals* (staff memorandum revised November 12, 2008) (http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mlpa/pdfs/agenda_111808n.pdf)
- *California State Parks Guidelines for Creating Marine Managed Areas* (staff memorandum revised November 18, 2008) (http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mlpa/pdfs/agenda_012909b9.pdf)

California Marine Life Protection Act Guidelines

- Use classifications for marine protected areas (MPAs) as defined in the Marine Managed Areas Improvement Act (state marine reserve, state marine park, state marine conservation area)
- Address MLPA goals within the statewide network of MPAs and have "specific identified objectives" for each MPA
- Consider existing MPAs
- Replicate habitats within marine reserves in each biogeographic region, to the extent possible

Science Guidance from the Master Plan for MPAs (January 2008 draft) and Methods Used to Evaluate MPA Proposals (May 4, 2009 draft)

- MPAs should extend from intertidal to offshore areas
- Minimum alongshore span is 5-10 kilometers (3-6 miles or 2.5-5.4 nautical miles)
- Preferred alongshore span is 10-20 kilometers (6-12.5 miles or 5.4-11 nautical miles)
- Maximum spacing between habitats is 50-100 kilometers (31-62 mi or 27-54 nautical miles) (MPA spacing guideline does not apply at the Channel Islands)
- Replicate key marine habitats in multiple MPAs
- Include 3-5 MPAs for each habitat type in each biogeographic region and at least 1 replicate of each key habitat in each bioregion (distinct regions within each biogeographic region)
- Include "key habitats" within MPA proposals: sand beach, rocky intertidal, estuary, shallow sand, deep sand, shallow rock, deep rock, kelp, shallow canyon, and deep canyon

Guidance from the California Fish and Game Commission

- Retain boundaries, regulations and classifications of the existing northern Channel Islands and Santa Barbara Island MPAs, and include these existing MPAs in all alternative proposals.

Guidance from the MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force

- Place great weight on MLPA Master Plan Science Advisory Team (SAT) evaluations
- Strong emphasis will be placed on MPAs that fall within the SAT preferred size and spacing range; proposals should include MPAs with "very high" or "high" levels of protection; marine reserves should be the "backbone" of any proposal; and proposals may include MPAs with at least a "moderate-high" level of protection or greater.
- Cross-interest support for MPA proposals and cross-interest involvement in their development is important and will be given great weight
- The regional stakeholder group should strive for convergence in geographies and regulations, where possible
- Strong consideration should be given to California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) feasibility guidelines. In final MPA proposals, provide specific rationale for any deviations from the recommendations in the feasibility analysis conducted by DFG.
- Special closures should be used sparingly and selectively
- Area G (also called SWAT 1) at San Clemente Island must be included in all MPA proposals. Area Alpha at San Nicolas Island and Wilson Cove at San Clemente Island may be included in MPA proposals at the discretion of stakeholders.
- Additional MPAs and special closures may not be proposed at San Clemente Island and San Nicolas Island. MPAs or special closures at Begg Rock may be included in MPA proposals at the discretion of stakeholders.

- MPAs or special closures on the mainland in military use areas may be included at the discretion of stakeholders.

California Department of Fish and Game Feasibility Guidelines

- Use straight lines (due north/south or east/west)
- Use easily recognizable, permanent landmarks, or use major lines of latitude/longitude
- Use simple regulations
- Consider accessibility
- Avoid unnecessarily complex arrangements of adjacent marine reserves, marine conservation areas and marine parks (e.g. no "doughnut zones")
- Avoid depth contour boundaries
- Avoid "distance from shore" boundaries
- Avoid intertidal MPAs that do not have an offshore component

California Department of Parks and Recreation Guidelines

- Consider areas offshore of terrestrial state parks as to their appropriateness and suitability for MPAs
- Consider especially areas offshore of state parks when they provide opportunities for public visitation, help protect representative habitats and species, provide special protection for intertidal species and habitats, provide venues for marine interpretation and education, and facilitate law enforcement
- When designing MPAs offshore of terrestrial parks, consider the state park's general plan as well as existing public use patterns

Summary of MPA Proposal Evaluation Approaches

The SAT, DFG, California State Parks, and MLPA Initiative staff evaluate draft MPA proposals for the study region relative to the identified guidelines. Evaluations include:

- **MPA size and spacing, and habitat replication and representation:** The SAT evaluates MPA proposals in relation to goals 1, 2, 4 and 6 of the MLPA and the science guidelines in the master plan for MPAs. For this analysis, each MPA is assigned a level of protection based on allowed activities within the MPA, which are also considered in other analyses. Levels of protection include low, moderate-low, moderate, moderate-high, high and very high.
- **Bioeconomic modeling:** The SAT uses spatially-explicit bioeconomic models to assess MPA proposals in relation to goals 2 and 6 of the MLPA related to the effects on populations of marine species and connectivity between MPAs. This analysis calculates the biomass of populations of a suite of fished species within proposed MPAs and how the proposed MPAs will affect fishery yield and profit.

- **Marine birds and mammals:** The SAT evaluates MPA proposals based on the protection of breeding, foraging, resting and rearing areas of marine birds and mammals.
- **Socioeconomic impacts:** The SAT, through a contractor, evaluates maximum potential negative economic impacts of MPA proposals on commercial and recreational fisheries.
- **Water quality analysis:** Considered secondary to other SAT evaluations, the SAT evaluates water and sediment quality concerns within proposed MPAs.
- **MLPA Goal 3 analysis:** MLPA Initiative staff evaluates MPA proposals based on access to recreational, educational and study opportunities.
- **DFG feasibility analysis:** DFG conducts an evaluation of MPAs relative to department-identified feasibility criteria; it provides guidance on MPA design to help ensure that MPA boundaries and regulations are readily enforceable and understood by the public.
- **State Parks analysis:** State Parks conducts an analysis of how different proposals address the State Parks MPA design guidelines.
- **Staff evaluations:** Staff provides basic information and statistics for MPA proposals, including breakdowns by MPA designations, level of protection, and individual MPAs.