

UPDATE ON MARINE RESERVES ACTIVITIES

Situation: This update on ongoing marine reserves activities covers the following areas:

1. Central California National Marine Sanctuary Activities
2. Phase 2 of the Council's Marine Reserves Considerations
3. Marine Reserves Science Developments
4. The Federal Advisory Committee on Marine Protected Areas

The National Marine Sanctuary Act requires that sanctuaries review their management plans at least once every five years. There are 15 workgroups actively updating the joint management plan for central California National Marine Sanctuaries (Cordell Banks, Gulf of the Farallones, and Monterey Bay). These groups are considering a wide array of issues for these sanctuaries including marine reserves. The target for release of a final joint management plan is the summer of 2004. Additionally, one of the working groups is considering an action plan that would ban krill harvest in the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. Krill are not covered under Council fishery management plans, and the group considering the ban has questions about the degree to which the Council would like to be involved in consideration of the ban and when consultation should occur.

Phase 2 of the Council's process for considering marine reserves has stalled due to a lack of funding and staff time. Dr. Richard Parrish, NMFS, has provided for the Council a paper intended to advance progress on Phase 2 of the Council process for federal waters off California. His paper provides specific examples of various arrays of potential Marine Protected Area (MPA) networks covering the range recommended in the Groundfish Strategic Plan (5% to 20% of the area). Individual reserves in the networks generally provide continuous coverage from 20 fathoms to 500 fathoms, were located in areas distant from fishing ports and covered areas representing an array of habitat depths and bottom types. The specific locations in his proposal also draw on results from the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary (CINMS) and California Marine Life Protection Act planning processes. His report is provided here as information for the Council family (Exhibit D.2.a, Attachment 1).

There continues to be controversy over the fishery science associated with marine reserves. Last fall, the Council was provided with an American Sport Fishing Report on marine reserves, commonly referenced as "The Shipp Report." The Shipp Report questioned fishery benefits that might be associated with marine reserves. Attached is a rebuttal to the Shipp report which Drs. Lubchenco and Hixon requested be provided to the Council (Exhibit D.2.a, Attachment 2). This attachment includes both the rebuttal and the original report.

In response to the ongoing controversy over the fishery science associated with marine reserves, the National Fisheries Conservation Center (NFCC) is proposing a workshop to bring marine reserve and fishery scientists together to resolve differences of basic assumptions about ecological process, the conceptual and mathematical models used to make predictions and analyze data, and the interpretation of available evidence. NFCC is seeking endorsements for this exercise and the funds necessary to support the workshop. Their proposal is provided as Exhibit D.2.a, Attachment 3).

A National Marine Protected Area Federal Advisory Committee (Exhibit D.2.a, Attachment 4) has been appointed to advise the Secretaries of Commerce and Interior on implementation aspects of the MPA Executive Order (Executive Order 13158). The committee will be supported by the National Marine Protected Areas Center. The MPA Center is charged with providing federal, state, territorial, tribal and local governments with the information, technologies, training, and strategies to coordinate federal activities related to MPAs. At the Winter Council Chairmen's meeting in Washington, DC, Councils were invited and advised to make recommendations on marine protected areas to this new committee.

Council Task:

1. Discussion and direction to staff, as appropriate.

Reference Materials:

1. "Marine Reserves to Supplement Management of West Coast Groundfish Resources, Phase 2-Draft Concepts for California Waters," Richard H. Parrish (Exhibit D.2.a, Attachment 1).
2. "Comments on ASA report entitled "No take marine protected areas (nMPAs) as a fishery management tool, a pragmatic perspective" by Robert L. Shipp, Ph.D." Carr *et. al.* (Exhibit D.2.a, Attachment 2).
3. "Integrating Marine Reserves Science into the Fisheries Management System," NFCC (Exhibit D.2.a, Attachment 3).
4. Press Release: Commerce and Interior Departments Select Candidates for National Marine Protected Area Federal Advisory Committee (Exhibit D.2.a, Attachment 4).
5. Public Comment.

Groundfish Fishery Strategic Plan (GFSP) Consistency Analysis

The GFSP calls for the Council to "use marine reserves as a fishery management tool that contributes to groundfish conservation and management goals, has measurable effects, and is integrated with other fishery management approaches."

- a. Agendum Overview
- b. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies
- c. Public Comment
- d. Council Discussion

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