

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL STATEMENT ON  
FEDERAL WATERS PORTION OF THE CHANNEL ISLANDS NATIONAL MARINE  
SANCTUARY SCHEDULE UPDATE

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) received a presentation from the manager of the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary (CINMS) on Phase II of CINMS' proposals for creating marine protected areas (MPAs). Five years ago, a California State process began for closures around the Channel Islands in state waters. Phase II will increase these areas in and around CINMS itself.

While the Sanctuary Manager presented the GAP with three maps delineating proposed closures, maps showing the "no action" alternative and a Channel Islands fishermen's alternative were not provided. The GAP was asked to provide comments to the Council's Ad Hoc Channel Islands Marine Reserve Committee, which is scheduled to meet in August.

GAP members made clear that they cannot support MPAs that are not based on science. Members of the GAP reminded CINMS staff that CINMS' role is not fisheries management. It can bring recommendations to the Council where rigorous scientific scrutiny can be applied. The Council was established to manage fisheries and the recommendations of CINMS should be considered as those of any other interested group. We see no need for any MPAs or fishing regulations above what the Council decides is necessary for fisheries management. We cannot support another agency reducing harvest opportunity without going through the Council process.

The GAP recommends that existing closures, restrictive measures implemented through regulation affecting fishing areas, and de facto protected areas due to the inability to use gear in areas be quantified before new closed areas are established. Analysis should include the economic impact of MPA management on the fishery.

Finally, the GAP notes that the proposed MPAs are inside the Rockfish Conservation Area (RCA) and close to the Cowcod Conservation Area. Both of these areas qualify as MPAs and are de facto marine reserves. Is an additional marine reserve really needed? After all, the RCA stretches from the Canadian border to the Mexican border, which should be enough.

PFMC  
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