

. SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE REPORT ON
MARINE PROTECTED AREAS "NEED CRITERIA" FOR THE MONTEREY BAY NATIONAL
MARINE SANCTUARY (MBNMS)

The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) reviewed the Briefing Book materials regarding the process established by Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary (the Sanctuary) to consider criteria and thresholds that would define the need for marine protected areas (MPAs) in Federal waters of the Sanctuary. The SSC was joined in its deliberations by Dr. Lisa Wooninck, a new member of the Sanctuary staff; Mr. Steve Scheiblaue, Harbormaster for Monterey, Board Member of the Alliance of Communities for Sustainable Fisheries (ACFS) and member of the Sanctuary MPA Working Group; Dr. Richard Parrish, fishery science consultant and author of the ACFS-sponsored report "A review of traditional and ecosystem-based fishery management in the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary (Agenda Item I.1.e, Attachment 6); and Dr. Ray Hilborn, from the University of Washington and co-author of the ACFS-sponsored report "Ecosystem consequences of MPAs for the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary" (Agenda Item I.1.e, Attachment 7). The five reports sponsored by the ACFS will be useful once the Sanctuary staff have established evaluation criteria.

There are three stated needs for establishing MPAs in the Sanctuary (Agenda Item I.1.b, Attachment 1), two of which are amenable to science-based evaluation: (1) MPAs would restore and safeguard ecosystem structure and function and (2) MPAs would provide research areas for examining human impacts on the marine environment. Arguably, the third aspect, the "intrinsic value" of wilderness areas, is not subject to scientific evaluation. Dr. Wooninck informed the SSC that the Sanctuary staff had developed rationales to accompany the statement of need for establishing MPAs within Federal waters of the Sanctuary. The rationales will be presented later this month to the Sanctuary Advisory Council. These rationales are currently under review and were not available to the SSC.

The SSC understands that the Sanctuary would welcome input from the Council and the SSC regarding the process they are developing for evaluating MPA proposals. To facilitate information exchange between the Sanctuary and the Council, the SSC suggests that several members of the SSC be appointed as scientific advisors to work with the Sanctuary's MPA Working Group. Of particular concern to the SSC is that any Sanctuary proposals for establishing MPAs consider a sufficiently wide range of alternatives (including status quo) and use an appropriate technical basis for evaluating the alternatives relative to the stated objectives for review under the National Environmental Policy Act. The Sanctuary has apparently concluded that there is a need for MPAs, but this conclusion is premature until there has been a formal evaluation of the MPA alternatives relative to the status quo alternative.

The draft time-line for the MPA development and review process (Agenda Item I.1.b, Attachment 3) indicates no Council involvement until the final stages. Council staff should work with the Sanctuary to develop mechanisms for an earlier review of Sanctuary proposals, including the range of alternatives, by the full SSC and Council.

The SSC notes that it would be advantageous to the Council if it had an Ecosystem Fishery Management Plan (with associated authorities) that specified a process for dealing with proposals to establish specific MPAs or a broader network of MPAs.