

SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE REPORT ON  
REVIEW OF RATIONALES FOR MARINE PROTECTED AREAS IN THE  
MONTEREY BAY NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY (MBNMS)

The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) reviewed the Briefing Book materials regarding the rationales for Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in Federal waters of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary (the Sanctuary). Dr. Lisa Wooninck of the Sanctuary staff read a statement and was available to respond to questions. Dr. Richard Parrish, a fishery science consultant, also participated in the discussion.

The SSC supports continuation of a dialogue between the Council and the Sanctuary on a process to identify and evaluate alternatives for MPAs in the Sanctuary. Alternatives should include a “no action” alternative, for which the adequacy of current protections will be evaluated; therefore support of the process does not necessarily imply support for MPAs in the Sanctuary.

The Sanctuary is currently looking for advice on evaluative processes for developing alternatives. The current rationales imply differing scales for MPA implementation; data may be inadequate to evaluate the need for MPAs at some of these scales; this disconnect will have to be addressed in developing the evaluation process. While not all criteria are amenable to rigorous scientific evaluation, those brought before the SSC should be.

In terms of process, the SSC agrees with the Sanctuary that science and policy should be kept separate and recommends that proposal development and review be done by separate entities. The SSC Ecosystem-Based Management Subcommittee is available for providing scientific input to the process. The SSC white paper “Marine reserves: objectives, rationales, fishery management implications, and regulatory requirements” provides useful background.

The SSC makes the following recommendations in developing and evaluating alternatives:

- 1) Proposed actions should be contrasted with protections afforded by current state and Federal regulations (the “no action” alternative) and, in particular, the added value of additional protection to Sanctuary management goals should be evaluated.
- 2) Consolidation of existing spatial management measures should be considered as one of the alternatives for evaluation.
- 3) It should be clear that the role of members of the Sanctuary’s working group is as stakeholders or institutional representatives, and the role of members of the Sanctuary’s science advisory panel is as independent scientists.
- 4) There should be experts from a variety of fields within the social sciences on the science advisory panel. A separate socioeconomics panel is not desirable.

- 5) Interactions between the Council and the Sanctuary should be formalized to help ensure that communication is efficient and timely. A Council staff member acting as a liaison between the Council and the Sanctuary would be helpful in this regard. SSC members, if on the science advisory group, would not speak for the SSC or the Council.
- 6) The Sanctuary, along with its partners, should develop monitoring plans to go along with each of the alternative proposed actions.
- 7) The potential loss of sampling and surveying opportunities could have a significant effect on data series used for stock assessments. Replacement of these surveying opportunities with alternative methods should be a high priority if MPAs are implemented.

PFMC  
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