

# Report to the Gulf of the Farallones Sanctuary Advisory Council on the Marine Life Protection Act Initiative: North-Central Coast December 13, 2007

## Highlights

- Since October SAC meeting:
  - RSG: 5 days of meetings: 1) one 2-day meeting where stakeholders continued to work in three teams and were tasked to come up with proposals; 2) one day meeting held to get feedback on draft proposals; 3) one 2-day meeting to select no more than five draft MPA proposals for the next round of review and evaluation; and 4) continued informal workgroups and extensive email discussions on different proposals
  - SAT: one in-person meeting, one conference call
  - BRTF: 1 meeting
- Regional stakeholder groups drafted and presented MPA proposals. A total of 4 packages were approved to move forward as MPA arrays, with the option to have an additional one if it's revised to meet the goals of the act and SAT guidance.
- Science Advisory Team has responded to many questions proposed by the RSG.
- Blue Ribbon Task Force has provided initial feedback on draft options for MPA arrays and draft MPA proposals submitted and requested no more than 5 proposals from the RSG.

## **Overview of GFNMS Actions**

- Providing GIS support to MLPA initiative
- Attended all RSG meetings
- Hosted 2 conference calls to update other Federal agencies (NOAA and Department of Interior and obtain feedback.
- GFNMS staff were not able to attend latest SAT, BRTF meetings due to Cosco Busan Oil Spill

## **Regional Stakeholder Group**

- RSG divided into 3 multi-interest groups ("balanced cross section") by MLPA staff (GFNMS on 2 groups) to develop team proposals.
- Oct 16-17, 2007 meeting in Gualala:
  - Presentations:
    - Preliminary MPA array proposals from RSG teams and 4 external proposals
    - Updated (final draft) regional profile
    - Commercial Fishing (Ecotrust) and Non-consumptive uses.
- November 28, 2007 meeting in San Rafael:
  - Discussed possible revisions to draft options for MPA arrays in light of SAT evaluations, BRTF guidance, and DFG analysis (discussion at conceptual level only).
- December 11-12, 2007 meeting in Pacifica – discussions and presentations on the following issues:
  - Revised Schedule (see section on important dates)
  - 3 external proposal presentations showing revisions.
  - A decision of 4 MPA arrays to move forward.
- Still giving \$125/day Per diem for members whose organizations not paying them to participate

## **Blue Ribbon Task Force:**

- Reviewed and adopted regional goals and objectives for the north central coast study region.
- Reviewed draft options for MPA arrays developed by the RSG teams and external to the work group process
- Presentation of methods and analyses of draft options for MPA arrays developed by work groups of the regional stakeholder group and draft MPA proposals developed external to the work group process

- Stakeholder panel presentation and discussion of draft options for MPA arrays and draft MPA proposals.

### **Science Advisory Team**

- Have responded to RSG science questions from the August 22-23 meeting, and have preliminary responses from the October 16-17 meeting. Topics include:
  - A table of seasonality of sensitive life stages of birds and mammals most likely to benefit from MPAs.
  - Unique habitats in this region: Estuaries, Farallon Islands
  - Evaluation of foraging and rearing areas for seabirds, mammals and sharks
  - Estimation of number of pinnipeds in the area and weight of food taken
  - Cables, wave farms and sewage outfalls
  - Displacement efforts
- Sizing/spacing guidelines: guidance has been provided to the RSG
- Provided evaluation of protection levels for various MPAs
- Provided detailed review of internal and external draft array proposals

### **Socioeconomics**

- Fishing: Updated recreational and commercial fishing maps available.
- Non-consumptive Users: NOAA MPA Center and Marine Conservation Biology Institute produced maps and compiled information on where tidepooling, wildlife viewing, diving/underwater photography, and kayaking are occurring.
- Tribal: Outreach to tribal community via information sharing workshop, produced maps that represent synthesizes of a SUBSET of the areas of importance (maps are draft).

### **“Special Closures” Discussion**

- There was a special conference call to discuss how to deal with Special Closures. Key Considerations: be mindful of existing closures, . Request to use special closures sparingly. Need to be specific about boundaries, talk about the goals and the species to benefit, and how protections are needed in addition to current protections, requesting that a problem is proven.
- SAT has provided the seasonality of special life stages of birds and mammals, location maps of key rookeries and colonies, and wildlife disturbance summary data
- A lot of public comment was given regarding the need to protect ecotourism.
- There will be a sub-group meeting to address this issue prior to January 23 SAT meeting.

### **Important Dates:**

- RSG Meeting 6, Feb 6-7, 2008 – Proposals finalized
- **NEW Date!** SAT Meeting, January 23, 2008 – Analysis of draft MPA proposals
- **NEW Public Workshops!** February 4,5,6 in the evening – Half Moon Bay, Bodega Bay, Gualala
- **NEW Date!** Blue Ribbon Task Force, April 22-23, 2008 – Act on revised proposals and preferred option. April 22 is a joint meeting with the Fish and Game Commission.

### **SAC feedback:**

- Please review draft MPA arrays online
- Potential for SAC participation at workshops
- Voting on Final Proposals during last RSG meeting in March

### **Attachments:** MLPA meeting dates, Map of marine bird breeding colonies

For more information go to: <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mlpa/>

To obtain meeting agendas and view live webcast: <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mlpa/meetings.asp>