

May 18, 2001

MEMO

To: CINMS Sanctuary Advisory Council (SAC)

From: Bruce Steele and Eric Hooper, SAC Fishing Representatives

Re: Fishing Working Group Meeting Report, May 14, 2001

The SAC's Fishing Working Group (FWG) met on May 14, 2001 at the Louise Lowry Davis Center in Santa Barbara from 5:00 to 7:30 pm. The meeting was attended by twenty-three people consisting of nearly equal proportions of commercial and recreational fishing representatives. Sanctuary staff Sean Hastings and Mike Murray were also present.

In attendance:

Eric Hooper	Jill Bourbeau	Tom Ball
Bruce Steele	Ed Tierney	Craig Murray
Mike Murray	Dimitri Peros	Mark Becker
Sean Hastings	Brian Long	John Richards
Chris Williams	Michael Harrington	Sandy Delano
Eric Kett	Harry Liquornik	Ed Matthews
Jeff Maassen	Nancy Berenson	Chris Miller
Andre Bourbeau	John Wightman	

Introductions

Bruce Steel and Eric Hooper welcomed everyone and each explained the origin of the group. Bruce shared experiences concerning the development of the SAC, and credited Eric Hooper with getting the Fishing Working Group up and running. Eric explained the role of the FWG as providing advice to the SAC concerning fishing. Noting that the marine reserves process was near to complete, Eric expressed a hope that the FWG could work on other issues within the sanctuary that are important to fishermen, such as cleaning up Bechers Bay and monitoring dumping areas.

Fishing Representation on the SAC

Early in the meeting, a significant discussion arose concerning the representation of fishing interests on the SAC. Eric Hooper explained that there was currently one fishing seat on the SAC rather than separate seats for commercial and recreational fishing. Given this current structure, he urged that it will be important for commercial and recreational fishing interests to speak with one voice.

Comments and questions from the audience reflected a range of concerns about the SAC's singular fishing seat. Some suggested that perhaps the single seat structure was a deliberate set up designed to encourage fighting between commercial and recreational fishermen. Eric Hooper pointed out that very few recreational fishermen originally expressed interest in joining the SAC. Sean Hastings explained that the SAC was deliberately structured with a "recreational" seat, which could be held by a recreational fishing representative. He also mentioned the flexibility of the tourism seat (which was previously held by a charter fishing business owner). Mike Murray explained that the SAC has considered the structure of the SAC on a few occasions, and has specifically voted on whether or not to add additional seats. Each time, Mike explained, the SAC voted to defer making changes to the SAC structure. Bruce Steele added that there is an important "political balance" on the SAC which potentially could be altered if additional seats are added. Bruce commented that if another fishing seat were added to the SAC, it is likely that requests would also be made for an additional conservation seat.

Harry Liquornik asked if it would be acceptable to the recreational fishermen present if their interests with the SAC could be represented through the FWG, or if they would rather try to create a separate working group or possibly channel their input through the Recreation or Tourism seats. Most responses from recreational fishing representatives favored working with the FWG for now, acknowledging the importance and advantages of speaking with one voice. Interest in eventually gaining a recreational fishing seat on the SAC, however, remained high.

Chris Miller suggested that the group start off by meeting regularly and developing active and diverse participation, including recreational fishing interests. He recommended that recreational fishermen work to get their issues of concern onto meeting agendas for the FWG, to make sure their issues are considered and discussed. Through building this participation, Chris suggested, a request for an additional seat on the SAC could be made effectively.

Views on Commercial and Recreational Fishing

Participants engaged in some discussion about the challenges commercial and recreational fishermen have had in working together. Many commercial fishermen expressed that their operations can and have often been well managed, and have not deserved the attacks from recreational fishermen. Several participants let it be known that they support both commercial and recreational fishing, and that they were interested in working together. Most present were very open minded to identifying and working together on local common concerns shared by the two groups.

Marine Reserves Process

Chris Miller provided a status report on the marine reserves process. Chris traced recent mapping negotiations that had been taking place between many MRWG members. He explained that recreational fishing representatives have proposed some areas around Anacapa and Santa Barbara islands. Chris also described a recent proposal some MRWG members had suggested that called for a "Marine Park" (an MLPA marine protected area category that allows recreational fishing but prohibits commercial fishing) on the north side of Santa Cruz Island.

The proposal, Chris explained, would unduly hurt the lobster fishery. Chris suggested that one compromise might be to recommend a zone where commercial finfish take is prohibited. Chris explained that this kind of option was not yet meeting with approval from the environmental representatives on the MRWG.

Chris added that the MRWG is also giving consideration to the idea of phasing in reserves over time. He concluded his report by pointing out that the group is trying to design a well-thought-out reserve system that will work for everyone.

It was asked if the situation now was beyond the question of whether or not reserves should be implemented, and had become only a matter of where and how big reserves should be. Sean Hastings responded by explaining that even if the MRWG was not able to finish their work, the state's Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) process would be coming to this area soon and would produce a marine reserve recommendation for the Channel Islands. Eric Hooper noted, however, that the MLPA process would not be limited to a consideration of no take zones. Chris Miller said that the MRWG's opportunity to make a recommendation is very important, because without it the fishing interests for the Channel Islands will not receive the same respect and standing by the state's MLPA process. Bruce Steele added that closures are a reality, and therefore one of the most important issues pertains to what kind of process will be used to establish them. Sean Hastings explained that the MLPA Master Plan Team is awaiting the recommendation from the Channel Islands marine reserves process, and will respect it.

Chris Miller shared concerns and criticisms for the Science Panel's recommendation. He explained that the Science Panel's reliance on MSY (Maximum Sustainable Yield) is inaccurate and outdated, and that ABC (Allowable Biological Catch) should have been used instead. The state's Marine Life Management Act, he added, calls on ABC to be utilized in developing management plans for fisheries. Chris also stated that it is problematic that the Science Panel's work has not yet been completed and peer reviewed. Eric Hooper added a concern that the Science Panel was asked to consider CINMS as a "management unit," which he stated did not match the true geographic range of the fish stocks being considered.

Harry Liquornik commented on the current mapped areas that the fishing representatives on the MRWG had worked to agree on, stating that the proposed reserve areas would not put anyone out of business. Eric Hooper noted, however, that prime areas for the spot prawn trawl fishery were within the proposed reserve areas. Harry responded that changes to the maps can still be negotiated.

Eric Hooper asked if the FWG could advise the MRWG directly. Mike Murray responded by explaining the SAC/Working Group model, which calls for Working Groups to report back to the SAC. However, since MRWG members are present at the FWG meeting, they are receiving the benefit of the group's ideas and suggestions. Mike suggested that informal advice to other SAC Working Groups is probably fine, but that written recommendations, resolutions, etc. should first go to the SAC.

FWG Recommendations to the Sanctuary Advisory Council

Relative to the marine reserves process, the Fishing Working Group agreed to forward the following recommendations to the SAC:

1. **The Science Advisory Panel recommendation should be peer reviewed.**
2. **Consistent with the state's Marine Life Protection Act, the MRWG should give consideration to recommending selective Marine Protected Areas (gear- or species-specific), rather than only no-take zones.**
3. **The MRWG should be given additional time to complete their work.**

Future FWG Meetings:

The FWG agreed to hold evening meetings (5:30 pm – 7:30 pm) one week prior to each SAC meeting. Therefore, **the next FWG meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 12, 2001 in Ventura (location TBD) from 5:30-7:30 pm.**

The FWG also agreed that they will become active in making requests concerning SAC agenda items. At each FWG meeting, the group plans to review and prepare for the upcoming SAC meeting based upon what has already been agendaized. In addition, the group plans to formulate agenda requests for the following SAC meeting.