

DRAFT WEBSITE TEXT FOR KEY COMMUNICATOR REVIEW

Guidance for Key Communicator Review

The following provides examples of two core components of the website, the Port Profiles and Key Findings pages. Key Communicators are invited to review this draft website text and consider the following questions:

- *Is the information as presented informative? Interesting? Tone?*
- *Is the way the information is presented intuitive? For example, is summarizing at the strengths/challengings/MPA effects level for each port useful?*
- *What else do you wish you knew about the ports and/or key finding?*
- *Is there any information included that you would suggest removing?*
- *What visual assets would you suggest including?*

While still in development, we anticipate including 4-6 key findings and over 20 port profiles on the website. Your input will help to inform the continued development of these final reporting products.

Draft 'Key Finding' from the Study Overall

Key Finding: COVID-19 Impacts and Adaptations -- Commercial Fisheries

- Commercial fishing focus groups participants recounted experiencing negative impacts and disruptions in their fishing activities due to COVID-19.
 - 63% of focus group participants reported high or very high disruption, 29% reported medium disruption, and 8% reported low or very low levels of disruption.
 - Fishermen from southern and central ports reported higher levels of disruption when compared to those from ports in northern California.
 - “COVID definitely affected the crab fishery. And it got to a point where the buyers didn't even want your crabs and they just told you just to bring your gear in and find somebody else to sell them to. The price was, I don't remember, three bucks or something - should have been like six.” -Bodega Bay commercial fisherman
- Commercial fishermen in several parts of the state reported challenges accessing the waterfront and their businesses due to COVID-19 restrictions and beach/waterfront closures in the first three months of the pandemic.
 - “As a trailer boat commercial fisherman, during COVID, in the beginning, I had to threaten these lawsuits to get access to the boat ramps in Mission Bay. The city was willing to listen and then they gave us access, they gave commercial fishermen access. San Diego Bay didn't until they were faced with having to go before the news to discuss it, and then they finally opened their boat ramps. There was two months where I wasn't able to fish because the boat ramps were closed.” -San Diego area commercial fisherman
- Commercial fishermen up and down the coast reported experiencing challenges and disruptions with selling their catch through traditional markets.
 - COVID-19 affected overseas and export markets, restaurant sales, and the trucking operations for buyers.
 - These disruptions resulted in very low prices and in some cases the inability to sell catch.
 - Some fishermen decided not to fish at this time due to low prices and health concerns.

- Other fishermen decided to fish harder in order to produce higher catches to offset the lower costs.
- “But for my personal experience this past year, I've done things that I never envisioned that I would have to do just to survive the COVID thing. We fished to when the truck was available, not to when the weather was good. And we had buyers that wanted, on one particular day of the week, they only wanted small fish [...] So we were throwing fish over the side that normally would have been marketable to not bring stuff to the dock that we couldn't sell. [...] If we couldn't make it work for the day that the truck was going to be there, we didn't get to go fishing. So we managed to make a year out of it, but it wasn't easy. [...] Those of us that are on this call have figured out how to survive, and that's why we're still here.” -Morro Bay/Port San Luis commercial fisherman
- Health concerns and crew challenges were reported in various ports across the state.
 - Some operations decided to reduce crew sizes due to health concerns.
 - Other operations struggled to maintain crew during the pandemic due to the availability of high unemployment benefits and health concerns.
 - “And it's also been hard to negotiate the whole thing with your deckhand on the boat, without having the social distancing all the time and the impact of that with your family [and being able to] work that all out, it's just made it a lot more difficult.” -Point Arena commercial fisherman
- Commercial fishermen reported creative adaptation strategies to keep their businesses afloat.
 - Some fishermen reported growing existing direct-to-consumer marketing businesses during the pandemic.
 - Others developed new strategies including using social media and other websites to sell their catch direct to consumers, restaurants, or food banks.
 - Fishermen expressed an interest to maintain or expand their direct marketing efforts since many of these ventures were lucrative during the pandemic.
 - “I have an Instagram page, and I don't like people or social media. Now I'm trying to sell direct to consumer. We adapted – we're fishermen, you have to or you go out of business.” -San Diego area commercial fisherman

Draft Port Profiles

Please Review Santa Barbara and Crescent City is optional

Draft Port Profile: Santa Barbara - Commercial

Well-being Strengths

Santa Barbara participants described the strong health of marine resources and the ability to catch a diverse array of high-value species as key strengths. Participants also described access to strong and diverse markets including traditional processors and multiple avenues for direct marketing to restaurants and individual consumers as strengths. Participants highlighted the strong social relationships between fishermen and with external entities such as local governments and management agencies. The community has gotten support for investment in port needs including infrastructure - which fishermen noted is some of the best in the state. The local fishing organization, Commercial Fishermen of Santa Barbara (CFSB), was described as both strong and effective, and fishermen recounted overall high levels of job satisfaction in the port.

Well-being Challenges

Participants noted some areas for improvement in local markets including the potential to develop more direct marketing, to improve connections between fishermen and restaurants, and to improve the reliability of international markets. They outlined concerns related to the high cost of living in the Santa Barbara area and the high cost of limited entry permits which can keep out new fishermen. Participants also conveyed concerns related to the future health of their fisheries including warming ocean temperatures, loss of kelp forests, and management which could further limit access to fisheries in the future. They felt relationships with the state could be improved and noted a disconnect between local priorities and state representation.

MPA Takeaways

Participants described an array of negative effects from local and regional MPAs (state and federal) including loss of access to resources (including important fishing grounds close to the port), compaction of fishing on MPA boundaries, and increased safety concerns and business costs. They expressed concerns about lack of information available about management priorities, including concerns around MPA boundary expansion, lack of clarity on monitoring, and inconsistent enforcement of MPAs. Participants expressed disdain on the failure to consider the Northern Channel Island (NCI) MPAs as part of the coastal MPA network and not considering the science guidance for NCI MPAs.

Quotes

“As far as our local facilities, I think we've got probably the best port, up and down [the California coast]. [In other ports,] there's no place to get ice, you can't sell your fish on your own. You have to go through somebody else that's going to charge you 30 or 25 or 50 cents a pound to unload you. Santa Barbara, we have the best.”

“We just essentially re-upped our board for CFSB with seven guys that volunteered to be board members. That's the way we try to structure it is that each of the seven represents a gear type. So we get the diversity of perspectives within our board's function and in that way too we pick challenges that are designed to elevate the entire community and the entire port.”

“The one thing that I think is extremely negative is that when they originally set up the plan, they asked fishermen where the areas were they didn't want the MPAs, and that's right where they put them, in some really prime turf [. . .] they took some really, really productive turf. So that, I mean, they targeted areas that we told them we wanted to keep.”

“I wouldn't recommend my son starting out in a fishery down here because of the cost of entering it. The cost of living is so much more [in Santa Barbara] for the new people that are getting into it. The idea of starting a family and buying a house in Santa Barbara is fairly restrictive.”

“I, personally, was pretty darn discouraged on the whole implications long-term with respect to where the state was going [during MPA implementation] and much they valued what we [commercial fishermen] were doing.”

Port Profile: Crescent City - Commercial (optional to review)

Well-being Strengths

Participants from Crescent City conveyed that it has been a difficult time in the port recently with few bright spots. They described the health of the marine resource base as a key strength and noted that Crescent City does have some representation on key management bodies which allows their perspective to be brought to management decisions. Their adjacency to the Oregon border gives them the ability to land fish in either state, increasing their market and fuel options.

Well-being Challenges

Fishermen noted that the lack of a diversity of fisheries to participate in has been an ongoing challenge which was precipitated by the near loss of two key fisheries in the port: the decline of the salmon fishery due to mismanagement of the fishery and habitat degradation and the loss of the California pink shrimp due to the state not being MSC certified. They described that social relationships both internal and external were a challenge with low levels of trust and civic engagement among the fleet and a need for more support from the local port and community. Fishermen described challenges related to infrastructure, markets, and the future of the resource including the lack of a processing plant or steady buyer in Crescent City which means products must be trucked out and landed in other ports, increasing business costs, competition with Oregon fishermen who can come across the border, and concerns about changing ocean conditions and future management which could further restrict access to the resource. The compounding of these numerous challenges has meant that it is difficult to make a living from fishing and participants noted that most fishermen from the port must have other jobs to support their livelihoods.

MPAs Takeaways

Crescent City participants expressed a view that the ecological outcomes from the MPAs were most likely neutral. They believe that MPAs would not have a big change on the resource because they were placed in areas that were not all that heavily fished beforehand. However they indicated that fishermen from Oregon may be experiencing more impacts due to the placements of MPAs in grounds near their ports. The fishermen noted some impacts from the MPAs due to loss of some areas they would have fished, but they observed that livelihood impacts were not too large due to the placement of MPAs away from the port. Fishermen expressed concerns about the enforcement indicating that there was limited enforcement and it was uneven with some fishermen getting cited and others not. They indicated that management of MPAs could be improved by better communicating the goals of the MPA and monitoring results. Participants were concerned that the MPA implementation and management seemed to be a one size fits all approach that did not relate to the unique context of the North Coast.

Quotes

“I just, I've been fishing, like I said, for 10, 11 years now. And since I started in the two fisheries that I've been in, the ocean just seemed very, very healthy as a whole [. . .] I mean the prawns seem to be up. I know the shrimpers have had good years, the [Dungeness] crabs cycle, but somewhere on the coast, you know, they've been [doing] well [. . .].”

“Three of us have been unloading in Oregon all year, and the rest of the fleet is unloading in Brookings now.”

“So because we don't have the MSC certification [in California], and in the marketplace MSC is very valuable... [the buyers] don't want to buy something if it isn't MSC. So we've kind of had the leg shot out from under us because we didn't qualify in California. So now basically the shrimp industry is out of California. It's going to Southern Oregon now, and that includes product caught off the coast of California going into Oregon. So the Department has lost revenue from all that, and so has the port itself.”

“I mean, there's [no processing] done around here. And that's why there's problems with the pricing around here. It's so expensive for [the live buyer] to truck. You know, I mean, anything that could be made is spent on the truckers and the fuel.”

“I mean, nothing gets cheaper except the price of fish.”

“I think for our area - I'm not talking about other areas because I know other areas did not have the same kind of information gathering [during the MPA implementation process] that we did - but I think for our area in getting the response that we did end up with what were proposed, I think we ended up in a much better place than it could have been. So I think that whole process for me was pretty satisfactory.”