

Focus Group Conversation about the Health and Well-being of California's Commercial Fishing Communities in Relation to the MPA Network

Preparation Packet

Welcome

We are very grateful that you have agreed to participate in this port-based discussion about the state of your fishing community and the effects of MPAs. We want you to be prepared for the discussion with an understanding of the focus group process and the topics planned for discussion. Please review the following instructions and reach out if you have any questions, concerns, or comments.

Enclosed in this Packet

1. Focus Group instructions
2. Focus Group agenda
3. Focus Group agreements
4. Consent form
5. Guiding prep questions
6. Community expert well-being questions

Requirements for Participation

Based on considerations for the online focus group format, additional criteria for participation includes:

- Access to a computer or tablet
- Access to a stable internet connection
- Availability to participate in a short training to familiarize participants with webinar Zoom functions

For more information about the focus group recruitment process, see Appendix C (page 22) [here](#).

Instructions

Please complete the following steps to participate:

BEFORE THE FOCUS GROUP

- Read the consent form (page 5). We will ask for your consent to participate in this study prior to the focus group conversation.
- Discuss guiding prep questions (page 8) with 2-3 fellow California commercial fishermen *who are not participating in the focus group conversation* or, if time does not permit this step, please review these questions yourself.
- Read and consider the 'Community Expert Well-being Questions' (page 9).
- If you need training in order to access Zoom prior to the focus group, please reach out to Jocelyn (jocelyn@strategiearth.com or 707-832-4088). We will conduct a brief training session at the beginning of the focus group to familiarize participants with the Zoom features needed for this focus group conversation.

DURING THE FOCUS GROUP

- Confirm the 'focus group conversation agreements' (page 4), including any friendly amendments.
- Provide consent to participate in this study if you have not done so before the focus group.
- Participate in the focus group conversation.
- Provide feedback and suggestions for Project Team to improve focus group experience for participants.

AFTER THE FOCUS GROUP

- Complete the compensation information form (will be sent in advance of the focus group) and send via email to Strategic Earth at kelly@strategicearth.com.
- Should you desire, provide additional feedback via email to jocelyn@strategicearth.com.

Thank you

Thank you in advance for your participation! Materials included in this packet will be made available on the project website, mpahumanuses.com. If you have any additional questions or follow up needs, please reach out to Jocelyn at jocelyn@strategicearth.com.

Focus Group Conversation about the
Health and Well-being of California's Commercial Fishing Communities
in Relation to the MPA Network

September 2020 | 5:00pm - 9:00pm
Zoom Conference

*Please join 5-10 minutes early to ensure you can log on successfully.
For troubleshooting support during the webinar, email Jocelyn at jocelyn@strategiearth.com*

Goal: To collect information about commercial fishermen's perspectives on their fishing community's socioeconomic health and well-being. Information gathered during the conversation will inform California's 10 year MPA network performance review, and final results from this study will be shared via a publicly available website that also includes information about trends in landings, value, and participation.

Agenda

Zoom Orientation

Brief overview of Zoom platform, including polling, video, chat functions, etc. to ensure all participants can actively engage throughout the discussion.

Welcome & Introductions

Introduce Project Team, invite focus group participant introductions, and review focus group goals and agreements. Provide overview and instructions for 'Community Expert Well-being Questions.'

Community Expert Well-being Questions - Session 1, Well-being Indicators

Invite focus group participants to respond and discuss well-being questions.

Break

Community Expert Well-being Questions - Session 2, MPA-specific Indicators

Invite focus group participants to respond and discuss MPA-specific questions. Participants will also have the opportunity to provide feedback and suggestions on the focus group process/approach, including what went well, what needs improvement, etc.

Concluding Remarks

Discuss next steps, reporting out, and adjourn.

For more information about this focus group conversation, including reference materials, please visit mpahumanuses.com, email jocelyn@strategiearth.com, or call Strategic Earth at 707-832-4088.

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Meeting Agreements

- Be available to focus fully on focus group conversation during the entirety of the conversation
- Be patient when listening to others, do not interrupt
- Respect the opinions of others even if you do not agree
- Explore ideas with curiosity and creativity
- Speak openly and honestly, keep comments concise and focused
- Approach discussion from a place of diversity and inclusion, considering voices and perspectives not be present in the focus group composition
- All responses are valid—there are no right or wrong answers
- It is okay to abstain from discussing specific topics
- Help protect others' privacy by not discussing details outside the group
- Personal attacks or discrimination of any kind will not be tolerated
- Address any concerns about the conversation with the Project Team

Focus group participation is voluntary. Please avoid revealing detailed information about your personal health.

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Consent Form

Before you participate in this project, we want to make sure that you understand how our study is designed, what we are asking you to do, and how we plan to protect your confidentiality and rights as a study participant. Please review the consent form below and direct any questions that you might have to a Project Team member before or during the meeting.

CONSENT FORM: Commercial Fishermen Virtual Focus Group Related to Socioeconomic Monitoring of the California MPA network

Official Project Title: Long-Term Marine Protected Area Socioeconomic Monitoring Program for Commercial and Commercial Passenger Fishing Vessel Fisheries in the State of California

You are invited to take part in a research study conducted by Humboldt State University, Ecotrust, and Strategic Earth Consulting (collectively referred to as the Project Team) related to long-term socioeconomic monitoring of California's MPA network. Before you decide whether or not to participate in the study, please read this form and direct questions to the Project Team if there is anything that you do not understand.

Project Purpose: The primary goal of this research is to gain information about the well-being of fishing communities in California and about the socioeconomic aspects of California's MPA network. The data will inform long-term monitoring of the MPA network and potentially be useful to policymakers and fishing communities. This project was funded by the California Ocean Protection Council and California Department of Fish and Wildlife's MPA Monitoring Program with funding administered through California Sea Grant.

What you will be asked to do: If you agree to participate in this study, we will ask you to engage in a focus group conversation over video conference with other individuals from your port / port grouping related to the overall well-being of your fishing community and socioeconomics of California's MPA network. The focus group conversation will be audio and video recorded. We will ask you to respond to approximately 20 questions using Zoom polling software and then follow up your responses with a conversation about the topic with other members of the focus group to add context to the responses received. We anticipate that the focus group conversation will take approximately 3-4 hours.

Protection of Information: The focus group conversation will be audio and video recorded. We will also be taking typed notes during the focus group. Audio and video recordings and transcripts will not be made available to anyone outside the Project Team. Research records will be kept in a password-protected Google Drive folder; only the Project Team will have access to these records. Your responses will be aggregated with other focus group participants' to create final, publicly available products from this research, including a key themes summary, reports, and a project website. You can choose whether or not to have your name and quotes used in final research products. Data, including direct quotes from the focus group, will be retained for possible use in research reports,

publications, or presentations in the future. You can choose whether or not to have your name listed as someone who participated in the study.

We ask that participants in the focus group also help to respect the confidentiality of other participants in the group. Please refrain from sharing personally identifiable information from the focus group conversation outside the meeting unless permission is granted.

Possible Risks and Benefits: We believe that there are little to no risks to you for participating in this study. If you agree to be quoted directly and cited with a name or attribute, it is possible that other individuals could identify your quotes, although we will make every effort to remove any identifying information when requested. You will receive direct benefits through the receipt of a stipend for your time. Other benefits, likely indirect, vary by how you choose to use the results from this study. Information will be used to inform the 2022 MPA management review. The Project Team is committed to producing products that will be useful to policymakers as well as to the fishing community to advance your collective priorities and needs.

Compensation: You will receive a stipend to compensate you for the time spent participating in this focus group.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation in the study is voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw at any time. You may skip any questions you do not want to answer. If you feel uncomfortable answering a question or need to take a break, please let a Project Team member know.

Contact Information: Thank you for taking the time to participate in this focus group. If you have any questions or concerns about this research, please feel free to contact Laurie Richmond, project co-principal investigator, at (707) 826-3202 or laurie.richmond@humboldt.edu.

If you are not satisfied with how this research is being conducted, or if you have any concerns with this study or questions about your rights as a participant, please contact the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects at irb@humboldt.edu or (707) 826-5165 to speak to an informed individual independent of the Project Team and this research.

Statement of Consent: *I certify that I understand the information in this consent form, and understand that the Project Team will answer any questions I may have concerning the research study or the procedures at any time. I also understand that my participation in any study is entirely voluntary and that I may decline to enter this study or may withdraw from it at any time without any consequences to me. I understand that the project team may terminate my participation in the study at any time. I have read the above information, and have received answers to any questions I asked. I consent to take part in the study.*

Confidentiality, Use of Information, and Records:

1. Your answers may be used in final research products. If so, you may choose to have your answers attributed in the following ways (please indicate below):

- I may be quoted directly and cited by name.
- I may be quoted directly, but not cited by name (cited as: “Eureka commercial fisherman,” “Bodega Bay CPFV fisherman,” etc.).

I do not wish to be quoted directly, nor have my name cited and only to have my responses shared in aggregate form.

Other: _____

2. Please indicate whether or not we may list your name as someone who participated in the study in summaries and reports (quotes or comments will not specifically be attributed to you unless permission granted above):

_____ Yes _____ No I give my consent for you to list my name as a participant in the study in summaries and reports.

Your Signature _____ Date _____

Your Name (please print) _____

NOTE: We will reach out to you to confirm your consent and agreement to participate either over email, over the phone, or during the focus group meeting itself. You do not need to print out and manually fill out this form.

The Project Team will keep a record of your consent and preferences for being cited, listed in summaries and reports, and being photographed for the duration of the Institutional Review Board approval.

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Guiding Prep Questions

During the focus group, participants will be invited to provide information about the current state of their fishing community as a whole. If you have a chance, it would be beneficial for you to reach out to 2-3 fellow fishermen from your port to gauge their feelings on some of the topics that we plan to discuss in the focus group. If this type of outreach is not possible, we encourage you to review these questions for yourself.

- What do fishermen from your community think about the current and future health and sustainability of marine resources on which your port relies?
- How do fishermen from your community feel about the level of access that fishermen have to marine resources to harvest as well as the markets available to sell your catch?
- What do fishermen from your community think about the strength and effectiveness of social and political relationships in your fishing community (i.e. do fishermen get along and work effectively with outside agencies and groups)?
- What do fishermen from your port think about the availability and quality of infrastructure to support the fishing fleet (e.g. launches, docks, fuel, ice, processing, hoists, dredging, boat repair)?
- What environmental changes or outcomes have fishermen from your port observed from the implementation of the MPA network?
- What economic, social, or political changes have occurred in your port as a result of MPA implementation and which MPAs have caused the most effects?
- Overall, how have fishermen from your port felt about the management, monitoring, and enforcement of the MPA network?
- Are there any other thoughts or concerns that fishermen would like to communicate to researchers, managers, and other potential readers of this research?

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Process Description and Community Expert Well-being Questions

Project: Long-Term Marine Protected Area Socioeconomic Monitoring Program for Commercial and Commercial Passenger Fishing Vessel Fisheries in the State of California

Funded By: California Ocean Protection Council and California Department of Fish and Wildlife's MPA Monitoring Program and administered through California Sea Grant

This document provides a brief overview of the process for the focus group discussions that will be held in each of the major ports or port groupings in California to discuss fishing community well-being and outcomes or impacts from marine protected areas (MPAs). The end of the document contains a list of the questions that will be asked during the focus group conversation. We will be asking for fishermen to reflect on the well-being of their community as a whole - beyond their individual experiences. Therefore, it may be helpful for fishermen to reflect on the questions themselves and with other fishermen from their port before attending the focus group. This document contains a shorter, summarized version of the focus group approach. For a more detailed discussion, please refer to [this document](#) on the project website.

1. Process Description

We are going to be holding virtual focus groups connected to each of the major 22 major ports or port groupings in California (see Appendix A for a list of the port groupings). The focus groups will consist of 4-10 commercial fishermen who operate out of that port or port grouping. We will work with port leaders to help select a group of focus group participants that includes representation from a wide range of commercial fishing interests in the port. Given that focus groups will be held in a virtual format, we will also consider access to and familiarity with remote meeting technology in our selection of participants. We will offer training on the use of Zoom, our virtual meeting software, before the focus group.

The focus groups will be structured to lead participants through a process to score and discuss about 20 questions related to their perceptions of both MPA outcomes and overall well-being of their fishing community (see the question list below). First, the facilitators will pose a question and ask participants to score their community using polling software in Zoom. Some of the questions are broad, but we will ask the participants to do their best to make an overarching assessment of how different factors are doing in their ports. We will be asking fishermen to reflect beyond their individual experience and to try to score the different questions based on how they feel about their port or fishing community as a whole.

The numerical scores for each question will act as an invitation toward a more detailed discussion. These discussions will be recorded. After the participants score each question, the facilitators will encourage participants to engage in a discussion about why they chose their scores. There will be about 10 minutes of discussion allowed for each question or question group. To start the conversation, the facilitator will show the spread of the individual scores and ask participants to discuss why they scored the questions the way that they did as well as how and why their individual scores differed. At the end of the discussion, the facilitators will ask the participants to score the questions again and the group can see if and how the scores changed after the conversation.

Participation in this study is voluntary. Either before or at the beginning of the focus group we will ask participants to confirm their consent to participate in the study. A consent form that outlines information about the study, rights as a participant, how the information will be used, and how participants' confidentiality will be protected is contained on page 6. Focus group recordings will not be made available to anyone beyond the project team and materials produced from this project will not include any identifying information about the participants unless they agree. We ask participants to review the consent form before the focus group if they can. We will discuss any questions about the study and the consent form at the beginning of the focus group and then ask for oral consent to participate (if participants have not done so already) before we start asking questions related to fishing community well-being and outcomes or impacts from MPAs.

2. Focus Group Questions

Below are the questions we will ask focus group participants in each port. During the focus group, we will ask participants to score all questions that are grouped (i.e., 1a, 1b, etc.) before discussing participants' responses and their reasoning. At the end of the discussion, participants will be asked to score questions again. Questions are grouped because their content is related.

COMMERCIAL FISHING FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

Topic	Question	Responses
Well-being Indicators		
Well-being, Environmental		
1a. Marine Resource Health - Present	<p>Overall, how would you rate the current health and sustainability of the marine resources on which fishermen from this port rely?</p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Abundance - Diversity - Size/weight - Habitat - Water quality <p>*Facilitator to acknowledge there are natural fluctuations and variation, but to try to do their best to describe overall*</p>	<p>(1) Very Low (2) Low (3) Neutral/Medium (4) High (5) Very High</p>
1b. Marine Resource Health - Future Concerns	<p>Overall, how worried are fishermen from your port about the future long-term health and sustainability of the marine resource populations on which you rely?</p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Effectiveness of management 	<p>(1) Extremely Worried (2) Moderately Worried (3) Somewhat Worried (4) Slightly Worried (5) Not at all Worried</p>

	- Future ocean changes	
Well-being, Economic		
2a. Access to Harvestable Resources	<p>Overall, how would you rate your port in terms of the level of access that fishermen have to marine resources to support the local fishing fleet?</p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Amount (e.g. lbs) - Diversity of fisheries - Restrictions that inhibit access - Equity 	<p>(1) Very Insufficient (2) Insufficient (3) Neutral (4) Sufficient (5) Very Sufficient</p>
2b. Income from Fishing	<p>Overall, how would you rate the income that fishermen from your port earn from fishing in terms of supporting livelihoods?</p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need to take on other jobs - Costs compared to revenue - Income earned compared to similar types of jobs 	<p>(1) Very Insufficient (2) Insufficient (3) Neutral (4) Sufficient (5) Very Sufficient</p>
3a. Markets	<p>Overall, how would you rate the quality of the markets to which fishermen from your port are able to sell their catch?</p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Price - Ease of use - Stability/consistency/reliability - Diversity/choice 	<p>(1) Very Poor (2) Poor (3) Neutral/Acceptable (4) Good (5) Very Good</p>
3b. Infrastructure	<p>Overall, how would you rate the state of infrastructure and services that support commercial fishing in your port?</p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Availability of key infrastructure - Reliability and maintenance - Financial support for infrastructure <p>*Facilitator to note that examples of key infrastructure might include: docks, fuel, ice,</p>	<p>(1) Very Poor (2) Poor (3) Neutral/Acceptable (4) Good (5) Very Good</p>

	dredging, loading and unloading equipment, processors, haul out facilities, gear storage, etc.*	
3c. COVID-19 Impacts	How disruptive do you think COVID-19 has been to your port's fishing operations?	(1) Very Low (2) Low (3) Neutral/Medium (4) High (5) Very High
Well-being, Social		
4a. Labor/New Participants	<p>Overall, how would you rate your port in terms of being able to recruit new entrants to the industry and being able to retain current participants?</p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New entrants vs. attrition - Quality of labor pool - Barriers to entry - Longevity <p>*Facilitator to note that respondents can consider captains and crew in their answers*</p>	(1) Very Poor (2) Poor (3) Neutral/Acceptable (4) Good (5) Very Good
4b. Job Satisfaction	<p>Overall, how satisfied do you think fishermen from the port are with their jobs in the fishing industry?</p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sense of fulfillment/purpose - Sense of job security - Level of stress - Extent to which positives outweigh negatives 	(1) Very Dissatisfied (2) Dissatisfied (3) Neutral (4) Satisfied (5) Very Satisfied
5a. Social Relationships - Internal	<p>Overall, how would you rate the strength of social relationships (or social capital) within your port?</p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leadership - Trust - Engagement - Sense of shared identity - Ability to work and gather together 	(1) Very Weak (2) Weak (3) Neutral (4) Strong (5) Very Strong

5b. Social Relationships - External	<p>Overall, how would you rate the strength of the port's relationship with external groups who could help support community needs?</p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engagement in policy processes - Relationships with government, NGOs, others - Community support <p>*Facilitator to note that government includes local, state, federal government*</p>	<p>(1) Very Weak (2) Weak (3) Neutral (4) Strong (5) Very Strong</p>
Well-being, Overall/Additional Comments		
6. Overall/Open-ended	<p>Is there anything not captured above that you would like managers and other readers to know about your fishing community/industry?</p> <p>What do you think federal and state managers could do to better support California's fishing communities?</p> <p>What do you think members of your fishing industry could do to support the well-being or sustainability of your fishing community?</p>	<p>Open-ended</p>
MPA-Specific Indicators (MPAs)		
MPAs, Outcomes/Effects		
7. MPA Ecological Outcomes	<p>Overall, how would you rate the effect that the California MPA network has had on marine resource health in your area?</p> <p>Consider MPAs Effects On:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Abundance - Diversity - Size - Habitat - Market quality - Other <p>*Remind the group to focus on trying to tease out effects from MPAs against other non-MPA related</p>	<p>(1) Strongly Negative (2) Negative (3) No Effect/Neutral (4) Positive (5) Strongly Positive</p>

	ocean changes that have been occurring since MPAs implemented and overall marine environment quality was already discussed in previous questions*	
8a. MPA Livelihood Outcomes	<p>Overall, how would you rate the effect that the MPA network has had on the ability for fishermen from your port to earn a living/gain income from fishing?</p> <p>Consider MPAs Effects On:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Landings - Cost - Income - Number of participants 	<p>(1) Strongly Negative (2) Negative (3) No Effect/Neutral (4) Positive (5) Strongly Positive</p>
8b. MPA Effects - Overall	<p>What other types of effects or impacts have fishermen from your port experienced from MPA implementation?</p> <p>*Note question to be incorporated as part of discussion related to Question 8a*</p> <p>Possible Effects to Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Change in ability to fish in or go to traditional grounds/areas - Change in travel distance to fishing grounds - Change in safety or risk associated with fishing - Change in crowding/competition in certain areas - Change in ability to serve/fulfill their markets - Change in fisheries of participation or dominance in port - Change in participation in local industry (fishermen leaving industry or moving ports) - Effects on political engagement, organization, and activity - Effects on relationships within and external to fishing community - Other 	Open-ended
9. MPA Effects - MPA Specific	<p>Which MPAs have had the most impact (positive or negative) on fishermen from your port and why?</p> <p>*Facilitator will show an interactive map of the</p>	Show a map of the different MPAs and allow them to select

	MPAs to aid this discussion*	
MPAs, Management		
10a. MPA Management	<p>Overall, how satisfied do you think fishermen from your port are with the management of the MPA network?</p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fairness - Communication of information/decisions - Opportunities for fishermen involvement - Effectiveness in achieving goals 	<p>(1) Very Dissatisfied (2) Dissatisfied (3) Neutral/Neither (4) Satisfied (5) Very Satisfied</p>
10b. MPA Monitoring	<p>Overall, how satisfied do you think fishermen from your port are with the monitoring of the MPA network?</p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Design of the studies - Communication of results - Collaboration with fishermen - Inclusion of fishermen’s perspectives 	<p>(1) Very Dissatisfied (2) Dissatisfied (3) Neutral/Neither (4) Satisfied (5) Very Satisfied</p>
10c. MPA Enforcement	<p>Overall, how satisfied do you think fishermen from your port are with the enforcement of MPAs?</p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clarity of the rules and regulations - Fairness in CDFW’s interpretation of the rules/regulations - Effectiveness 	<p>(1) Very Dissatisfied (2) Dissatisfied (3) Neutral/Neither (4) Satisfied (5) Very Satisfied</p>
MPAs, Overall/Additional Comments		
11. MPA Overall	Any additional comments or concerns about the MPAs and MPA management you would like to communicate?	Open-ended

Feedback on Virtual Process		
12a. Satisfaction with the Virtual Process	Overall, how satisfied were you with your experience participating in this virtual focus group?	(1) Very Dissatisfied (2) Dissatisfied (3) Neutral/Neither (4) Satisfied (5) Very Satisfied
12b. Willingness to Participate in Virtual Process in Future	Would you be open to participating in a virtual focus group or meeting like this in the future?	(1) No (2) Maybe (3) Yes
12c. Process Open-ended	Can you share any additional comments about your experience in this virtual focus group? What do you think are some of the pros and cons of having a conversation like this online rather than in-person? *Note question to be incorporated as part of discussion related to Question 12a and 12b*	Open-ended

APPENDIX A. List of the major ports or port groupings in California where we intend to hold commercial fishing focus group conversations. See [this document](#) on our project website for more detailed information about which ports are encompassed in which groups.

1. Crescent City
2. Klamath
3. Trinidad
4. Eureka
5. Shelter Cove
6. Fort Bragg Area Ports
7. Point Arena
8. Bodega Bay Area Ports
9. San Francisco Area Ports
10. Princeton - Half Moon Bay
11. Santa Cruz
12. Moss Landing
13. Monterey Bay
14. Morro Bay
15. Avila-Port San Luis
16. Santa Barbara
17. Ventura Area Ports
18. Los Angeles - Long Beach Area Ports
19. Avalon
20. Orange County Area Ports
21. Oceanside
22. San Diego Area Ports