

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

### Perspectives on the Health and Well-being of California's Commercial Passenger Fishing Vessel Fishing Communities in Relation to the MPA Network

#### *Members of San Francisco Area's Commercial Passenger Fishing Vessel Community*

The Marine Protected Area (MPA) Human Uses Project Team<sup>1</sup> anticipates hosting over 25 virtual focus group conversations with commercial fishermen and Commercial Passenger Fishing Vessel (CPFV) owner/operators throughout California from July 2020 through Spring 2021.<sup>2</sup> The information shared during these discussions is a core component of a study to gather and communicate information about the health and well-being of commercial and CPFV fishing communities in California, including impacts from MPAs. A key goal of this study is to convey commercial fishermen's and CPFV owner/operators' perspectives about the unique challenges and opportunities that fishing communities are facing to managers and decision-makers through a series of summaries and other products. The results of this study will be made available to inform discussions about MPA and fisheries management, including California's 10-year MPA network performance review.

For each focus group, a small number of CPFV owner/operators were brought together to:

- provide their perspectives on their fishing community's health and well-being, including environmental conditions, income, allocation of resources, and social and political relationships, including impacts from MPAs; and
- share feedback about their focus group experience to help improve the process for future focus groups.

The focus groups included quantitative questions where commercial fishermen and CPFV owner/operators were asked to score their port on various topics, and an open-ended qualitative discussion followed each question. This document summarizes both quantitative and qualitative findings from the focus group. More details about the methods used for each focus group discussion, including questions asked to participants and the approach to recruiting focus group participants, is available on the Project Team's website, <https://mpahumanuses.com/>. The website also hosts focus group conversation summaries and an interactive data explorer, which will be components of the final products developed upon completion of this project in 2021. For questions about this project, including focus group engagement and the content of this document, please contact us at [hello@mpahumanuses.com](mailto:hello@mpahumanuses.com).

**Regional CPFV Port Group: San Francisco Area Ports**

**Date: Thursday, September 10, 2020**

**Participants: Tom Mattusch, William "Captain Smitty" Smith, Jon Yokomizo**

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<sup>1</sup> Consisting of Humboldt State University researchers, Ecotrust, and Strategic Earth Consulting

<sup>2</sup> Previous versions of the summaries from other ports suggest there would be 30 focus groups through February 2021. The project has since evolved based on the needs of the fishing community and is reflected in all summaries moving forward.

## Overview

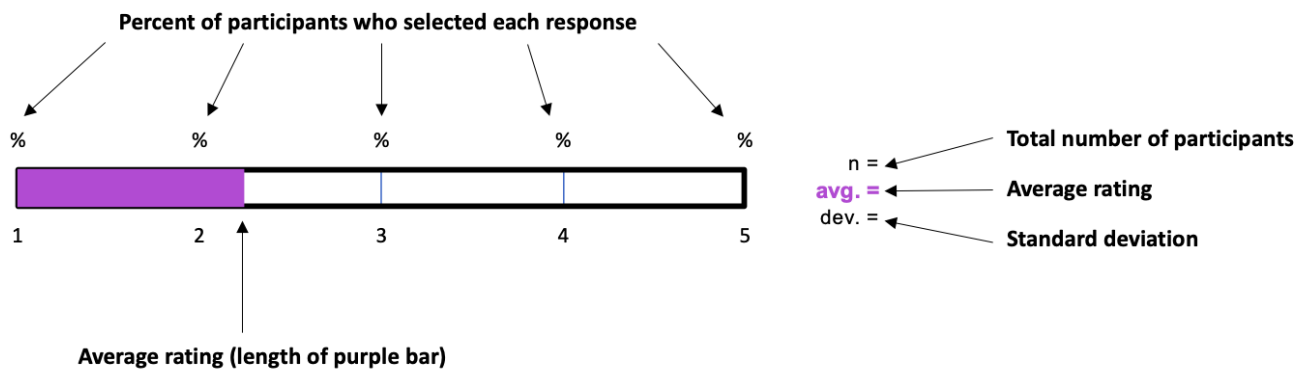
On September 10, 2020, three CPFV owner/operators out of the San Francisco area participated in the sixth focus group conversation overall and first CPFV focus group conversation\*. A detailed summary of the conversation is captured below, including:

- the numerical final scores (gathered via Zoom polls) for questions asked within each theme;
- a summary of participants' perceptions, insights, and perspectives related to each question; and
- direct quotes from participants that help to illustrate sentiments in their own words.

\*This focus group acted as a pilot for the Project Team's conversations with CPFV owner/operators. Based on input shared by San Francisco area participants and the Project Team's learning, our methodology changed following this first CPFV-focused discussion. To adjust for this update, the Project Team conducted one-on-one discussions with each participant to complete their well-being scores, which were initially asked in an open-ended format.

## Guidance for Interpreting Figures

There are 14 figures displaying participant responses for questions that had a numerical/quantitative component. In those figures, the percentages located directly above the bar (between 1 (low) and 5 (high)) represent the percent of participants in the focus group who selected that response. The total number of focus group participants is labeled 'n' to the right of each figure. The length of the purple bar indicates the average rating for each question, also labeled 'avg.' to the right, and 'dev.' refers to standard deviation, or the extent to which scores deviated from one another. See below for an example figure. There are also two figures on pages 14 and 22 that display the average responses for each question in the well-being and MPA sections, respectively, from highest to lowest.



In addition to providing feedback to help refine our process and approach for future focus groups, participants requested several resources be shared with them, including:

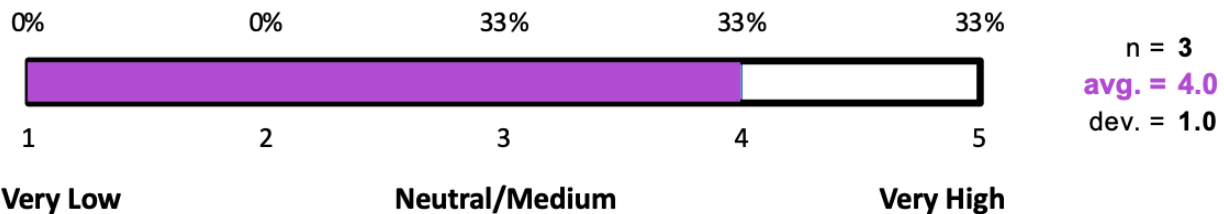
- [California Fisheries Data Explorer](#): This interactive site allows users to visualize commercial landings data (i.e., number of fishermen, pounds of fish landed, and revenue from fish landed) and CPFV logbook data (i.e., number of anglers, vessels, trips, and fish caught from specific fisheries and ports).
- [MPA Baseline Monitoring Program: North Central Coast](#)
  - [A Summary of the Marine Protected Area Monitoring Program 2010-2015, North Central Coast](#)

Our Project Team would like to express our appreciation to the three San Francisco area CPFV owner/operators—Tom Mattusch, William “Captain Smitty” Smith, and Jon Yokomizo—for their time and contributions to the focus group conversation.

## Perceptions of Fishing Community Well-being

### Well-Being, Environmental

**1. Marine Resources - Present State** Overall, how would you rate the current health and sustainability of the marine resources on which CPFV owner/operators from this region rely?



**Discussion Summary** Participants rated marine resource health between neutral and very high. They said rockfish populations have improved in the San Francisco area over the past several decades, and their clientele have been catching sufficient quantities of - although smaller in size - rockfish. They said this year’s salmon fishing has been slow, causing some salmon charter operations to supplement their salmon catch with rockfish. Participants said the ocean currents during the summer of 2020 had a big impact on the fish species they caught; specifically, sustained currents from the south, as opposed to normal currents from the northwest, resulted in fish species typically found south of the San Francisco area being caught locally. Participants also discussed the status of local kelp beds and their importance to the fishing industry.

- One participant said rockfish stocks are recovering from overfishing during the 1970s and 1980s due to managers having limited access for commercial fishing in shallow areas. One participant believed ‘super draggers’ had decimated local stocks. Another participant recalled how rockfish populations were also intensely targeted by small-scale commercial fishermen who did not properly preserve their catch with ice, which spoiled; they would replace the spoiled catch with new catch to tempt buyers, only to repeat this cycle, which negatively affected the resource.
- Participants discussed many challenges facing the local salmon fishery, from drought to management of hatchery salmon to water law.
  - One participant said the slow salmon season during 2020 resulted in local salmon charter boats targeting rockfish instead so their clients could catch some fish during the fishing trip, even if it was not salmon.
  - One participant attributed poor salmon fishing success to hatchery managers’ timing for smolt releases, which they believe is not aligned with high river turbidity levels, resulting in unnecessarily high losses of smolt to predation.
- Several participants said the presence of currents from the south, rather than normal currents from the northwest, affected the number and diversity of fish caught locally during summer 2020. One participant believed these abnormal currents were part of the reason for the slow salmon season, but climate change, drought, and water law also play important roles.

- Participants shared there are healthy kelp beds from Duxbury to Drakes Bay, but there is a large reduction in the amount of kelp near Half Moon Bay. One participant said both *Macrocystis* and *Nereocystis* populations look healthy at Año Nuevo. Several participants said healthy kelp forests benefit their fishing operations (e.g., as nurseries for fish resources), and one participant stated they were concerned about kelp loss negatively affecting their business. One participant expressed concerns that land-sourced pollution, including agricultural and street runoff, is a major contributor to kelp bed loss and abalone population decline.

### Participant Quotes

“During the 80s, the [federal] government said the ocean is an infinite wilderness. They gave out [many millions of dollars] to build super draggers. We watched these draggers come across the deep reef and they have roller gear that could roll over a three-story house. We watched them decimate the fishery... there would be just acres of fish that were dead on the surface. And this was what we were fighting in the 90s to stop... we were effective in reducing that, but also we had to pay the price of, if they're going to get reduced, then we're going to get reduced too.”

“The salmon fishing is so slow, that the majority of the salmon boats fishing out of San Francisco Bay, they're running out, getting limits [of] rockfish on the coast and then they fish salmon, just so that the people go home with fish. They're smaller fish, though... the guys have been doing really well for the rockfish.”

“For salmon, the problem is manmade. The salmon don't leave the creek, until you got turbidity. It's just like a delta smelt; they're not going to move until they have turbidity to migrate so that they're not going to get eaten. And that's one of the biggest problems with what's happening with the salmon, is they're [hatchery managers] releasing them with no turbidity. So you get all the predation. It's not [just] the birds, it's not [just] the stripers, it's everything... catfish'll eat 'em.”

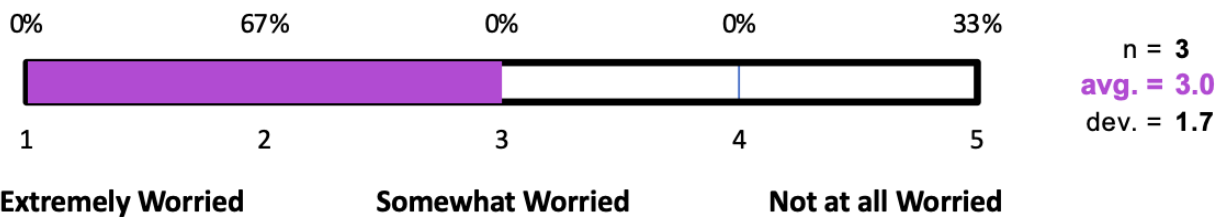
“We have not had a northwest current all summer. All of our currents have been pumping out of the south, pumping up north... the currents have had a tremendous effect on the salmon fishery. Without the northwest currents... the northwest currents bring in the upwellings that cool the water, that bring those nutrient rich waters from the bottom to the surface to feed the plankton, the anchovies, the filter feeders, the salmon, the rockfish, everything that feeds off of those northwest currents... we have not seen them. It's been southerly all year long... we've got probably a dozen ocean white fish this year on the [Farallon] Island. You're just seeing different species... we've got some wrasse that you probably would catch at La Jolla kelp beds.”

“Last year, 762 fish [salmon] from the Coastside Fishing Club's Salmon Smolt Acclimation project were caught off Westport, Washington. That would have sustained Pillar Point Harbor for a month, with all the charter boats... currents are part of the effect, but we got to look at the river, whether you want to talk about climate change, drought, water regulations... there's a lot of things that are all interconnected.”

“From Duxbury all the way up to Drakes Bay, there's areas that we've always fished that we can't even fish now there's so much kelp. We've got kelp beds in 40 feet of water that has been just barren rock before, and now I can't even get in there.”

“For us in Half Moon Bay, we have the reef just right outside of the harbor, and there's been a tremendous reduction in the amount of kelp that we've had there. There's, I'd say, maybe 20 percent of what has been [there] historically. We've had the kelp beds down in Pescadero, Bean Hollow, Año Nuevo, and there has been a big reduction of those.”

**2. Marine Resources - Future Concerns** Overall, how worried are CPFV owner/operators from your region about the future long-term health and sustainability of the marine resource populations on which you rely?



**Discussion Summary** Participants expressed concerns about future ocean and climate change in addition to poor management, both in the ocean and rivers. One participant said regardless of management, Nature will take her course and that currents determine the water temperatures that affect fishing.

- One participant shared their concerns that water law and management, combined with California’s drought, might negatively affect the salmon populations their business relies on.

**Participant Quotes**

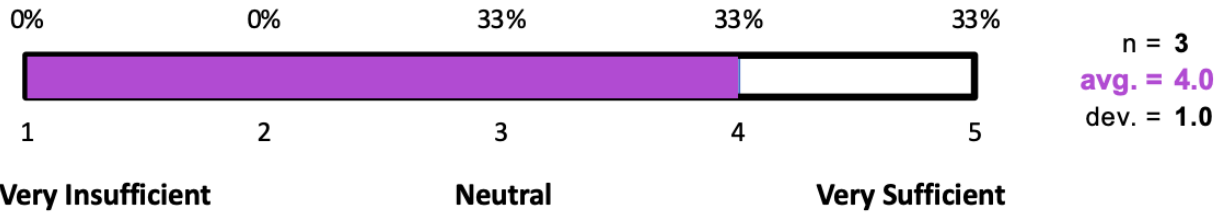
“[It’s a] combo of worry about management and future ocean change. I’m always worried that CDFW [California Department of Fish and Wildlife], NMFS [National Marine Fisheries Service], NOAA [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration], PFMC [Pacific Fisheries Management Council] are going to screw up management measures.”

“It's almost all current-driven. You could see [it] when you have the northwest [current]. That one storm will drop the temperature five degrees and as long as you don't have a south current after that, it'll stay cool until you have this southerly push. And you can't worry about it because it's Mother Nature... Mother Nature is going to do what she's going to do. Every year is going to be different.”

“The macro view [is] California's in a drought. We have water wars going on that have been continuing for 150 years that basically, if we don't flush some of the rivers with enough cold water, the water levels are going to drop. The salmon that do go up are going to lay the [eggs]. The [eggs] are going to get exposed to the air. The flies are going to lay eggs and that will ruin that. So this year's salmon swimming up the river is tremendously at risk because of water wars that are way above the three people that are on this chat with you. Three charter boat guys can't do anything about how water gets allocated down the rivers.”

## Well-Being, Economic

**3. Income from Fishing** Overall, how would you rate the income that CPFV owner/operators (including crew) from your port earn from fishing to support livelihoods?



**Discussion Summary** Participants expressed a range of views with regard to income to support fishing operations in their respective ports. One participant said income levels depend not only on fishing conditions, but also on the socioeconomic status of society as a whole.

- One participant operating out of the East Bay said they earn a steady income, and even though many of their regular customers stopped booking trips due to COVID-19, there were enough new customers to fill the boat (for further discussion related to COVID-19 impacts, please see the **Discussion Summary** on page 8). They believed other operations, particularly salmon charter operations, were struggling to earn enough income to support their livelihoods due to low salmon abundance.
  - One participant highlighted the importance of healthy salmon populations in sustaining livelihoods within the CPFV industry and said drought impacts on salmon runs have hurt their business (for a more detailed discussion related to salmon health, please see the **Discussion Summary** on page 3).
- One participant related income earned from CPFV operations in Half Moon Bay and East Bay to their proximity to population centers. They said Half Moon Bay struggles to bring in customers from the Bay Area who must drive longer distances to reach the port. One participant recounted losing income due to former clients buying their own boats to fish recreationally and/or illegally, charging for and taking people on fishing trips.

### Participant Quotes

“[Income] depends on weather, socioeconomic status of society and customers... going through recessions impacts the business we can maintain, more than just fishing itself.”

“Everyone [CPFV owner/operators in Emeryville] makes a living. [They] either make money, or a lot of money. Some commercial crab or [commercial fish for] halibut, but for the most part, everyone is either working on the boat or on vacation... I had a reduction of my regular customers by like 70 percent [this year due to COVID-19]. But I brought in a lot of new customers this year, because there are a lot of years where people couldn't get on the boat because I was full. So now I'm bringing in a lot of new people. So it's just one of those things for myself. The other boats, the salmon boats, they're struggling... I fish rock cod through the whole season.”

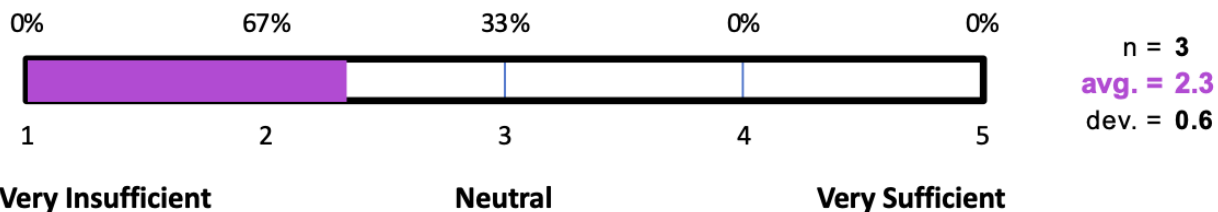
“[It's a] nice balance: [there is] income to support livelihoods. What hurts [is] all this drought - [it's a] problem with no water for salmon, [they're] down in numbers. [It's the] biggest fishery

we've got – the crab/rock crab combo is key, but salmon keeps us alive. When salmon's a problem, then everything else is a problem.”

“[In Half Moon Bay,] we're trying to survive. One of the things that also affects us [is, in Emeryville, there is] a larger market to draw from. We don't have the whole East Bay and concentrations of population that [the Emeryville] market has, and that's one of the reasons why Half Moon Bay always struggles, because people have to drive.”

“We have lost a tremendous amount of our clientele to the private industry... a lot of our customers have gone out and bought their own private boats and are now bootlegging and taking people out for monetary reasons. So we've seen a large reduction in our business because of the small vessels operating illegally and the ones that are operating legally, still, these are clientele that we have lost through their buying their own boats. And a big problem again with that is that they just follow us around, they're like flies.”

**4. Allocation of Resources** Overall, how would you rate the allocation of fish resources for CPFV fisheries in terms of supporting the CPFV industry?



**Discussion Summary** Participants rated the management and allocation of resources from very insufficient to neutral, and expressed frustration about the management of several fisheries they rely on, specifically lingcod, salmon, and chilipepper rockfish.

- One participant was frustrated with the poor management and allocation of lingcod. Within their role on a policy advisory body, they opposed CDFW’s increase of sportfishing lingcod limits from two to three fish and believed this led to a crash in lingcod stocks.
- One participant said local area closures (e.g., Rockfish Conservation Areas (RCAs) and MPAs) have helped to rebuild rockfish stocks, positively affecting their business. However, they expressed frustration about a recent management decision increasing the commercial open access fishery’s access to 40 fathoms, which they are concerned will negatively affect recently rebuilt rockfish stocks.
- One participant expressed frustration that salmon populations they rely on have been negatively affected by poor management of rivers by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), in addition to poor management and misuse of water and dams. They said the salmon fishery has been decimated by dams.
- One participant believed new habitat (e.g., artificial reefs) should be created to help build stocks for future allocation and access (for further discussion related to artificial reefs, please see the **Discussion Summary** on page 21).

**Participant Quotes**

“I fought to keep the lingcod limit at two, they upped it to three... but then it crashed. [They said] if you don’t want those fish, we are going to give them to commercial allocations.”

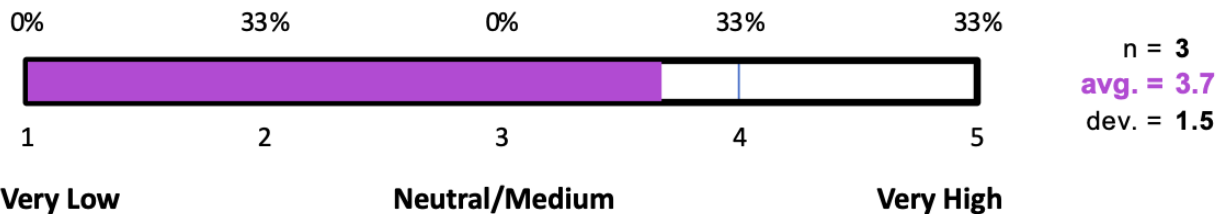


“[Management has a] tremendous impact on our ability to survive as a business. Rockfish has been managed under restrictions of MPAs and RCAs, which has tremendously impacted us. This has allowed stocks to rebuild, [and we are] seeing sustainability from [this]... the concern now is open access fisheries being allowed to fish out to 40 fathoms, which will have a big impact on these fisheries that have been protected and are rebuilding. [My] concern is about [opening] commercial fishing, which has historically been very impactful.”

“[For] salmon, mismanagement in rivers and streams through BLM, misuse and mismanagement of water diversion, mismanagement of dams. The original allocations... the first mitigation was to compensate for loss of stream habitat, hatcheries - [this has been] mismanaged... fisheries [have been] decimated by dams, this has been completely disregarded regarding original intent.”

“Chilipepper rockfish is federally designated as underutilized and [we] can’t access [those fish] because of depth limitations... we need new habitat [like artificial reefs] that can be created to help with the future in terms of access and allocation.”

**5. COVID-19 Impacts** How disruptive do you think COVID-19 has been to your region’s CPFV fishing operations?



**Discussion Summary** Participants said their businesses have been affected by COVID-19 to varying degrees. Some participants lost nearly three months of their fishing season due to COVID-19, but recent approval from local County Boards of Supervisors have allowed businesses to re-open with extensive sanitation efforts and reduced passenger loads.

- One participant said their regular customers stopped booking trips but new customers filled in, allowing them to continue operating, albeit with reduced loads in accordance with social distancing measures. Another participant said they lost significant business as a result of regular customers, who are typically older, choosing not to be in public spaces like on charter boats due to increased health risks associated with COVID-19.
- One participant described how they have made significant investments in sanitation supplies, extensive efforts to keep the boat sanitized, and greatly reduced passenger loads in order to keep customers properly spaced per health guidelines, all of which have allowed business to pick up recently.
- One participant recounted how guidelines during the early months of the pandemic led to the closure of the port’s parking lot to public access. Their business was negatively affected as a result because people were not allowed to camp out for the weekend, nor go fishing because they had no place to park.

**Participant Quotes**



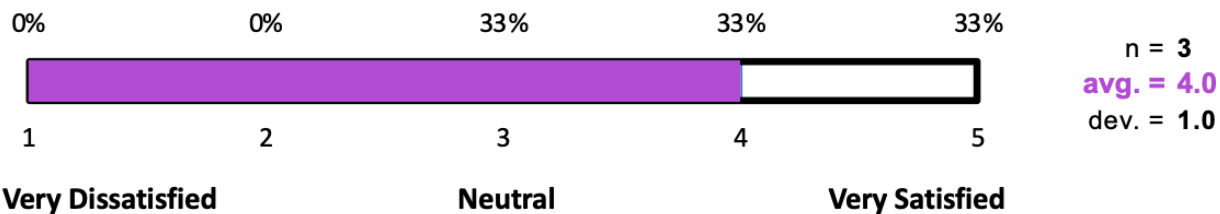
“You know, COVID slowed us down a whole lot for several months, even now, we're rebuilding with half loads, slightly increased prices. All of a sudden, this economy may start to be improving... there's a number of us working together just trying to get a load out. There's days that my captain - I have a hired captain and crew - I'll put them out with three people. Well, if you do the math on that, you know, that's not helping the business very much. But it helps them to gather a little bit of rent money, so we're running reduced loads.”

“My regular customers are really feeling afraid to ultimately go onboard vessels and that's a huge loss under COVID. That's been a big problem for all of the CPFVs... I'll speak for me, a lot of my regular clients are older, and the COVID has had more of an impact on the older people. And they are tending to be much more cautious. And when I've contacted a lot of them, they said they're afraid of contact with people and they won't come out because of that.”

“I probably have \$600 invested in hand sanitizer bought at the peak of the: 'Oh my God, we need the disinfecting solutions, the wipes'... and you pay an absolute premium. Now they're a little bit easier to get, but when we needed them, we needed them. Many of the harbors came up with, 'Here's what we're willing to do to put people on our boat' [...] San Francisco [and] Berkeley got something approved by their County Supervisors, I [...] got Half Moon Bay approved by our supervisors. So there's been a lot of money invested in this... we disinfect the entire vessel in between the cells... everything is done in between drifts... and we're outside... but that's just part of the extent that we're going to try and keep things safe.”

## Well-Being, Social/Political

**6. Job Satisfaction** Overall, how satisfied do you think CPFV owner/operators from the region are with their jobs?



**Discussion Summary** Participants shared they were generally satisfied with their jobs due to working outside; doing an activity they enjoy; working with customers; and having autonomy over their work loads, activities, and schedules.

- One participant explained that money is a stressor that affects their job satisfaction, but working with happy customers ultimately brings them satisfaction.

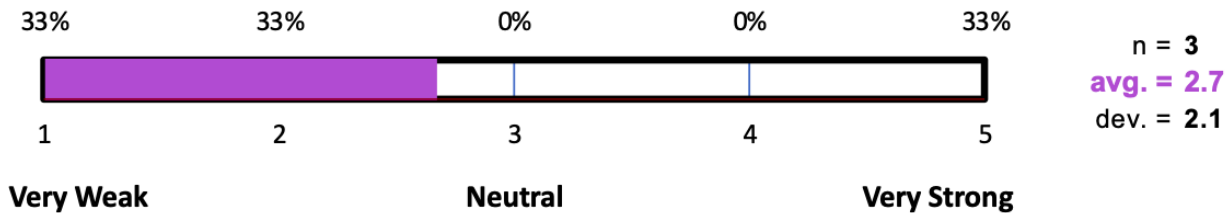
### Participant Quotes

“[We] all feel blessed we are able to fish, [and to] have the business we have.”

“Everyone who wants to go out is going out, which is a good thing. The media reports massive amounts of people can’t work, at least we can work and get out in the fresh air. [In this industry, you] have the opportunity to do things, be as successful as you want.”

“The stress of money is always an overriding factor that would limit satisfaction. But my customers and their satisfaction is paramount to me, which I would rate is good. Overall, I feel satisfied and gratified.”

**7. Social Relationships - Internal** Overall, how would you rate the strength of social relationships (or social capital) among CPFV owner/operators in your region?



**Discussion Summary** Participants shared a range of views, from very weak to very strong, regarding the strength of social relationships among CPFV owner/operators in their respective ports within the greater San Francisco Bay Area. Some participants identified strong relationships and collaboration within their port, while others said CPFV owner/operators in their port do not work well together.

- One participant highlighted the differing levels of cohesion and organization across fishing associations in the San Francisco Bay region.
- One participant said CPFV owner/operators in their port work together to share information about fishing conditions, while another participant indicated there is less collaboration among CPFV owner/operators in their port.
- One participant shared how there is a high level of competition among CPFV owner/operators for certain fishing spots, but overall relationships are strong in their port and owner/operators engage in social activities together. One participant described a collaborative relationship among CPFV operation employees in their port, especially when working to improve their facilities.

**Participant Quotes**

“SAC [Sportfishing Association of California] has more cohesiveness [here] than up north. We have the GGFA [Golden Gate Fishermen’s Association], [but it is] very disorganized. There are factions that point fingers, lots of pockets of bitching and moaning.”

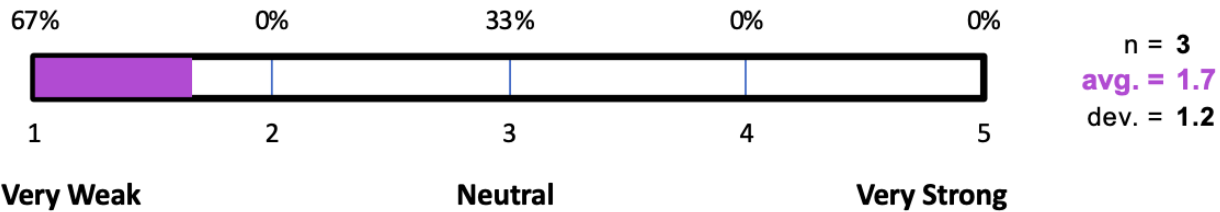
“The CPFV operators, we do work together, we do talk and share information as to what areas are producing, what areas are not.”

“There's not much working together; we talk, we're all struggling for business now. We're friends, we don't do a lot to promote things.”

“It’s pretty cutthroat [here]. If I gave anyone lat/long on a rock, other guys will pound the stones until there’s nothing left. Salmon guys, some work together, but I'm doing my own thing seven months out of the year... but at the end of the day, we pass the beers around and everything's fine. It's like for Emeryville, we're a family. We don't get into a fight... we have a beer at the end of the day together, but as far as fishing goes, you're on your own. Yeah, but for the [policy engagement] we got to stick together.”

“If you want something done [in our port], you do it yourself... a lot of our customers [work for] lumber companies... we just call them and say this is what we need, and they'll drop off a truck load of lumber to the parking lot and we'll just pull extension cords and all that and just build it ourselves - deckhands, captains, everybody just gets involved if we want something done.”

**8. Social Relationships - External Overall, how would you rate the strength of relationships between CPFV owner/operators in your region and external groups who could help support industry needs?**



**Discussion Summary** Participants shared a range of views regarding the strength of San Francisco Bay Area CPFV owner/operators’ relationships with external groups, from very weak to neutral.

- Two participants described situations that created a lack of trust in state managers; specifically, they referred to frustrations about lingcod limits and canary rockfish restrictions that did not seem like informed decision making.
- One participant said they have good working relationships with commercial fishermen on their dock, which is beneficial when negotiating with groups external to the fishing industry (e.g., environmental groups, management agencies). Another participant identified tension, competition, and spite between CPFV owner/operators and commercial fishermen, especially as it relates to allocation of resources.
- Participants discussed how social media affects their relationships with groups outside the CPFV industry. One participant believed social media creates division between the CPFV and commercial industry, while another participant thought social media is an important advertising method for both CPFV owner/operators and commercial fishermen.
- One participant said the CPFV fleet has a good working relationship with harbor management in Half Moon Bay, while another was frustrated by the harbor’s lack of support for the Coastside Fishing Club’s Salmon Smolt Acclimation project.
- One participant was frustrated about challenges getting CPFV representatives on the California Dungeness Crab Fishing Gear Working Group, despite CPFV owner/operators making public comments at Fish and Game Commission (FGC) meetings expressing frustration about not being included in these conversations.

**Participant Quotes**

“With the lingcod, I fought to keep it at two fish. Well, they raised it to three. By September of the first year of the two-year season, they [CDFW managers] wanted to shut the season off because we took too many lingcod. So then we renegotiated, and they kept saying, ‘Well, we're still going to give you three.’ Then [they] dropped down to one. Then they gave us two and they wanted to raise it to three... then they increased the open access lingcod to the commercial guys, instead of keeping it at two [fish] and four hundred pounds. So it's constantly fighting a battle on that front. [Now] you got perch fishermen in 14-foot boats running out and catching their 800 pounds of lingcod every month.”

“We have commercial guys on our dock and sport, and... we either stick together or we die together. So we have to work together to fight the common enemy, if you will call it that. And that's where we get along and... we take care of it. [The common enemy,] it's complex, but [it's] environmental groups sometimes... a lot of times the government, as far as the fisheries go. Say, with the canary rockfish, I asked... Fish and Game, 'What are we going to do about the canary rockfish?' and their quote to me was, 'You'll never see a canary rockfish in your gunny sack in your lifetime.' By September they said, 'Oh, the canary rockfish stock has been fully rebuilt.' So there's no trust, there's no trust... after a while, you just get burnt out going to these meetings.”

“I think it's a more adversarial [relationship between] CPFV versus commercial [compared to CPFV versus recreational], because the commercial is far more... able to state their position, they've got more seats on... PFMC and they can go around with different committees. [I've made] presentations to PFMC before [to] get more allocation for different fisheries, and literally had people say, 'Oh, there goes the recreational trying to ruin another commercial fishery.' We take a fraction of what they take and CPFV and recreational are managed under the same rules... I see it not so much as adversarial between [CPFV and] recreational, but more about commercial allocation... issues.”

“You'll see it with social media between the commercial, the sport, and the charter boat [when] the CPFVs are fishing or the sport guys are fishing, and they're showing all their pictures on Facebook, the commercial guys get burned. And when the commercial guys are getting 175 to 200 fish a day, it goes both ways. But social media is destroying the industry as a whole [...] we should be coming together.”

“There's another person, [name redacted], who has been the groundfish representative for the GGFA at the PFMC meetings. And [he] has been on the groundfish management team for about 20 years. And he has done his best to help protect our industry, but [he] is waning out and getting burnt out... Back in the 90s, I attended a lot of meetings myself [...] It's difficult to break into the good old boy groups [at these meetings and during policy processes]. And once you're there, they're very protective of their positions.”

## Well-Being, Overall/Additional Comments

**9. Overall/Open-ended** *Is there anything not captured above that you would like managers and other readers to know about your fishing community/industry?*

- *What do you think federal and state managers could do to better support California's CPFV fisheries?*
- *What do you think members of your fishing industry could do to support the well-being or sustainability of your fishing community?*

**Discussion Summary** Participants highlighted ongoing challenges related to infrastructure in San Francisco Bay Area ports and frustration about access to chilipepper rockfish and black cod resources. One participant requested attention be directed toward regulations allowing the open access fishery to 40 fathoms and the potential impacts loosening restrictions on the open access

fishery may have on groundfish stocks overall. One participant reiterated the need for greater consideration of CPFV owner/operator input in management decisions.

- Several participants said the pier at Pillar Point Harbor in Half Moon Bay, party boat dock, and six-lane launch ramp need to be rebuilt, yet construction is hindered by funding and permitting issues. One participant said infrastructure needs in Emeryville are not addressed by the company that operates the Emeryville marina, leaving CPFV owner/operators and commercial fishermen there to deal with infrastructure themselves.
- Participants were frustrated with the poor access to chilipepper rockfish habitat and poor allocation of black cod resources; they cited politics within PFMC processes as one reason CPFV owner/operators' access to these resources is limited.
- One participant was frustrated that CPFV owner/operators input isn't given enough weight in management decisions.

### Participant Quotes

"We've got a harbor dredging program that has been approved by the state. We have so many small permitting issues. We've got the entire pier at Pillar Point Harbor that needs to be rebuilt. We're trying to rebuild H Dock where all the party boats are. Our six-lane launch ramp has been deemed at the end of its life. Where do we come up with the funds? We used to be able to go to the Department of Boating and Waterways. Since Parks took them over, the Department of Boating and Waterways hasn't been as solvent as they used to be. So there's a tremendous infrastructure and funding need at Pillar Point Harbor."

"Oh, for the Bay Area, San Francisco's its own animal. They really don't have anything [in terms of infrastructure to support CPFV operations]. For Emeryville, Berkeley, we have the charter boat dock or commercial dock. And if we have a problem with it, we fix it ourselves. The harbor is leased by a company through the city. The city owns the property and a company that owns almost every single marina in the midwest... they operate Emeryville Marina. And they really don't want us there. But the city council wants us there since we've been there so long. So if we have a problem on our dock, if we need a fish cleaning rack or anything like that, we make it ourselves."

"You know, we have an underfished species like chilipeppers, commercials are on limits there and we can't access them even if we wanted to. Rumor is we're going to get ten more fathoms next year. Ten more fathoms isn't going to put us into chilipepper water. You've got something that's federally classified as underutilized and we're not allowed to go out and try it. I've tried to get an EFP [Experimental Fishing Permit] for it and it was somehow blocked."

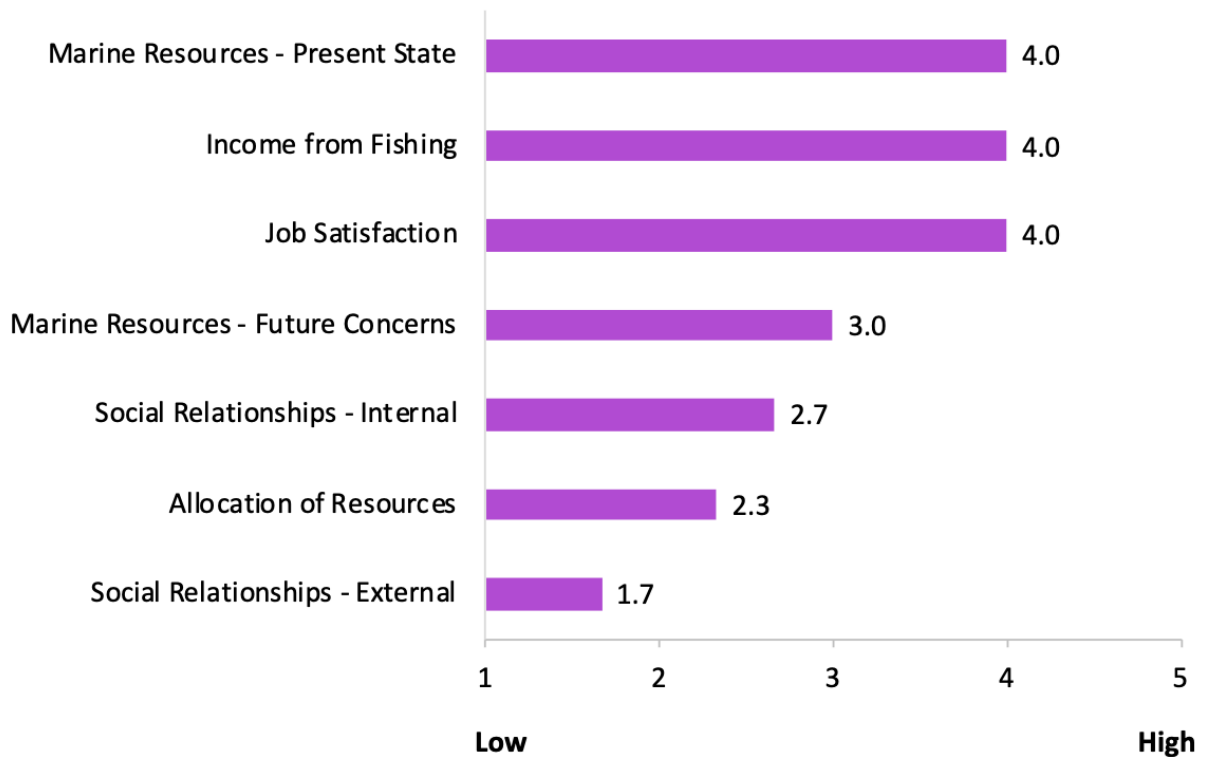
"There is an agenda on a lot of these fisheries, the black cod and the various other species that the commercial are being extremely protective of, and they have the power and resources to guide and control that aspect of those fisheries. And I think that that is one of the major stumbling blocks for both black cod and the chilipeppers, is that you're going up against a major block in the PFMC and they have the power and they don't want to give it up and they're going to enforce their wishes."

“There needs to be more concern about regulations regarding the open access fishery out to 40 fathoms, and the impacts on all fisheries, and other changes that are allowing more commercial fishing impact on groundfish stocks.”

“There needs to be a better understanding that CPFVs are stewards of these resources, and the info we can provide needs to be considered with more weight, rather than [considering our input as] anecdotal [...] People like me have over 50 years of experience in these fisheries, managers don’t give enough weight to our experience; they give more weight to college grads who study statistics on paper, and have never been a part of the marine environment.”

### Perceptions of Fishing Community Well-being, Average Responses for Questions 1-4, 6-8

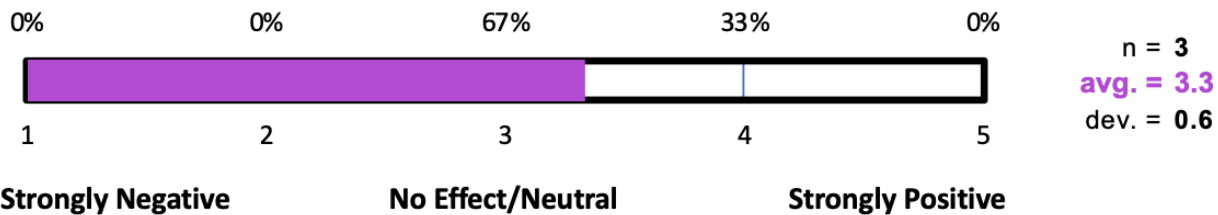
(Note: The following figure does not include the average rating for question 5. *COVID-19 Impacts*.)



## Perceptions of MPAs

### MPAs, Outcomes/Effects

**10. MPA Ecological Outcomes** How would you rate the effect that the California MPA network has had on marine resource health in your area?



**Discussion Summary** Participants believed MPAs in the San Francisco Bay Area have had positive or no effects on marine resource health. Participants expressed different opinions about MPA impacts with respect to spillover. One participant discussed both positive and negative effects from MPAs, and believed the overall effect on local marine resources was positive. One participant said they are seeing more fish, but not bigger fish, as a result of MPAs.

- One participant believed MPAs have positively affected fish populations by protecting nursery habitat but that MPAs have negatively affected fish populations due to compression of fishing effort; they estimated the overall effect was positive.
- One participant recalled their participation in MPA monitoring when they caught the same fish in the same area during subsequent years of the study, which led them to believe there is no spillover from the MPAs. Another participant countered this perspective, saying subadults and juvenile fish, which are not tagged, are the individuals populating new areas beyond the habitat of the older tagged fish.

### Participant Quotes

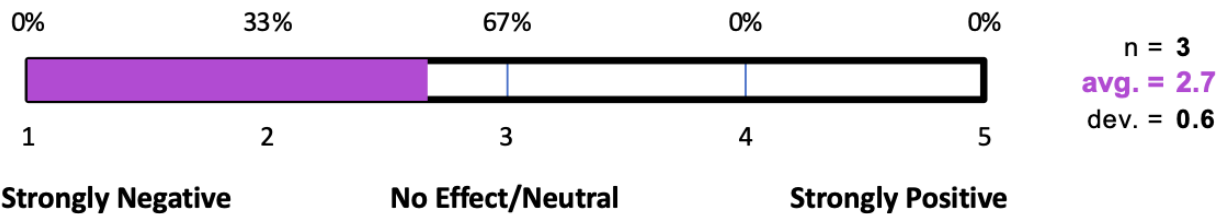
“I think [MPAs] have had a positive effect on the fisheries in that it gives them a nursery and a rookery for fish species here... the negative aspect of this is that it has limited our geographical areas where we can fish. And the limiting of geographical areas we fish has had a negative impact, because we're having to fish in a smaller area... we end up having to go back to the same spots as opposed to going to new areas all the time... but the positive aspect is that it has been a good rookery. It's an area where fish populations have been able to grow and those juveniles and subadults are moving to other areas. And so I see it as an overall positive thing because of the increase in the populations.”

“I think it has to do with the annual recruitment. You have good recruitment years, bad recruitment years. Majority of our rockfish don't really leave the rock that they're born on, are hatched on... with the new electronics [i.e., fish finders] it's pretty easy to wipe out everything that exists and then just move on. The reserves help some of the pelagic species exist because they can't be taken at the time that they're in there. I've been monitoring the marine reserves for 14 years on these programs and you catch some of the same tagged fish that you got three, four, five years ago in the same block that you caught them in before. So the spillover effect is a fable.”



“One of the aspects that I feel is a big part of this is the juveniles and the subadults are the ones that are leaving the areas to go populate other areas. Yes, you may have adults that will continue to stay in one area, but as with all species, it's the subadults and juveniles that will move into new areas. And I see these as repopulating many of the other areas of the fisheries. So I believe that is one of the best aspects of the MPAs is that they have allowed that.”

**11a. MPA Livelihood Outcomes** Overall, how would you rate the effect that the MPA network has had on the ability for CPFV owner/operators from your region to earn a living?



**Discussion Summary** Please see the **Discussion Summary** following question 11b. *MPA Effects - Overall* which summarizes the conversations related to questions 11a and 11b.

**11b. MPA Effects - Overall** What other types of effects or impacts have CPFV owner/operators from your region experienced from MPA implementation?

**Discussion Summary** Participants rated MPA impacts on CPFV owner/operators’ livelihoods between negative and neutral. Two participants said if there was an additional response option for ‘Slightly Negative,’ they would have selected it. Participants discussed negative impacts from MPAs including compression of fishing effort into smaller areas, increased fuel requirements due to having to travel to fishing grounds farther from port, and cumulative impacts from multiple types of area restrictions.

- Participants recalled experiencing crowding from more boats fishing the same few spots simultaneously and said the fish they are catching are smaller due to increased pressure on the fishing spots that remain open.
- Participants discussed cumulative impacts from MPAs, RCAs, Cowcod Conservation Areas (CCAs), and special bird closures. One participant suggested RCA and CCA restrictions should be removed in their region.

**Participant Quotes**

“We're having to work in smaller areas to stay legal. And again, it's more impact on them [the fishing grounds that remain open]. I believe that the MPAs have been effective. To expand them would be detrimental to all three industries: the commercial, the recreational, the CPFVs. The ones [MPAs] that we have set up and are implemented now, I believe, in our area, have been working very well.”

“Not just more fuel, greater pressure, smaller fish. [We are] pushed into smaller boxes.”

“One thing that you also need to understand is that the RCAs have also had a tremendous effect and impact on our industry [in addition to the MPAs], and that's not being addressed here at all.

[The combination of the MPA network and the RCAs have] pushed us into a much, much smaller box [...] The RCA should just be done away with completely. And we've had so little cowcod up here that I can never remember, and like I say, I was fishing this back in the 70s... we have very little cowcod at all. It's a Southern California fish."

## MPAs, Discussion of Specific MPAs

### 12. *MPA Effects - MPA Specific* Which MPAs have had the most impact on CPFV owner/operators from your region and why?

**Discussion Summary** Participants highlighted several MPAs that have negatively affected CPFV owner/operators from the San Francisco Bay Area.

- *Point Reyes State Marine Conservation Area (SMCA), Point Reyes State Marine Reserve (SMR), North Farallon Islands SMR, and Southeast Farallon Island SMR and SMCA:* One participant was frustrated about losing safe harbor areas to MPAs near Point Reyes and the Farallon Islands. They were concerned about potentially being accused of fishing in MPAs if they needed to stop in the closures due to an emergency. One participant stated the loss of safe harbor area was a greater impact from the Farallon Islands MPAs than the closed fishing grounds, while another participant thought MPAs at the Farallon Islands closed good bottom habitat for fishing.
- *Point Reyes Headlands Special Closure:* One participant noted the Point Reyes Headlands Special Closure is all sandy bottom, and they would like to see fishing access opened here which they believe would still enable the protection of elephant seals.
- *Año Nuevo SMR and Montara SMR:* One participant said the MPA at Año Nuevo hasn't affected their business much, but the Montara SMR was a place they used to fish a lot. They thought that in the future, the Montara SMR might produce good quality fish, similar to what they see on reefs south of Pigeon Point which are producing good quality fish after not being fished for two decades. Another participant said the Montara SMR has increased the distance they must travel to fishing grounds, and described their frustration seeing lots of people fishing illegally in the Montara SMR.

### Participant Quotes

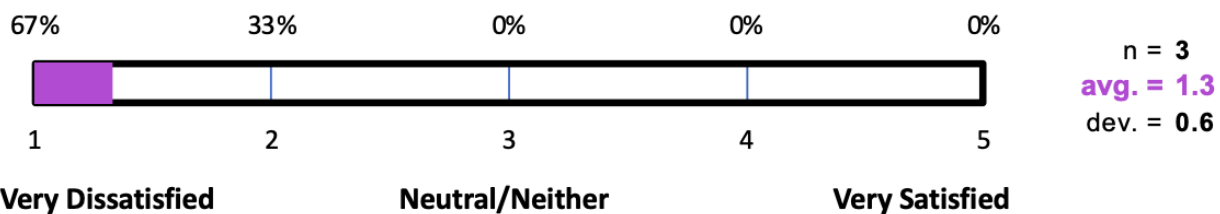
"For the MPAs, [in our area] you got Point Reyes and you got the Farallon Islands. By having the MPAs there, you're taking away safe harbor. So if you got high winds... last week, a guy had a seizure on the boat, and if I were to stop in an area that was calm enough to take care of him [in an MPA, someone would] call [the CDFW warden] and he'll come running out, and call me on the radio. So [I would be] accused of fishing somewhere I'm not supposed to be, and I'm not even fishing. Plus, if we have the south wind, [I could] hide on the north side of the island, or if you have a big wind up at Point Reyes, you could hide along the bluffs and get out of the weather. So for the guys out of San Francisco, [MPAs are] taking away a safety measure."

"Año Nuevo, less [of an impact]. Montara, we used to fish a lot. Montara could potentially turn out to be one of those things, like when we got 300 feet below Pigeon Point, there are some reefs that hadn't been fished in 20 years and they're producing just absolutely phenomenal quality fish. The Farallon Islands, to me, was a shame. There's so much habitat out there. I didn't see a need personally to shut down any of that, we lost some really good bottom."

“The MPA off Montara was a very good fishery for us and was very close to our port. But it has affected us financially because we have to run further to obtain fish for our customers. I think it's been effective, again, as a rookery for a lot of species here. But there's constantly people bootlegging fish in the [Montara SMR]. And they [CDFW wardens] can see it from the beach, I mean, they don't even have to get on a boat there to enforce that.”

## MPAs, Management

**13. MPA Management** Overall, how satisfied do you think CPFV owner/operators from your region are with the management of the MPA network?



**Discussion Summary** Participants expressed general dissatisfaction with the management of the MPA network. They believe managers have failed to communicate information about MPA monitoring studies and how this data informs management decisions, which creates a major source of dissatisfaction. Participants were also frustrated by the MPA implementation process, which they believed lacked meaningful consideration of local fishing community input and that the outcome was predetermined.

- One participant believed MPA management was satisfactory, but MPA enforcement is poor, leading to their overall sense of dissatisfaction with MPA management.
- Two participants discussed the MPA network implementation process and felt opportunities for fishing community input during these meetings were hollow gestures.
- Participants were dissatisfied by the lack of involvement of fishing community members in ongoing MPA management.

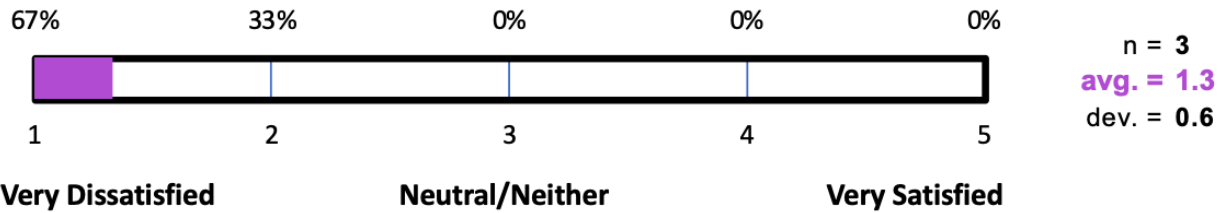
### Participant Quotes

“There's been no communication, there's been no information that's been put out on what has been going on with the MPAs. There's been no fishermen involvement that I have seen in the management of what's going on in the MPAs. Yes, we were involved with setting up the MPAs originally, but after that, there's been nothing.”

“As far as management of changes for the MPAs, there's been no communication. [Local fishing community members] were on the committee to initiate the MPA and personally, [I believe] they were robbed of it. [The managers] asked [the fishing community], ‘What do you think would be a good idea?’ And they came into another meeting and they said, ‘OK, this is how it's going to be.’ So even though there was involvement, there wasn't any involvement. They pretty much had it set on how they were going to do it.”

“Management, in my mind, is doing a good job, enforcement isn't.”

**14. MPA Monitoring** Overall, how satisfied do you think CPFV owner/operators from your region are with the monitoring of the MPA network?



**Discussion Summary** Participants were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the monitoring of the MPA network. They expressed frustration about the poor communication about MPA monitoring results, and the lack of inclusion of the CPFV fishing community in MPA monitoring studies.

- One participant expressed concerns about monitoring studies where biologists rather than fishermen determine the type of bait used for the studies, which they believed does not give an accurate picture of fish presence. The participant suggested fishermen involvement in study design would produce greater accuracy given their years of experience fishing the local habitat.
- One participant was frustrated with the lack of communication of MPA monitoring results, and said they haven't been informed of results even though they participate in MPA monitoring activities. They also said they don't have time to participate in forums or small meetings related to MPA monitoring due to the demands of running their business, but wished for more information about monitoring results through communications other than meetings. They said they didn't know of MPA monitoring studies, other than this project, that consider fishermen's perspectives.

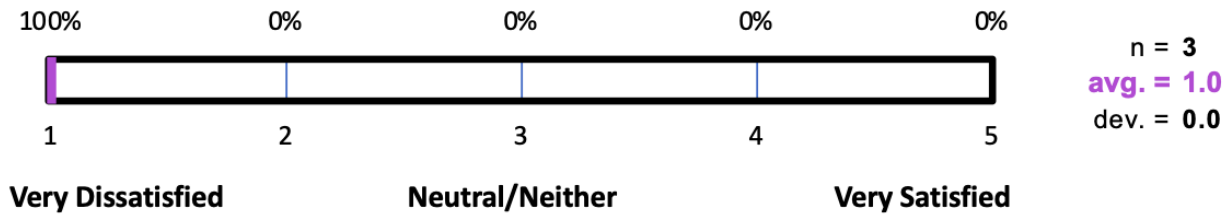
**Participant Quotes**

"There's been no involvement and there's been no information put out on any of these [MPA monitoring] topics."

"Well, based off of talking to [a local boat captain who runs MPA monitoring study fishing trips], when they do the research, [the passengers fishing for the studies are] told what and how to fish. Well, when you're fishing in shallow water like the MPAs, being told how to fish a spot is not going to tell you what's there. If they're feeding on jellyfish, they're going to feed on one [type of bait]. If they're feeding on short bellies, they're going to feed on another [type of bait]. So your numbers are skewed based off of how you're collecting the data. If you want to see what is on the stone itself, don't leave it to the biologists, you got to leave it to the fishermen... at the same time, when you're talking about Mother Nature and currents, feed, water temperature... things change every day, every hour. You can have a fish feeding on one part of the tide, and you hit the top of the tide even offshore, and you're not going to get bit at all."

"I'm part of the [MPA monitoring] program and I'm not hearing what's doing better, what's doing worse, things like that. Collaboration with fishermen - I know that there's occasionally a forum that goes on. I don't know what goes on. I can't take a day off to go meet with a few people. And I don't know what they're talking about, what's working, what's not working. And I don't know anyone that's talking about inclusion of fishermen's perspectives. I think it's like what [name redacted] said: 'You know what? Here's the way we're going to do it. Shut up and fish.'"

**15. MPA Enforcement** Overall, how satisfied do you think CPFV owner/operators from your region are with the enforcement of MPAs?



**Discussion Summary** All participants were very dissatisfied with the enforcement of MPAs.

- One participant recounted discussions they had with CDFW wardens about the need for enforcement of illegal fishing at the Farallon Islands, and the warden said enforcement there was prohibitively expensive.
- One participant described their understanding of challenges related to the enforcement of MPAs, where boats fishing illegally in MPAs stop fishing when they see enforcement boats. This participant offered to take CDFW wardens on their vessel to observe the illegal fishing in MPAs, but their offer wasn't accepted.
- One participant expressed frustration about the lack of enforcement of private boats they see fishing in the MPAs, and said CPFV owner/operators help inform vessels that are fishing illegally, but often these vessel operators ignore them or rudely disregard their communication efforts. Another participant said they have been specifically asked to help enforce MPAs within their role as CPFV owner/operator.

**Participant Quotes**

“There is no enforcement, and I don't know how we can put a positive spin on this. We can't polish this turd. But there's nothing left to say. We don't have enforcement. I think we're wasting all [folks' on this meeting] time to pretend that there is.”

“The state is not going to pay for the patrol boat to run out there every day and chase everybody away. So why have something that they can't even enforce?”

“Well, for the Farallon Islands, I've spoken to a number of [CDFW] wardens and they said, 'You don't understand. To run out [to the Islands,] unless we're already on a run to check salmon boats or crab pots, it's not monetarily feasible for us to run out there. You're looking at \$7,000 in labor costs, not including fuel, just to get to the Islands to maybe catch one person.’”

“In talking with various wardens about enforcement, when they come out, they equate themselves to like a leaf blower: wherever they go, boats scatter and leave the area. So it's difficult for them to have any kind of enforcement because of that effect. I have offered many times to take them on board my boat in uniform or out of uniform, I don't care. I want to take them out and show them this and so they can then do enforcement undercover, under the guise of whatever they want. I am more than willing to use my vessel and my services to provide that to them, and I have yet to have any of them ever respond to me.”

“One of the big issues around [CPFV clientele buying their own private boats] is that, yes, they buy a boat, but they still don't know what they're doing. And one of the problems with the

MPAs is that there is a lack of enforcement, people go up fishing in these areas. Every time we go off of the Montara MPA, invariably there's at least one or two boats always fishing in there. And you know, we try and stop and get on the PA and tell them, 'You're fishing in a closed area.' And most of them just flip us off. A lot of people don't even bother anymore because you just might as well be talking to a door."

"The only people that really end up enforcing [the MPAs] is the CPFVs. The [Farallon] Islands are always calling me, asking me to chase the boats out of there and it's taken away from my day."

**16. MPA Overall** *Any additional comments or concerns about the MPAs and MPA management you would like to communicate?*

**Discussion Summary** Several participants expressed their desire for the development of artificial reefs on the West Coast as a method to create accessible fish habitat to compensate for fishing grounds lost to MPAs.

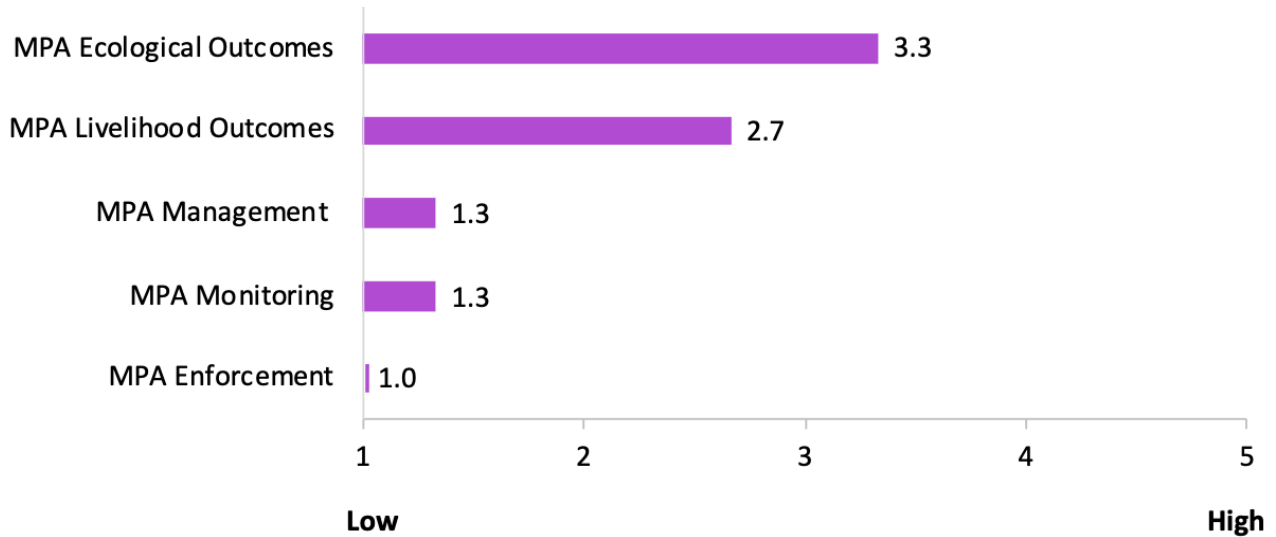
- Participants discussed artificial reefs in other parts of the world where fish populations have established in locations where there isn't naturally occurring habitat structure.

**Participant Quotes**

"An idea I postulated at a meeting in Washington, D.C., was... take just the amount of habitat structure [that is no longer accessible to fishing, due to closures], and give us that [same amount of habitat area to fish] by creating structure elsewhere... I talked with one of the West Coast managers, [who told me that] on the East Coast they drop [ship] wrecks routinely to create habitat, and that brings in massive quantities of fish."

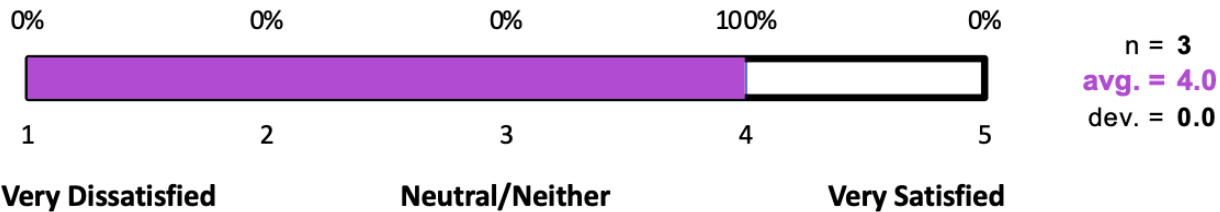
"I was at a diving meeting... and we were trying to get some of the Liberty ships from the Bay brought down to Monterey to increase structure and habitat down there. [There have been studies about the] positive effects of how this will increase fisheries population. One prime example is... the oil derricks off Santa Barbara, there are so many fish in there, they can't get their ROV [remotely operated vehicle] through [...] It has been proven time and time again. You go to the Caribbean, look where they've sunk ships for diving and the amount of benthic life along with fisheries increases in these is tremendous. Another prime example is the *Looking Back*, which is a ship outside by the shipping lanes, out in the middle of nowhere. But you can go out there and see and catch a tremendous amount of fish off of that wreck. [...] It's not going to happen before I'm out of the industry here, but I would certainly like to see this fishery exist and thrive for my grandchild. I want him to be able to own my boat, take my boat out and operate my boat in a fishery that is sustainable and healthy."

### Perceptions of MPAs, Average Responses for Questions 10-11a, 13-15



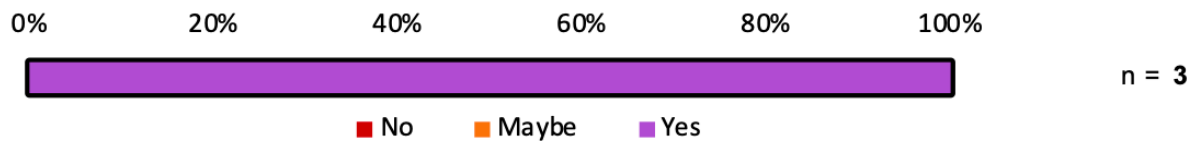
### Feedback on Virtual Process

**17a. Satisfaction with the Virtual Process** Overall, how satisfied were you with your experience participating in this virtual focus group?



**17b. 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?

(Note: For the following figure, the length of the purple bar indicates the percent of participants who responded 'Yes' to question 17b. If participants responded 'No' or 'Maybe,' a red or orange bar would appear, respectively.)





**17c. 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?*

**Discussion Summary** (Participants did not share additional comments about their experience in the focus group.)