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 Fishing Communities in Relation to the MPA Network

Members of Santa Barbara's Commercial Fishing Community

The Marine Protected Area (MPA) Human Uses Project Team[1] is hosting over 30 virtual focus group conversations with fishermen throughout California from July 2020 to February 2021. 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 Commercial Passenger Fishing Vessel (CPFV) fishing communities in California, including impacts from MPAs. A key goal of this study is to convey fishermen's 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 fishermen representing a range of fishing interests were brought together to:

- provide their perspectives on their fishing community's health and well-being, including environmental conditions, markets, infrastructure, 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 fishermen 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.

Port: Santa Barbara
Date: Monday, August 31, 2020
Participants: Harry Liquornik, Paul Teall, Chris Voss, one anonymous participant

Overview

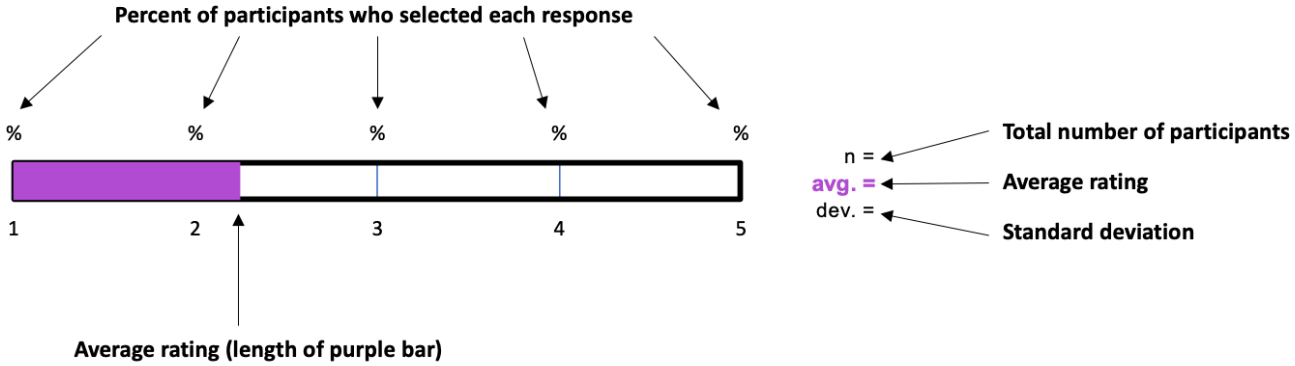
On August 31, 2020, four commercial fishermen operating out of Santa Barbara participated in the third focus group conversation. A high-level summary of the conversation is captured below, including:

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

[1] Consisting of Humboldt State University researchers, Ecotrust, and Strategic Earth Consulting

Guidance for Interpreting Figures

There are 15 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 13 and 19 that display all of 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:

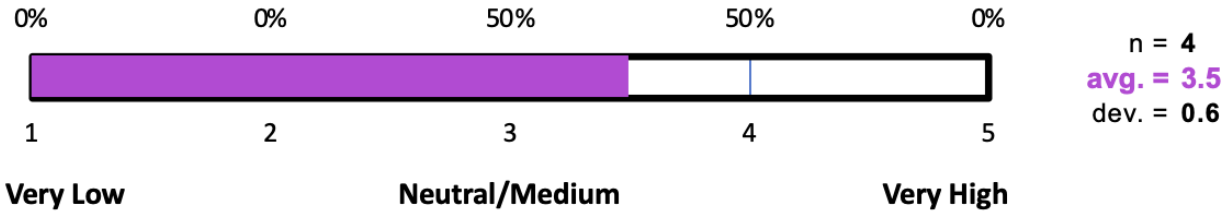
- California Fisheries Data Explorer: This interactive site allows users to visualize commercial landings data (i.e., number of fishermen, pounds of fish landed, and revenue from fish landed) and CPFV logbook data (i.e., number of anglers, vessels, trips, and fish caught from specific fisheries and ports).
- MPA Baseline Monitoring Program: South Coast
    - Summary of Findings from Baseline Monitoring of Marine Protected Areas, 2011-2015, South Coast

Our Project Team would like to express our appreciation to the four Santa Barbara fishermen—Harry Liquornik, Paul Teall, Chris Voss, and one anonymous participant—for their time and contributions to the focus group conversation.

Perceptions of Fishing Community Well-being

Well-Being, Environmental

1. Marine Resource Health - Present *Overall, how would you rate the current health and sustainability of the marine resources on which fishermen from this port rely?*



Discussion Summary In terms of the current health and sustainability of marine resources in Santa Barbara, participants reported several species are doing well while others are a cause for concern, but perceived the ocean to be healthy overall.

- One fisherman believed the rock crab fishery to be generally healthy given the high recruitment levels. They added rockfish populations are cyclical and tend to follow climate patterns.
- Another fisherman identified a slight concern with seabass but considered the species to be generally healthy. They believed thresher shark and swordfish populations are doing well, and that the abundance of salmon has increased in recent years.
- One participant reported that limited algal growth around the Channel Islands is negatively affecting the sea urchin fishery.
- Another participant expressed worry about the downstream effects on fisheries, especially sea urchins, associated with the loss of the sunstar.
- One participant emphasized the importance of considering all impacts when evaluating the health of marine resources beyond fishing alone.

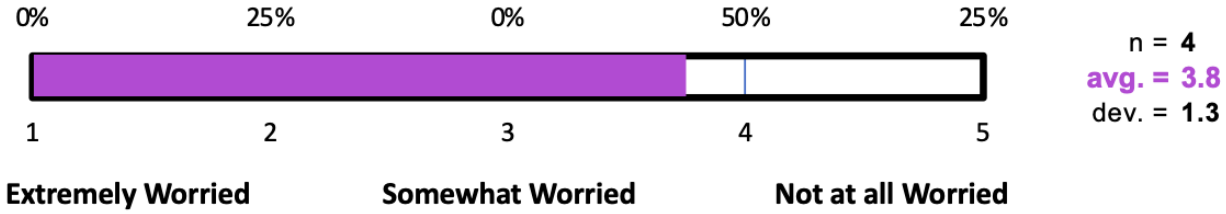
Participant Quotes

"I voted high for the fisheries I'm engaged in because the rock crab fishery, for instance, has been very sustainable, they start breeding at a very young age, and the recruitment is pretty high. I've seen ups and downs in the fisheries for the last 40 years but it's mostly been up and the downturn seems to follow climate, you know, the El Niño events and then they come back up as we go back into normal events."

"The loss of the sunstar has had a huge impact and we haven't been able to figure that one out and that's really concerning because that runs the whole Pacific Rim and the temperate zone. It's not just the North Coast, it's down here and runs all the way up. So that one's really puzzling and we don't know what did that."

"I'm optimistic about the overall underlying fundamentals of the [ocean] system's ability to be productive and robust because we see massive seal populations, massive dolphin populations, and then the whale populations are, you know, in such great shape."

2. Marine Resource Health - Future Concerns *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?*



Discussion Summary When reflecting on the future or long-term health of marine resources, participants expressed some worry regarding changing ocean conditions into the future and the effects future management decisions may have on commercial fisheries.

- One fisherman shared some concerns related to warming ocean temperatures and sea level rise. They were also worried about the effects of receding kelp forests negatively affecting the abalone fishery, particularly for the North Coast, in addition to the die off of starfish.
- All participants indicated they were concerned about future closures and reserves intended to meet target percentages of protected areas (e.g., Assembly Bill 3030), and how this may lead to increased fishing pressure in some areas.

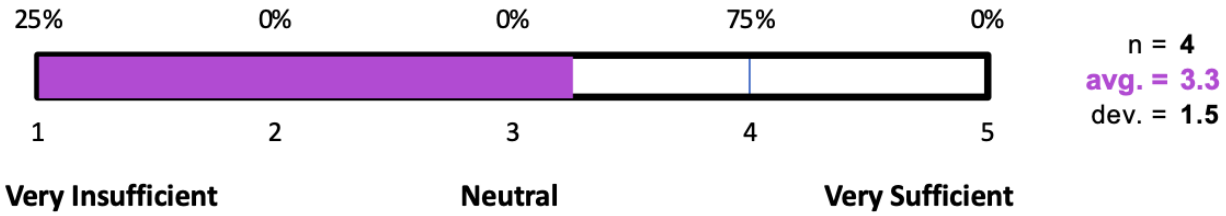
Participant Quotes

"[. . .] and the general concern about ocean warming. And so, my mind is a slight at this point, recognizing that, you know, science is indicating sea level rise and continued high water temperatures as a result of climate change [. . .] but we're not seeing really dramatic effects from things like ocean acidification. So I just went with us slightly concerned because right now, right here, we're seeing issues, but they're not catastrophic in any way, shape, or form."

"I heard testimony from the proponents [of Assembly Bill 3030] that they said they wanted 30% with the ultimate goal of 50% closure or reserves, which will create areas that aren't tapped at all and areas that have too much pressure. That's one of the biggest concerns that I have. That's why I have doubts for our future that management is going to go politically correct and shut fisheries down [. . .] the goal is to take half the state."

Well-Being, Economic

3. Access to Harvestable Resources *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?*



Discussion Summary Participants expressed similar views related to the level of access to commercial fish resources for fishermen from their port with regard to restrictions that inhibit access, diversity of fisheries, and equity.

- Several participants emphasized the negative effects area closures have had on their ability to access the fisheries they participate in. One fisherman estimated they lost about 40 percent of their fishing grounds through the Marine Life Protection Act Initiative, while another fisherman highlighted related effects to the sea urchin and dive fisheries.
- The majority of participants stressed the importance of fishermen from their port being involved in multiple fisheries to support their livelihood. They identified not being allowed to harvest several species in a single fishing trip as a barrier to access.
- One participant explained how fishermen need a variety of different permits to support a living which can be costly.
- One fisherman described the port's commitment to increasing local level access into the commercial fishing industry by subsidizing infrastructure to support the fishing community in Santa Barbara (e.g., subsidizing slip fees, providing space for gear storage).

Participant Quotes

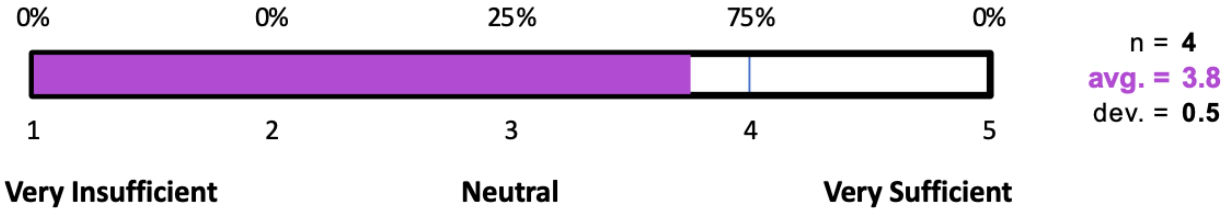
"I rated [access] as insufficient because of the amount of grounds they take away from us. I mean, although we all are making it work, I don't personally see any benefits for my fisheries by taking away our fishing areas that, in the last 40 years that I've been harvesting out there."

"It's extremely important to be [in] multiple fisheries because things are cyclical, markets are cyclical. It's pretty hard to make it on just a single fishery."

"It's basically like making a law outlawing carpooling [not being able to bring in multiple species in one trip without the proper permits or depending on a fishery's regulations]."

"[. . .] we're currently trying to secure shoreside space that we can offer to the fishing community, to those that need it [. . .] It's a community objective to, I guess, help bring about some equity to make it easier for guys."

4. Income from Fishing *Overall, how would you rate the income that fishermen from your port earn from fishing in terms of supporting livelihoods?*



Discussion Summary When discussing income and livelihoods from fishing, participants indicated more established fishermen are in a better position to support themselves and their businesses compared to new entrants, but that some fishermen, regardless of experience, face challenges related to the costs of fishing and living in Santa Barbara.

- One participant shared while their fuel costs and slip fees have increased, the cost of fishing has stayed relatively the same because the price of their product has gone up as well.
- One participant estimated the income for sea urchin fishermen has dropped to about 40 percent in recent years.

- Another participant expressed some concern about how expenses will increase into the future with regard to surtaxes and carbon taxes resulting in higher fuel costs.

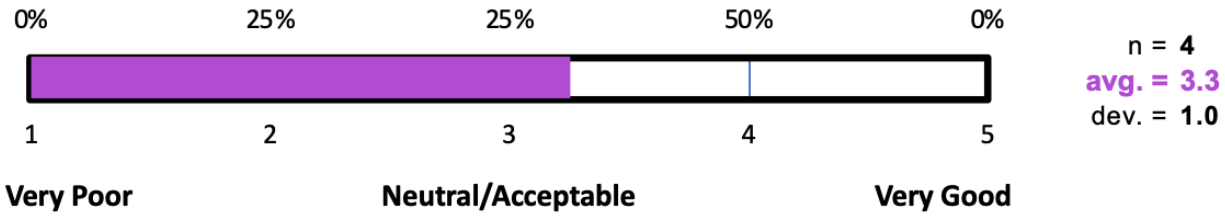
Participant Quotes

"If you are a lifelong fisherman, that's all you know. I mean, the guys that get other work are the guys that had something else going on before they became fishermen. If you're a fisherman, then you make it work by fishing, and everybody that I know is doing okay with the income [. . .] no one's getting rich at it. But we're all doing fine, for the most part."

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

"I wouldn't want to be a guy that just dropped a big load of money into a new boat and try and pay for it with sea urchins right now. It'd be a pretty daunting prospect."

5. Markets *Overall, how would you rate the quality of the markets to which fishermen from your port are able to sell their catch?*



Discussion Summary When discussing markets, participants noted the importance but difficulty of direct and local marketing and the challenges associated with export and international markets.

- Several participants identified the potential for more product to be sold locally.
    - One participant explained that when cold storage space is available, it helps improve fishermen's ability to supply local restaurants, especially to buffer the availability of product with frozen options when one or several fisheries are closed.
    - One fisherman was surprised how restaurants in Santa Barbara prefer to do business with distributors rather than local fishermen, but that they have slowly been able to increase direct marketing to restaurants and the public in recent years.
    - One fisherman stated that markets for shark have declined significantly.
- One fisherman highlighted the negative effect imports from Mexico have had on their ability to market seabass.
- One participant explained that the product they do not sell to restaurants, they can sell through the Santa Barbara fish market and the local Community Supported Fishery Program. They added there was a lot of competition for salmon this year, but that it is difficult to market halibut, seabass, and shark.

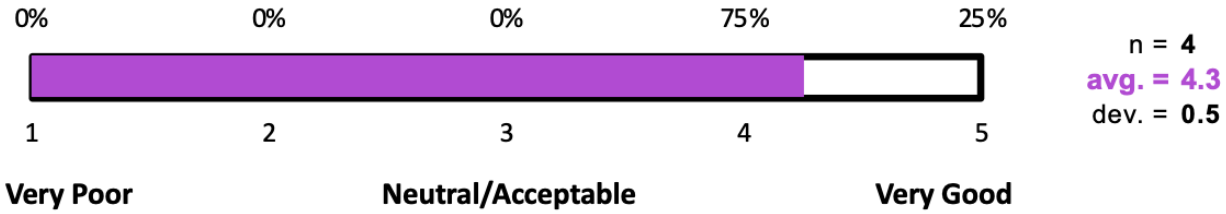
Participant Quotes

"The local markets, you know, we don't have a big choice, there's boats that sell to out-of-town markets, but locally it's okay. I mean, the local markets pay low but they've got a high cost of living in operating costs."

"We started [direct marketing] about 10 years ago, just real small, couple of restaurants. Actually still most of our restaurant accounts are in LA. It's kind of interesting. A lot of Santa Barbara restaurants just want to do one-stop shopping. It's a little easier for them to deal with bigger distributors. It's just kind of the nature of Santa Barbara. You would think, you know, for doing sea urchins that every chef in town would be at the harbor grabbing urchins, but not the case."

"I go through buyers. A lot of it through the Santa Barbara fish market and then a little bit through other markets, but the other markets, the little specialty markets, It's really hard to connect. They'll tell you that we need 200 pounds on Tuesday and that's not how fishing works. So, and then there's times when I catch a lot of fish and, like, in the little dock-to-dish markets, can't do that. So basically, there's only, as far as the majority of the larger loads of fish goes through, one market in town here."

6. Infrastructure *Overall, how would you rate the state of infrastructure and services that support commercial fishing in your port?*



Discussion Summary Participants discussed the availability of infrastructure in their port, especially as it relates to fishermen being able to fulfill their markets.

- Several participants highlighted the strength of the infrastructure to support fishing needs in Santa Barbara, including the boat yard, two marine supply shops, dredging, cheap ice, a fuel dock, and a dry dock.
    - Another participant explained the initiative to develop more community-based cold storage space for fishermen to process and freeze their product so they can engage in more direct and local marketing.
- The majority of participants believed the public hoists are an important asset for the commercial fishing community.
- Several participants noted the importance of subsidized monthly slip fees for commercial fishermen in the area, but that only a few docks are allocated for commercial fishing use. Others have to pay higher fees for private slips.
- One participant explained how a local organization, Commercial Fishermen of Santa Barbara (CFSB), works to ensure fishermen have equal access to available infrastructure in the port.
- One fisherman was concerned about the future availability of infrastructure outside the harbor.

Participant Quotes

"As far as our local facilities. I think we've got probably the best port, up and down [the California coast]. I was just in Monterey fishing salmon - you can't get ice in Monterey Bay in three ports. There's no place to get ice, you can't sell your fish on your own. You have to go through somebody else that's going to charge you 30 or 25 or 50 cents a pound to unload you. Santa Barbara, we have the best"

"So we would make it kind of community-based cold storage so that we would, just as we do with the slips or with the boat and the gear storage, it would be a first come first serve resource [. . .] But also we recognize that there is value in creating an opportunity for fishermen that are so inclined to have some of their catch processed and then freeze it and direct market it maybe throughout the year [. . .]"

"The infrastructure [name redacted] has spoken to outside of the harbor, being able to have storage, cold storage, mechanics, machine shops, stuff like that, that's going to be problematic for Santa Barbara, just because, you know, it's expensive and popular and these kind of areas, don't generate a lot of tax base for the city so they're more than happy to rezone them. I call that the perverse incentive."

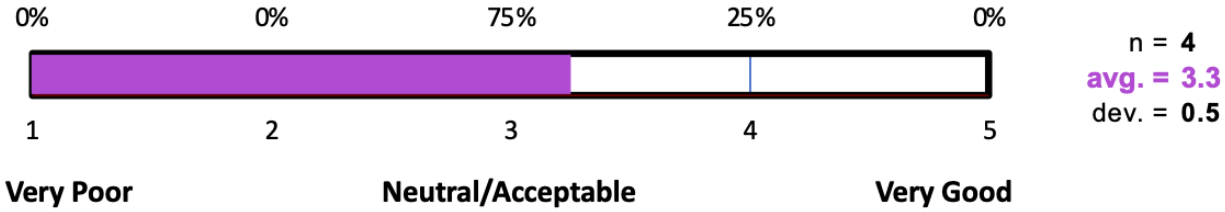
7. COVID-19 Impacts *How disruptive do you think COVID-19 has been to your port's fishing operations?*

Discussion Summary (Participants discussed but did not rate this question because the rating component was not yet included at the time of this focus group.) Participants explained the effects the pandemic has had on the Santa Barbara fishing community, and the ways in which they have been able to slowly recover.

- Several fishermen explained how COVID-19 affected their markets this year.
    - One fisherman lost about 80 percent of their restaurant accounts in a span of two weeks but was eventually able to pivot to individual sales at the weekly harbor market and through an online store. However, they have yet to fully return to their previous sales levels because of low demand for their products.
    - One fisherman explained how their halibut and seabass markets were badly affected by the pandemic, but how they were able to fish for salmon this year because the salmon markets are strong.
    - Another participant shared how they saw the early effects on the lobster fishery, which relies heavily on the Chinese market, as an indication of larger scale market problems related to the pandemic. They anticipate more fishermen will engage in direct marketing to compensate for the loss of international markets. One participant highlighted that fishermen are prepared to direct market lobsters to large population centers near Santa Barbara, including Los Angeles and San Diego.
- One fisherman communicated the resilience of the commercial fishing industry amid the pandemic and how it had catastrophic effects early on, but that local non-profit organizations donated to CFSB which allowed fishermen to process and freeze their catch and deliver it to the local community Food Bank.

Well-Being, Social/Political

8. Labor/New Participants *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?*



Discussion Summary When discussing labor concerns, participants indicated that recruitment and retention of participants into the commercial fishing industry is better now than it has been in recent years but that it still fluctuates.

- One participant described the older commercial fishing fleet in Santa Barbara and added that many fishermen are close to or at the age of retirement.
- Another participant explained how the level of recruitment is often associated with whether people see a future in the commercial fishing industry, given the continued loss of fishing grounds. They noted the current recruitment of younger fishermen into the industry is high and believed this is related to the financial support they receive to help them enter the industry (e.g., through inheritance).
- The majority of participants stated it is difficult to find experienced crew members.
    - One fisherman suggested new entrants be required to have participated in a fishery before they enter the industry.
    - Another fisherman explained the financial liability of having a crew which discourages some fishermen from hiring a crew that could hinder their bottom line and/or be the next generation of commercial fishermen.

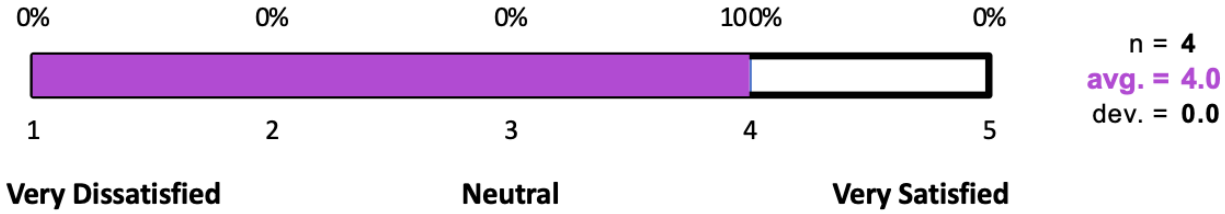
Participant Quotes

"I have my son fishing and he's essentially taken over for me and there was a measure of recruitment required there. You know, he could have done whatever he wanted to. And so I had to kind of suggest to him this was a good choice. And I don't think I would have done that 10 or 15 years ago because [. . .] there was a period of time when it looked as though we were going to continually lose ground and there would have to be even more attrition over time as a result of being displaced by protected areas. But I think we're hopefully turning that corner [. . .] I think there's a future in the fisheries and despite the barriers of permit purchase and the cost of doing business in this context I believe there's been an influx in Santa Barbara, in particular, of younger, aggressive guys that are working really hard and being successful."

"For the new recruitments, the quality of the labor pool, it fluctuates, I mean there were times where it was really hard to find a quality crewman and then you find someone new and they last for a few years and hopefully they enter the fisheries and become part of the young pool that we're seeing in the harbor now. There was, I don't know, 10 years ago, there weren't nearly as many young fishermen entering the fisheries and now it looks very promising."

"I'm neutral on the crew. I haven't had a crew in 30 years [. . .] Everybody I talk to says you can't do it by yourself and it's not a job that [. . .] a crewman is going to make a living wage at, I mean, I don't know anybody that's making much money at it. And the liability end of it - I don't really want a crew in the boat for that either [. . .] If somebody gets hurt on my boat, you know, there goes my retirement."

9. Job Satisfaction *Overall, how satisfied do you think fishermen from the port are with their jobs in the fishing industry?*



Discussion Summary A majority of participants explained they are generally satisfied with their jobs as commercial fishermen.

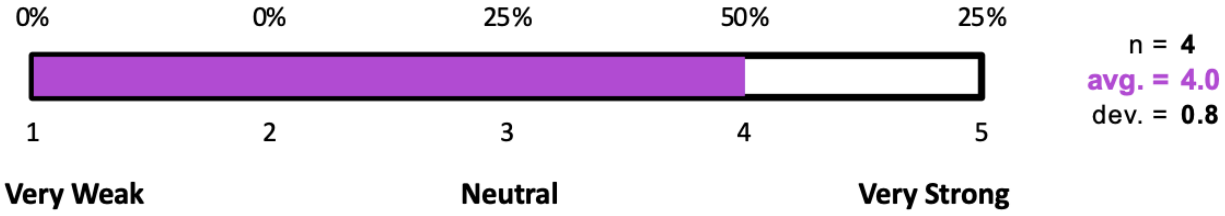
- One fisherman shared they are their own boss and that job satisfaction varies but for the most part, they like what they do, especially when their catch and markets are good.
- Several participants indicated fishermen love their jobs, otherwise they would not be fishing for as long as some of them have.

Participant Quotes

"Yeah, with the job satisfaction, I don't think any of us has been doing this for as long as we have if you're not pretty darn satisfied with it."

"I rated [job satisfaction] satisfied with everyone else, almost borders on very satisfied. I love my job and the security is certainly good. The positives outweigh the negative by far. The level of stress fluctuates with the amount of wind, and I see the [work-related] stress in my life is very low."

10. Social Relationships - Internal *Overall, how would you rate the strength of social relationships (or social capital) within your port?*



Discussion Summary Overall, participants reported they felt social relationships within the Santa Barbara fishing community were strong and that fishermen generally supported one another.

- Several participants noted there are groups within the community that get along better than others, but that overall they have learned to be friendly with each other.

- One participant reflected on how fishermen used to interact more outside of fishing than they do now.
- One fisherman explained how the CFSB board has representation from different perspectives within the community and how it tries to address challenges that can benefit the community as a whole.

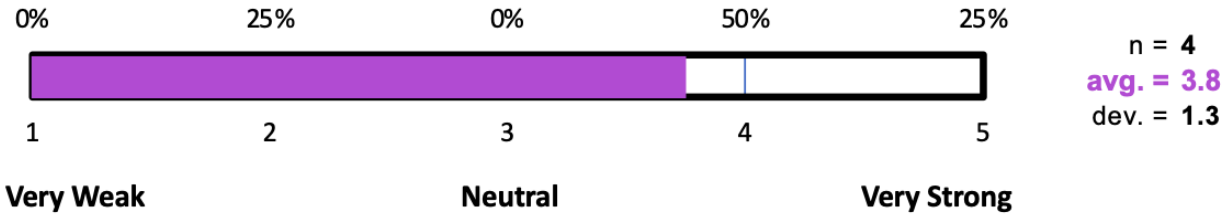
Participant Quotes

"There's always going to be factions in the fleet. We're our own worst enemies. We don't necessarily get along, but we all admire each other for our jobs. And I mean, you see a guy, you might not like his fishing techniques because he's a little too aggressive, but at the same time we got to give him credit for catching a lot of fish."

"It's a small harbor so you learn pretty quick you better get along. Otherwise, life's gonna be difficult."

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

11. Social Relationships - External *Overall, how would you rate the strength of the port's relationship with external groups who could help support community needs?*



Discussion Summary There were similar views with regard to the fishing community's strong relationship with external groups.

- One participant explained the harbor is required to support the commercial fishing industry because of the large amount of economic activity fishermen generate for the city each year. As a result, city leaders and volunteers often engage with the fishing community to help fishermen meet their needs, especially in times of crisis.
- Several fishermen believed the fishing community has broad representation in local political processes. Conversely, several participants believed there is a lack of support for the commercial fishing industry among state elected officials.
- One fisherman identified several individuals that have helped to increase the capacity of the local fishing community, including the CFSB executive director and members of the Harbor Commission.

Participant Quotes

"This port's always been pretty well represented. I think a lot of it probably goes back to the oil spill in '69 and, you know, a lot of guys that fished in that harbor early were kind of pioneers in that respect. So it's carried on a long legacy in the harbor there. It's been a good thing."

"We had a number of different fishermen participate in the city council meeting[s] and stood up and spoke as well as some city leaders. [. . .] We can pull together and get good representation."

"Sometimes it's real difficult to get support on our state representatives because they are more concerned with the party position rather than their local community. And I think that in the future we need to really push on our local city council to push on them."

Well-Being, Overall/Additional Comments

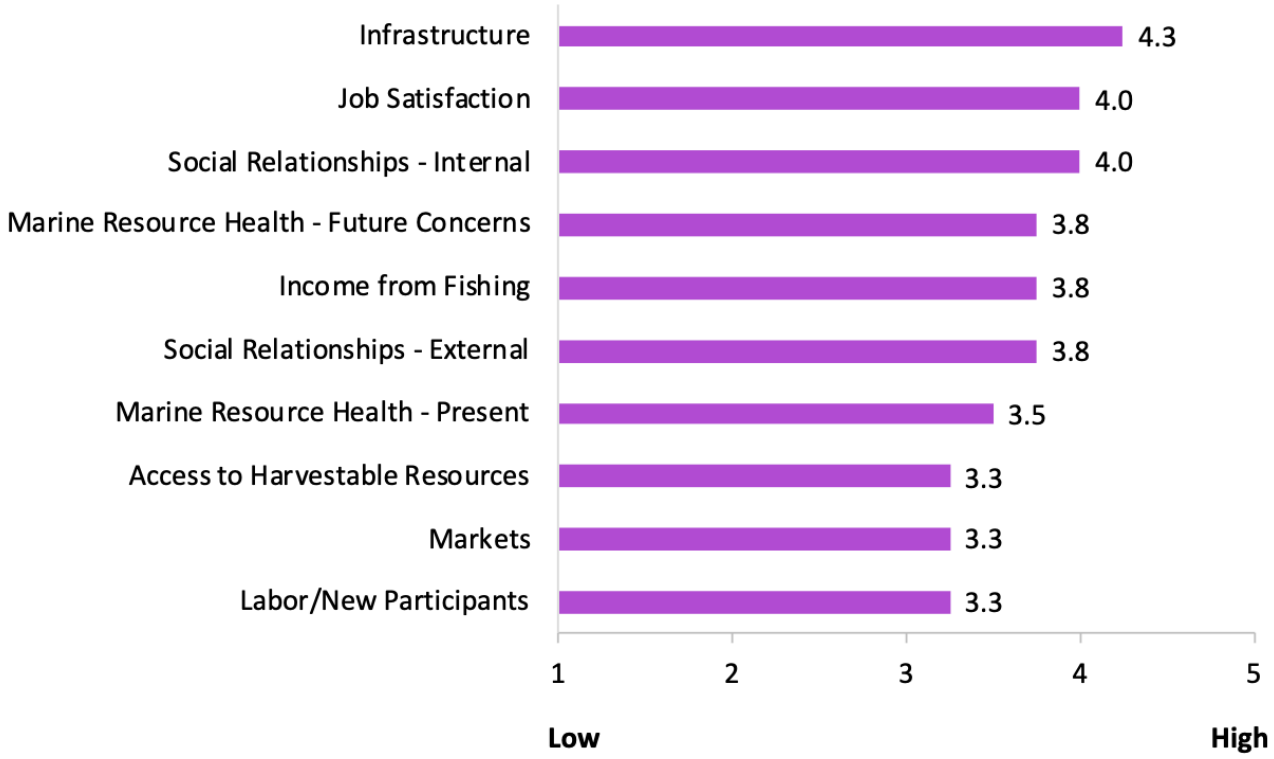
12. Overall/Open-ended *Is there anything not captured above that you would like managers and other readers to know about your fishing community/industry?*

- *What do you think federal and state managers could do to better support California's fishing communities?*
- *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 offered several suggestions for how state managers and the local Santa Barbara community could better support the local fishing industry.

- One fisherman recommended managers not use area closures to achieve ocean protection because they believe closures are a simplistic solution to a complex problem.
- One fisherman suggested California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) consider the socioeconomic impacts of their decisions as managers. They gave the example of CDFW not allowing fishermen to sell frozen lobster tails, which could have increased economic benefits for fishermen including being able to sell product even when fisheries are closed.
- One participant would like to see more social awareness of the local commercial fishing industry, including increased engagement in the local fishermen's market.

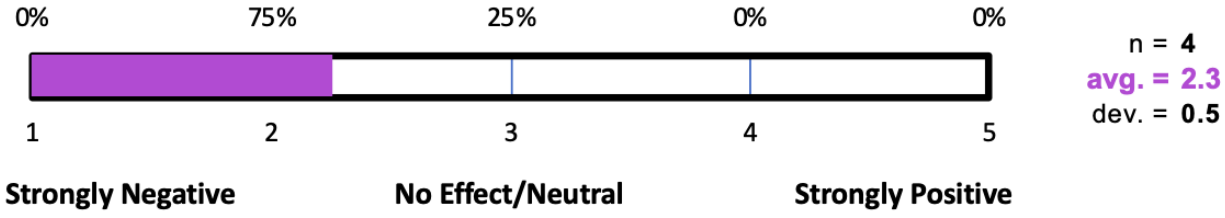
Perceptions of Fishing Community Well-being, Average Responses for Questions 1-6, 8-11



Perceptions of MPAs

MPAs, Outcomes/Effects

13. MPA Ecological Outcomes *Overall, how would you rate the effect that the California MPA network has had on marine resource health in your area?*



Discussion Summary When asked about ecological outcomes or impacts from the MPA network, participants reported they have seen little to no positive effects on marine resources and, in some cases, MPAs have had a negative effect on marine resource health.

- Participants believed the MPAs have not had any effects on fishing for halibut, rock crab, or sea urchin.
- Several fishermen explained the MPAs have created more pressure on marine resources outside MPAs due to compaction along MPA boundaries.

- One fisherman identified some increase in the abundance and size of sedentary species in MPAs like lobster, but that they are still subject to environmental conditions that MPAs cannot protect against (e.g., toxic runoff, ocean acidification). Another participant noted they have seen some species spilling out of the MPAs.
- One participant described how it is difficult to compare the abundance of species within and outside MPAs without knowing what research is being done, especially for species that move a lot.
- One fisherman explained how a net benefit to marine resource health would result from allowing some take in MPAs where it is currently not allowed.

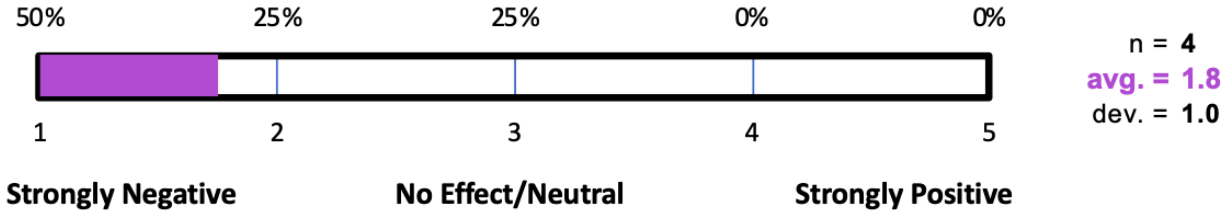
Participant Quotes

"From a purely resource perspective, the urchin fishery hasn't gotten any benefit [from the MPA network]. We kind of knew this going into it. Also, because urchins are sedentary. They don't move. So essentially, it was really a loss of [fishing] habitat."

"Obviously, the [. . .] sedentary species clearly have some protection [but] the MPAs are still exposed to warm water events and ocean acidification or even toxic runoff, for that matter, and so they're not entirely protected. They're not 'marine protected areas' because there are these broader scale impacts that can influence them."

"There's all these examples where you could allow some measure of small take in order to keep things going. But they [CDFW] don't consider the input: that an MPA has as a precaution, it exists there now as a no-take zone and that it has some measure of resource in it that we won't impact."

14a. MPA Livelihood Outcomes *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?*



Discussion Summary Please see the **Discussion Summary** following question *14b. MPA Effects - Overall* which summarizes the conversations related to questions 14a and 14b.

14b. MPA Effects - Overall *What other types of effects or impacts have fishermen from your port experienced from MPA implementation?*

Discussion Summary When discussing livelihood and overall impacts from MPAs, all participants reported the negative effect MPAs have had on fishermen from their port.

- One participant explained what occurred following MPA implementation was what they expected with regard to the sea urchin fishery experiencing accelerated attrition and movement to other ports. They added that the MPAs made fishermen feel like the state did not value commercial fishermen.

    - One participant recounted the loss of some of the gill net fishery, and believed they were specifically targeted during the MPA implementation process.
    - Another participant estimated the sea urchin fishery lost about 80 percent of fishing grounds. In some cases, these were areas fishermen spent years learning how to fish. They added this loss was one motivator behind reducing the sea urchin fleet.
- Participants highlighted the fact that fishing is not easy in general, but that MPAs have made it more difficult to be a fisherman.
    - Several participants described the increase in crowding, displacement, and compaction as a result of MPAs because there is less area available to accommodate fishing activity.
    - One participant explained how the MPAs have forced fishermen to travel further and in dangerous weather conditions; one participant left the lobster fishery because they did not have the boat capacity to do so.
    - A couple participants emphasized how fishermen are forced to anchor in unsafe conditions outside MPAs. Those that are engaged in federal fisheries with a vessel monitoring system (VMS) must report when they think they are going to transit an MPA even though they cannot know this beforehand since they can not predict the weather. One participant added that these rules are unfair and unsafe for fishermen, and that the VMS can easily detect whether they are fishing in the MPAs.
- One participant explained how fishermen went to many meetings at the time of MPA implementation to understand what was happening and to stay informed.
- One participant believed there was a public campaign to portray the fisheries as overfished to justify the need for MPAs.
- Another participant worried the MPAs would lead to more proposals by environmental groups to remove area from fishing.

Participant Quotes

"We've eliminated a lot of areas that we could fish in weather [due to the MPAs] the coast is now essentially eliminated and that was an area we could still fish in weather a lot. So it definitely increased the hazards of fishing and the time and effort taken to go fish especially when the weather's up."

"The MPAs are making our jobs harder, but our jobs are never easy so we have an ability to catch fish, even if we have to go to different areas to do it. So it's harder to make a living, because of the extra areas that we have to travel to."

"That particular little area that they took out [around San Miguel Island] was, I would say almost criminal, what they did there because they were specifically targeting a fishery that they didn't like; they didn't need that little chunk of area there."

MPAs, Discussion of Specific MPAs

15. MPA Effects - MPA Specific *Which MPAs have had the most impact (positive or negative) on fishermen from your port and why?*

Discussion Summary Participants emphasized both state and federal MPAs in the area have had negative effects on Santa Barbara fishermen.

- *Campus Point State Marine Conservation Area (SMCA) (No-Take), Naples SMCA, Gull Island State Marine Reserve (SMR) and Federal Marine Reserve (FMR), and South Point SMR and FMR:* These MPAs have had very high negative effects, particularly on urchin fishermen, as they were prime fishing grounds for Santa Barbara based fishermen.
- *Harris Point SMR and FMR, Judith Rock SMR, Richardson Rock SMR and SMR, and Gull Island SMR and FMR:* These MPAs encompassed important fishing grounds in relatively safe or protected areas from the weather causing fishermen to be displaced into more dangerous areas. One fisherman stated they lost almost half of their fishing grounds as a result of the implementation of these MPAs. They added that since San Miguel Island is almost completely surrounded by MPAs, fishermen are forced to fish and anchor in areas that are more susceptible to dangerous wind and wave conditions. The Harris Point FMR was identified as an area that is particularly important for anchoring during unsafe ocean events.
    - *Judith Rock SMR:* This was a productive area for rock fish and rock crab before it was turned into an MPA.
    - There were existing special closures around San Miguel Island before MPA implementation, and the area is now about 50 percent restricted. Fishermen would like to see a reduction in the amount of restricted areas around San Miguel Island.
- *Naples SMCA, Campus Point SMCA (No-Take), Point Conception SMR:* These were productive lobster areas that fishermen can no longer access.
- *Vandenberg SMR:* Salmon trolling is no longer allowed in this area due to the MPA. Fishermen do not understand why salmon trolling is not allowed in this MPA while it is in other MPAs in the state, given that salmon are a pelagic species and do not stay within MPA boundaries.

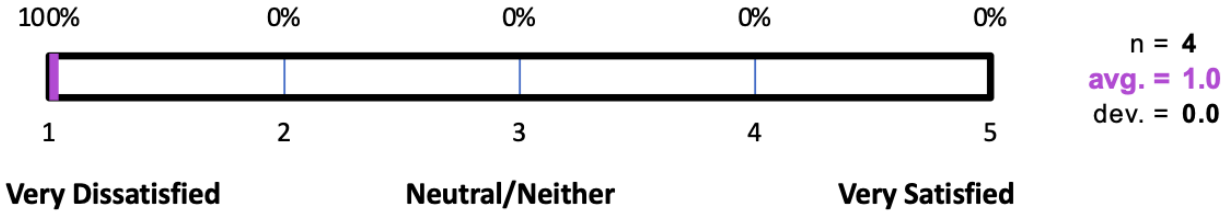
Participant Quotes

"For me in particular, the Harris Point closure has affected me in northwest conditions when the swell's big. [. . .] There's that whole question of why the VMS is restricting us from accessing these safe harbors, so I was in trouble for anchoring inside of Harris Point in a storm and I had to go to meetings and answer questions and they, you know, treated me like a criminal."

"Judith Rock was a nice area to fish. Not sure why they decided to take a little patch of that out there. Rockfish and the rock crabs are both excellent fishing in there and now it is this little sliver that they took for who knows why. They took so much area out of San Miguel Island [. . .] If you look at the map [of MPAs], it's practically closed."

MPAs, Management

16. MPA Management *Overall, how satisfied do you think fishermen from your port are with the management of the MPA network?*



Discussion Summary Participants were generally dissatisfied with the management of the MPA network, especially with regard to the implementation process.

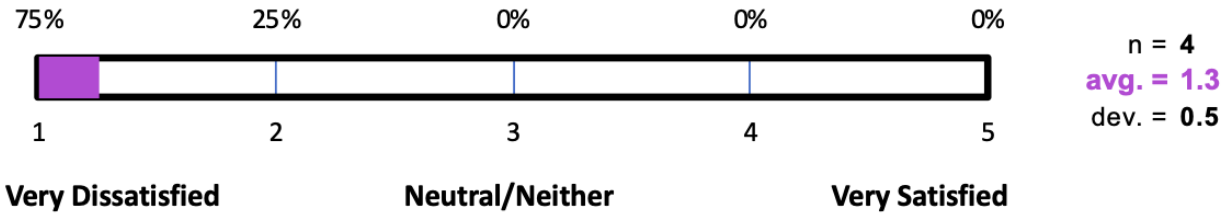
- One fisherman explained how the areas that became MPAs were the areas fishermen indicated they did not want taken away. Another participant commented on the lack of meaningful engagement with fishermen throughout the MPA designation process.
- One fisherman suggested the MPAs could be used to understand broader ocean changes, but that the politics surrounding MPA implementation and management overshadow the ability to achieve common objectives.

Participant Quotes

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

"We should be thinking creatively about how to do smart things with the areas that are closed, the very least of which is using them as a baseline for our understanding about what abundance can look like if there's no human impact on some of the populations, which is a critical scientific number that you need to to create a high quality stock assessment."

17. MPA Monitoring *Overall, how satisfied do you think fishermen from your port are with the monitoring of the MPA network?*



Discussion Summary Participants believed the MPA monitoring program is insufficient to monitor MPAs and the program does not support collaborative research with fishermen.

- One fisherman did not know of any studies being done on the rock crab populations in the MPAs.

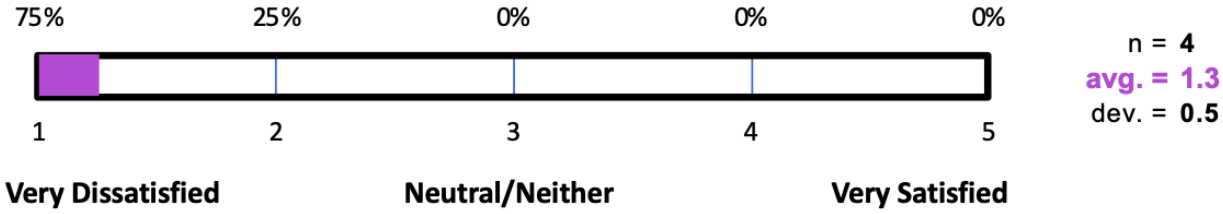
- Another fisherman explained how they offered to help with MPA monitoring studies to better understand what is happening inside the MPAs free of charge, but that their proposal was turned down.
- One participant expressed general frustration with current MPA monitoring including missed opportunities in informing fisheries management and general concern that there has been little to no monitoring of MPAs.

Participant Quotes

"You could get a baseline on unexploited stock, that's a critical piece of information when you're trying to build a stock assessment of what an unexploited stock looks like. And so you could utilize the MPAs as a means to help effectively and sustainably manage in between [the MPAs]. None of that's been done, they didn't do what they were told to do as a means to make what the MPAs being in existence could have benefited fisheries management moving forward."

"I even asked if I could do a study for free to see how the fishing was in a closed area, which especially would have been important during one of the natural fluctuations and downturns in the crab fishery - others would be interested to see if the same thing was happening in the areas that had been harvested - but they rejected that, saying they didn't have the funding. When I said I'd do it for free, they still rejected me, so very dissatisfied with that one."

18. MPA Enforcement *Overall, how satisfied do you think fishermen from your port are with the enforcement of MPAs?*



Discussion Summary One participant perceived the enforcement of the MPAs to be unfair and inconsistent.

- They questioned why some people are exempt from MPA regulations while others are penalized even when they have not broken any rules.

Participant Quotes

"Their only intention is to enforce people to break the law so that they can collect funds."

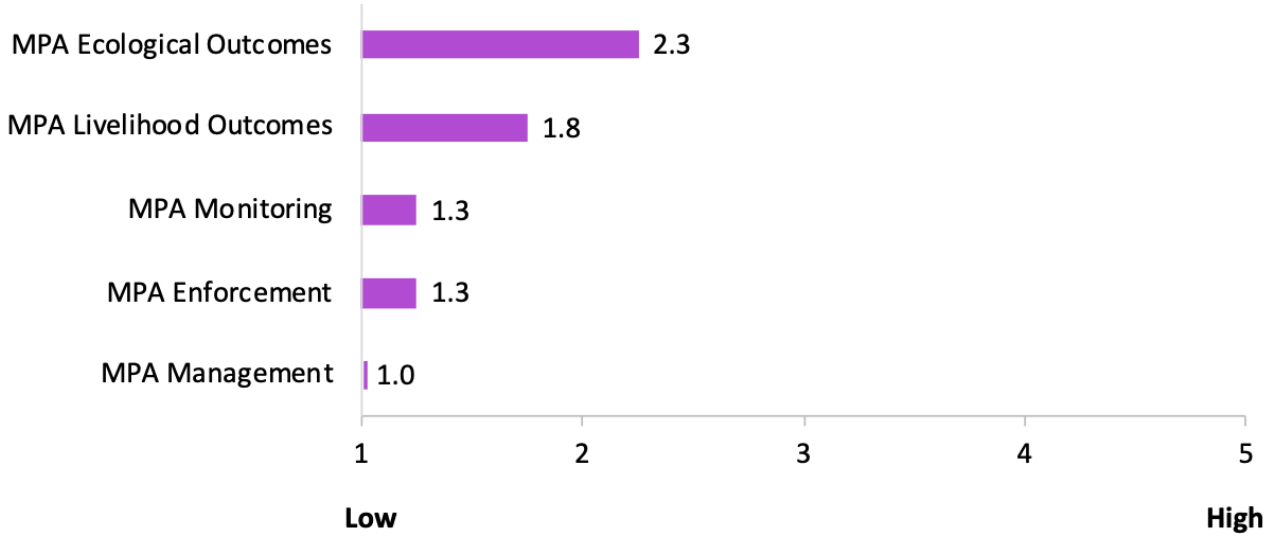
"They're enforcing it when they happen to see a [commercial fisherman] guy in there or if they happen to catch you with your VMS being in an area for some reason, but they're not enforcing it at all in the sport fleet."

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

Discussion Summary Participants offered several suggestions for fisheries managers with regard to MPAs, including:

- Fisheries should be managed through gear limits and seasonal closures rather than area closures like MPAs.
- When managers consider designating a target percentage of protected areas, they must also consider all the other areas fishermen can't access other than the MPAs.
- The area inside MPAs could be used for other ocean activities, like the development of wind energy.
- MPAs should not be expanded since it would create more problems including overtaxing the resource in open areas.
- Fishermen should be able to anchor in MPAs for safety reasons.
- Managers should do a better job of engaging fishermen in MPA management and monitoring.

Perceptions of MPAs, Average Responses for Questions 13-14a, 16-18



Feedback on Virtual Process

20a. Satisfaction with the Virtual Process *Overall, how satisfied were you with your experience participating in this virtual focus group?*

20b. 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?*

20c. 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 (Due to time constraints during the focus group, participants were not asked these questions, and so did not provide ratings or discuss their responses.)