

The goal of the Monitoring Fisheries Uses and Values project is to better understand the influence and socioeconomic impact of marine protected areas (MPAs) on commercial and charter fishing activities along California's Central Coast. We will research both commercial and charter fishing uses of the region, extending from Pigeon Point in North to Point Conception in the South.

This project will directly inform the 5-year review of the Central Coast MPAs which will provide a baseline characterization of the ecological and socioeconomic conditions and changes within the Central Coast region since MPA implementation. This project and the 5-year MPA review are administered by the MPA Monitoring Enterprise (http://www.calost.org/monitoring_ent.html), a program of the California Ocean Science Trust, in collaboration with the California Ocean Protection Council (OPC), California Department of Fish and Game, and California Sea Grant.

Project Goals and Objectives

The objectives of this research are to:

1. Collect detailed data on the 1) demographic characteristics; b) spatial use patterns; and c) economic profile for key commercial fisheries and the charter fishing fleet of the Central Coast;
2. Utilizing previous baseline data collected by Ecotrust, conduct an assessment of spatial and socioeconomic changes in key commercial fisheries since MPA implementation;
3. Utilizing previous qualitative data collected by other researchers, conduct a qualitative assessment of socioeconomic change over time within the Central Coast charter fishing fleet, and;
4. Provide contextual information on the direct and indirect effects of MPA establishment and other driving factors attributing to economic change (e.g., general economic decline, closure of fisheries, additional spatial fishing regulations, loss of port infrastructure, etc) within the commercial and charter fisheries in the Central Coast.

Commercial and Charter Fishing

Ecotrust conducted commercial fishermen interviews in 2006 as part of the CC MLPA planning process and the data collected established a baseline on fisheries uses and values across the region. However, this baseline data was collected using a method that did not adequately inform the MLPA process at the time. In order to build and improve upon this previous effort, we will be conducting interviews with fishermen who participated in the initial baseline study and other fisherman most active in the fishery. We will focus on four key fisheries: Dungeness crab, nearshore finfish, market squid, and spot prawn.

Baseline data was not collected for charter operators during the MLPA planning process, thus a primary objective of this project is to establish a baseline dataset of spatial use patterns and direct/indirect effects of MPA establishment upon charter fishing operators. Our goal is to interview the full fleet of charter fishing operators across the CC region in order to develop a complete baseline dataset.

MPAs along the Central Coast

Effective September 22, 2007 California's Central Coast is home to 29 MPAs which were designated by the California Fish and Game Commission (CDFG) as part of the state's Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) Initiative. The MLPA planning process was designed as a participatory public process in which a regional stakeholder group works closely with a science advisory team, CDFG, and Initiative staff and contractors to develop MPA recommendation. Despite this, many fishery stakeholders maintain they felt marginalized during the process and their input largely ignored or inadequately considered. Ecotrust is seeking to bridge this history of the Central Coast MLPA process with a more thoughtful and useful socioeconomic assessment tool for the communities involved and the success of the MLPA initiative.

Confidentiality

Ecotrust takes every measure possible to protect the confidentiality of sensitive information provided by fishermen during and after the interview process. These measures include:

- Explicit consent will be obtained from all participants;
- All information on the individual level will remain anonymous and confidential. Only Ecotrust staff (operating under a strict confidentiality protocol) will handle the data collected during the interviews; and
- Analyses and results will be presented only in aggregate form for participating fishermen from each fishery to review before results are finalized.

Ecotrust

Ecotrust's mission is to innovate, invest, and inspire in ways that creates reliable prosperity. This prosperity follows our triple bottom line philosophy in which promoting economic opportunity, social equity, and environmental well-being are all critical measures of success in our work. Ecotrust is headquartered in Portland, Oregon and is a unique organization; creating a range of programs in fisheries, forestry, food, farms and children's health, and developing new scientific and information tools to improve social, economic, and environmental decision-making.

Contact Information

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