

The Importance of Monitoring

The three-year North Central Coast MPA Baseline Program will provide a summary description, assessment and understanding of ecological and socioeconomic conditions, inside and outside North Central Coast MPAs, at or near the time of MPA implementation. It also will document initial ecological changes and socioeconomic effects of MPA implementation. These projects have been developed 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.

The Monitoring Human Uses and Values project is a sub-component of the MPA Baseline Program conducted by Ecotrust and Natural Equity to better understand the influence of newly established marine protected areas (MPAs) on activities along California's North Central Coast. We will research both consumptive (e.g., commercial fishing, recreational fishing, charter fishing) and non-consumptive (e.g., diving, kayaking, whale watching, beach walking) uses of the region, extending from Alder Creek near Point Arena in Mendocino County to Pigeon Point near Half Moon Bay in San Mateo County. This study is one of 11 projects that comprise the North Central Coast MPA Baseline Program.

Project Goals and Objectives

As part of the Monitoring Human Uses and Values Project, we will collect data on coastal use patterns, operation costs, trip expenditures, and demographic characteristics of California's North Central Coast (NCC) consumptive and non-consumptive user communities. The objectives of this research are to:

1. Provide spatial and demographic baseline estimates of economic activity in the study region;
2. Describe the initial responses of ocean/coastal user communities to the MPAs; and
3. Inform the planning and implementation of long-term monitoring, in order to understand the causal links between ecosystem features, socioeconomic changes, and the implementation of MPAs.

Recreational (Consumptive and Non-consumptive) Uses

We will survey recreational users through a random sample of NCC residents. These residents will be solicited through a standing internet panel that will allow data to be directly comparable across all recreational user groups. In addition, in order to collect a sample that accurately represents the recreational consumptive dive community—in particular the abalone users group, which has been highlighted as a species of concern—we also will be conducting in-person surveys of this user group.

Commercial and Charter Fishing

Ecotrust conducted commercial fishermen interviews in 2007–08 as part of the NCC MLPA planning process and the data collected established a baseline on fisheries uses and values across the region. In order to build upon this previous effort, we will be conducting follow-up interviews with fishermen who participated in the initial baseline study. We will focus on the six fisheries more likely to see changes associated with the MPAs: Dungeness crab, deeper nearshore rockfish, nearshore rockfish, urchin, seaweed, and California halibut.

The total size of the NCC charter fleet is unknown; however, in Ecotrust's NCC baseline study, twenty-one charter operations were interviewed. Even though the primary goal of this project is to compare pre- and post-MPA changes, another primary objective is to quantify the number of charter fishing trips. Therefore, we will interview

the full fleet of charter operations across the NCC region in order to develop a more complete dataset. The five key fisheries we will focus on are abalone, Dungeness crab, California halibut, salmon, and rockfish.

MPAs along the North Central Coast

Effective May 1, 2010, California's North Central Coast is home to 21 MPAs. These MPAs were designated by the California Fish and Game Commission (CDFG) as part of the state's Marine Life Protection Act Initiative, a participatory public process in which a 45-member regional stakeholder group worked closely with a science advisory team, CDFG, and Initiative staff and contractors to develop MPA recommendations.

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 and will be recorded by Ecotrust personnel.
- 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.
- 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.

Natural Equity

Natural Equity works with Ecotrust to pioneer an internet-based approach to understanding the quantity of trips people take to the coast, exactly where they go, what they do, and how much they directly contribute to coastal economies. Our goal is to estimate a baseline of human coastal use, and inform the MLPA process and public policy.

Contact Information

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