

Research Activity Panel: Meeting Minutes
California Department of Fish and Game Office, Monterey
Friday September 12, 1997
09:00 - 12:00

Introduction of members and guests (G. Cailliet)

Institution Representatives

Greg Cailliet, Moss Landing Marine Labs- Chair
Andrew DeVogelaere, MBNMS- RAP Coordinator
Lisa Ziobro, MBNMS- SAC Coordinator

Jane Caffrey, ESNERR and ESF
Michael Field, USGS
Steve Eittreim, USGS
Chris Harrold, Monterey Bay Aquarium
Deborah Johnston, CDFG/ Monterey
Rikk Kvitek, CSUMB
Jan Roletto, GF, CB, MBNMS
Leslie Rosenfeld, Naval Postgraduate School

At-Large

Caroline Pomeroy, UCSC/CSUMB

Special Advisors

Gary Sharp, CIRIOS

Guests:

Dave VenTresca, CDFG/Monterey
Frank Schwing, NOAA/NMFS/PFEL
John Smiley, UCSC/BCER
Kim Paulsen, CDFG
Karin Strasser Kauffman, MBNMS SAC
Bill Durous, Santa Barbara County
David Ebert, US Abalone
John Robinson, MBNMS
Jenny Carless, MBNMS Newsletter

CONSENT ITEMS

Modifications to the agenda (G. Cailliet)

Addition under short information items: Cooperative Institute opportunities with NOS.

Approval of the minutes for August 1997 (G. Cailliet)

The draft minutes from the August 8, 1997 meeting were approved with modifications.

PRESENTATIONS

Overview of the Landels-Hill Big Creek Reserve (John Smiley)

John Smiley, Landels-Hill Big Creek Reserve Manager, presented an overview of the reserve program. Big Creek is a 4,000-acre terrestrial reserve

in the University of California System, combined with a marine reserve designated by the California Department of Fish and Game.

The reserve has been set aside for teaching and research and is not open to the public; however, annual open houses are held on the premises. There is a cooperative agreement that allows fishermen to use the site to launch their boats from the reserve.

The reserve has active marine research projects, including: habitat mapping (NMFS/MLML/Sea Grant/MBNMS), monitoring and developing species lists for assessing change (HMS/UCSC), determining the appropriate reserve size for fishery replenishment zones (CDFG/Sea Grant/MLML/NMFS), and using local fishermen to collect fisheries data (UCSC).

Fishing pressure has increased in the area during the past two years. While fishermen generally respect the rules of the reserve, there has been confusion regarding the boundaries. Currently, the northern and southern boundaries are marked by orange-red, six-foot diameter triangles placed on land about 100 feet above the ocean. Dave VenTresca is making buoys to mark the north, south, and west boundaries of the reserve, and is looking for funding to put them in place and to maintain them. He requested help from the SAC and Conservation Working Group to find the means (approximately \$1,000) to place the buoys. Some RAP members commented that the maintenance of buoys can be very expensive.

John Smiley stated he presently operates three weather stations, but with limited support and maintenance due to funding. Leslie Rosenfeld, NPS, indicated that her department was very interested in supporting such stations and offered to help John improve his monitoring capabilities and add the data into the REINAS system. On the subject of mapping the land and marine reserves, John indicated he had a fairly old computer running early geographical software. Rikk Kvitek, CSUMB, offered to help John with improving his computer facilities and GIS capabilities.

Marine protected areas and fish at the Big Creek Reserve (Dave VenTresca)

Dave VenTresca, CDFG, gave a presentation on his project within Big Creek Reserve. The objectives of his project are to:

1. Establish a baseline of fish abundances;
2. Produce a bathymetric/habitat map of BCER;
3. To document species composition, size frequencies, and catch-per-unit-effort of the present commercial skiff and Commercial Passenger Fishing Vessel fisheries in the areas adjacent to BCER;
4. Compare fish population data collected at BCER during this project with limited data collected at BCER in earlier years.

Dave is targeting fish that are most impacted by fishing: long-lived, residential, and slow to mature; he is counting adults and sub-adults. Results from last year's cruise indicate that there are more fish in the reserve than outside the reserve. However, Dave is unsure whether these results are due to protection or differences in habitat availability. He will be measuring environmental parameters to help tease-out potential confounding factors.

El Nino: here we go again (F. Schwing)

Frank Schwing, PFEL staff, gave a presentation on El Nino. Even though patterns that appear to be related to El Nino are evident on the California coast, they cannot necessarily be attributed to the El Nino the tropics are experiencing. The northeast Pacific off California has experienced a local warming since early 1995 that is due to unusual wind patterns seemingly unrelated to El Nino, though the effects will be the same. Frank explained the El Nino "symptom" -- tropical fish making their way to central California waters -- is not due to their transport by warm currents from the equator, but rather is due to their warm water range being expanded north due to a reduction in open ocean upwelling.

If the local warming is coupled with El Nino, the effects on the California coast could be more stronger than expected.

Frank concluded his presentation by suggesting that ecologically there is a need to look at climate change issues in addition to El Nino issues.

DISCUSSION

El Nino (M. Field)

Michael Field, USGS, explained that in anticipation of major winter rains and flooding, USGS has begun surveys to gather baseline information. In this respect, Michael suggested the need to start coordinating data among agencies who are tracking the effects of El Nino, and would like to use the RAP to do so. Andrew De Vogelaere will move this effort forward.

Comments on draft section for the "Sea Life Reserves" Keeley Bill (J. Robinson)

A draft of marine protected area legislation was presented to the RAP for comment. It was agreed that Caroline Pomeroy and Greg Cailliet would bring the document for discussion at an upcoming fisheries conference.

Gray Whale harvest in Washington: a request for comments from the SAC Chair (A. De Vogelaere)

The Makah tribe in the state of Washington has requested permission to harvest five gray whales per year. Karin Strasser Kauffman has been contacted by environmental groups within California in opposition to the request; she would like input from the research community regarding this issue.

The RAP felt this was largely a social/economic issue, and should be coordinated with the Conservation Working Group and SRD Headquarters. After some discussion, Greg asked Andrew to compile a list of science issues that should be considered in the decision. This list would be comented on by the RAP, forwarded to Greg and on to Karin for the next SAC meeting.

SHORT INFORMATION ITEMS

Verbal items:

Nancy Foster, National Ocean Service, to visit Monterey Bay (A. De Vogelaere)

Nancy Foster will be in Monterey on September 15, 1997 to attend the Sanctuary Reception being held at Sea Studios, 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Common Murre die off in Monterey Bay: detection and response (A. De Vogelaere)

Andrew provided an update on the common murre die-off in Monterey Bay. Over 400 dead birds were identified in August. Several hypotheses have been eliminated, leaving possible causes as an increase in set net effort or the localized red tide phenomenon.

Study of the Ft. Ord Exclusion Zone Complete (Kim Paulsen)

The report is complete and the study found relatively low levels of contaminants.

Cooperative Institute opportunities with NOS (Gary Sharp)

The formation of a cooperative agreement might be a mechanism to get funding from NOAA for Sanctuary research. A small group of people who represent institutions and projects is needed to get this project moving forward.

MBNMS Birthday Celebration

Monterey - September 14, 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., Cannery Row
Santa Cruz - September 20, 11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Santa Cruz Wharf

SAC Positions are open

Sound in the Sea Bibliography (A. De Vogelaere/M. Jacobi)

The document is complete.

The Sanctuary Scientific Research Plan (A. De Vogelaere/M. Jacobi)

Authors have been sent their appendices listing needed research for different disciplines. They will comment on if they should be updates with the same survey process as in the first edition. Comments are due at the end of September.

UCSC RAP alternate (G. Griggs)

Dan Costa has been appointed the RAP Member Alternate position for the University of California at Santa Cruz.

MBNMS Research Coordinator contract (J. Flanders)

Andrew De Vogelaere's bid for the Research Coordinator contract was accepted.

"Natural History of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary" (A. De Vogelaere)

This book was just published. Copies will be made available to RAP members.

Research institution Video (K. Evans)

A formal project description is being drafted. It will be available for RAP review at the next meeting.

Handouts available:

- NMS Research Reports
- Permit Report
- News article on common murre die-off
- News article on the proposed whale hunt
- Ft. Ord exclusion zone report

New Business

No October meeting; next meeting scheduled tentatively for November 21.

ADJOURN