

## COMMITTEE STAFF SUMMARY FOR NOVEMBER 15, 2016

**6A. ABALONE FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN****Today's Item****Information** **Direction** 

Update on red abalone fishery management plan (FMP) timeline and public involvement.

**Summary of Previous/Future Actions**

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|---|--|
| • FGC accepts MRC recommendation to develop red abalone FMP | Oct 8, 2014; Mt Shasta                 |
| • Receive update on FMP process                             | Nov 4, 2015; MRC, Ventura              |
| • Receive update on FMP process                             | Mar 21, 2016; MRC, Los Alamitos        |
| • Receive update on FMP process and timeline                | Jul 21, 2016; MRC, Petaluma            |
| • <b>Today's update on FMP process and timeline</b>         | <b>Nov 15, 2016; MRC, Los Alamitos</b> |

**Background**

A fishery management plan (FMP) for red abalone is under development. Currently, the management and recovery of all abalone species in California is guided by the Abalone Recovery and Management Plan (ARMP), adopted by FGC in 2005. As required by legislation in 1997, prior to enactment of the Marine Life Management Act (MLMA) that requires FMPs form the primary basis for managing the state's marine fisheries. In light of changes in the red abalone fishery, and limitations in the management responses available under the ARMP, FGC endorsed a proposal from DFW to develop an FMP for the existing northern California recreational red abalone fishery, separate from recovery under the ARMP.

The endorsed process to develop the red abalone FMP was launched through a series of public workshops in 2014, followed by an online angler survey in Feb 2015. Since then, DFW has provided updates at MRC meetings on stakeholder input and next steps in the FMP development process. At the Mar 2016 MRC meeting, DFW staff reported that an extended timeline was needed, in order to increase public outreach including a 2-day Control Rules Workshop to discuss FMP development metrics and citizen science data streams in conjunction with The Nature Conservancy in May 2016.

Since Feb 2016, DFW has also kept FGC informed of the unexpected set of environmental conditions it referred to as a "perfect storm" leading to severe biological impacts, and how those have affected and delayed the FMP process, as staff resources have of necessity redirected focus to evaluate impacts to abalone stocks (see Agenda Item 5C, this meeting). Today DFW will provide an update for the FMP timeline and development.

**Significant Public Comments**

Comment from Brandi Easter encouraging the consideration of regional management, the use of citizen science, and area of consideration for FMP application (Exhibit 1).

**Recommendation (N/A)****Exhibits**

1. [Letter from Brandi Easter, dated Oct 26, 2016](#)

**Committee Direction/Recommendation (N/A)**

October 26, 2016

California Fish and Game Commission  
P.O. Box 944209  
Sacramento, CA 94244-2090  
fgc@fgc.ca.gov

RE: Abalone survey results and Abalone FMP

Dear President Sklar and Commissioners,

My name is Brandi Easter and I am a recreational diver. It was requested that I provide my public comments from the recent October 2016 DFG Commission meeting in writing regarding the recent abalone survey results and the Red Abalone Fishery Management Plan.

**Encourage conversational opportunities** for public to be participatory in emergency action discussions.

Rationale: Recreational license holders recognize this is a Mother Nature issue, not a human take issue.

PRO: Public engagement and exchange of ideas, better understanding from all concerned, inclusivity will help diminish the 'us – them' syndrome.

CON: Time is not on our side prior to the December 7-8 meeting, scheduling could prove to be problematic.

**Consider Regional Management** with Red Abalone Fishery Management Plan

Rationale: Population densities vary with different accesses throughout the fishery.

PRO: Potential easy transition, currently using regional management – Ft Ross, sub-limits, MPAs, can utilize codes already on report card or by county, potential balance of human impacts throughout fishery.

CON: Change is always difficult, potential confusion by recreational license holders with potential enforcement complexities, Mother Nature has no boundaries.

**Consider Citizen Science** as supplemental data collection going forward. Rationale: People want to learn more and be involved, inclusivity will help diminish the 'us – them' syndrome.

PRO: Gets public engagement in the process, potential cost savings to the Department, volunteers dive under Department Fish and Wildlife protocols, volunteers would able to dive when ocean allows instead of budget & staff availability, would provide better ongoing data collection throughout the entire fishery, volunteers would input collected data into common data base.

CON: Volunteer dive protocol or database not yet established and may take time and money to design and implement, long term volunteer retention may be challenging.

**Consider the ENTIRE North Coast Abalone Fishery;** Marin, Sonoma, Mendocino, Humboldt and Del Norte Counties when determining FMP.

Rationale: Currently, majority of conversations are focused on Sonoma and Mendocino Counties primarily due to the current transect areas where data comes from, the FMP is about the entire fishery.

PRO: Addresses the entire fishery - not just two counties, opportunity to re-write Abalone Report Management Plan (ARMP) to accommodate population density variances and environmental changes throughout fishery, can implement a volunteer program .

CON: There is underlying fear from people that we will always be beholden to the current ARMP as currently written. Population densities vary throughout the fishery and there is fear that if other areas are explored, the entire fishery will be closed down per ARMP.

Please let me know if you have any questions, I would be happy to answer them.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Brandi Easter

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