

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 Passenger Fishing Vessel Fishing Communities in Relation to the MPA Network

Members of Orange County/San Diego Area's Commercial Passenger Fishing Vessel Community

The Marine Protected Area (MPA) Human Uses Project Team¹ anticipates hosting over 25 virtual focus group conversations with commercial fishermen and Commercial Passenger Fishing Vessel (CPFV) owner/operators throughout California from July 2020 through Spring 2021.² 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 CPFV fishing communities in California, including impacts from MPAs. A key goal of this study is to convey commercial fishermen's and CPFV owner/operators' 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 CPFV owner/operators were brought together to:

- provide their perspectives on their fishing community's health and well-being, including environmental conditions, income, allocation of resources, 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 commercial fishermen and CPFV owner/operators 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.

Regional CPFV Port Group: Orange County/San Diego Area Ports

Date: Friday, November 20, 2020

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

² Previous versions of the summaries from other ports suggest there would be 30 focus groups through February 2021. The project has since evolved based on the needs of the fishing community and is reflected in all summaries moving forward.

Participants: Don Brockman, Kris Karpow, Markus Medak, Ernie Prieto, Mike Thompson, Brian Woolley

Overview

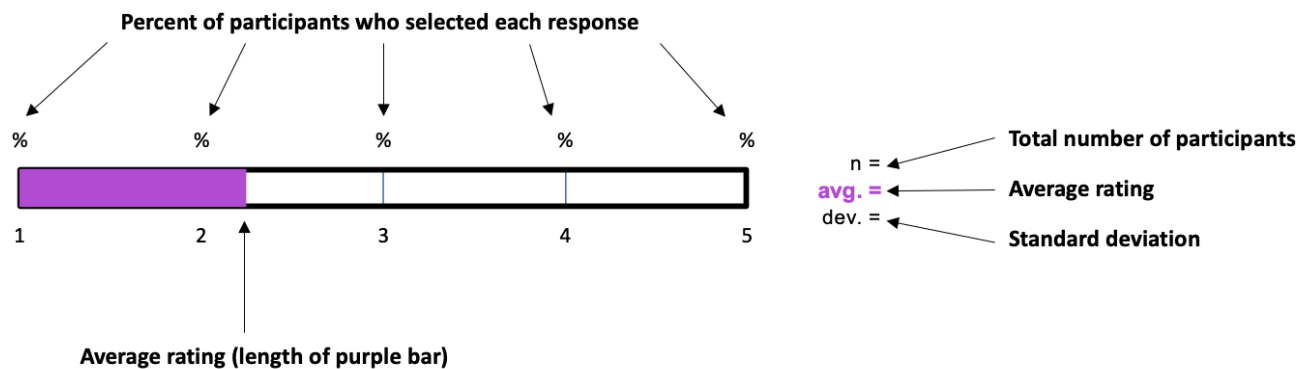
On November 20, 2020, six* CPFV owner/operators out of the Orange County/San Diego area participated in the fifteenth focus group conversation overall/second CPFV focus group conversation. A detailed summary of the conversation is captured below, including:

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

*While all six participants provided ratings and discussed their responses during the well-being portion of the focus group, one participant decided not to participate in the MPA session. The MPA section in this document (beginning on page 13) reflects the ratings and responses from the five individuals who participated in the MPA portion of the focus group.

Guidance for Interpreting Figures

There are 14 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 21 that display 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](#)

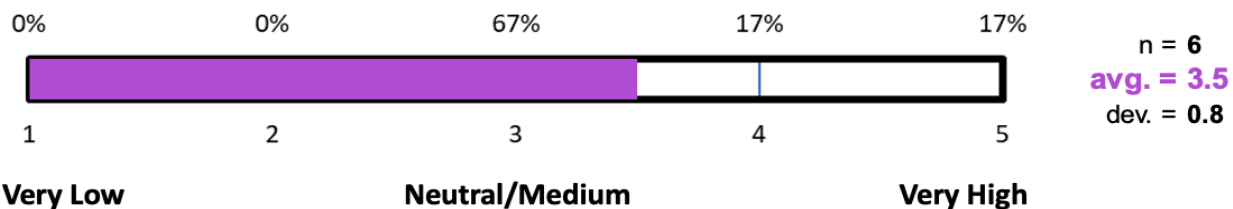
- [Summary of Findings from Baseline Monitoring of Marine Protected Areas \(2011–2015\), South Coast](#)
- [Marine Protected Area Monitoring Program, 2019–2021](#)
- An article about Governor Newsom’s [Executive Order related to protected areas and the 30x30 initiative](#)

Our Project Team would like to express our appreciation to the six Orange County/San Diego area CPFV owner/operators—Don Brockman, Kris Karpow, Markus Medak, Ernie Prieto, Mike Thompson, and Brian Woolley—for their time and contributions to the focus group conversation.

Perceptions of Fishing Community Well-being

Well-Being, Environmental

1. Marine Resources - Present State Overall, how would you rate the current health and sustainability of the marine resources on which CPFV owner/operators from this region rely?



Discussion Summary Participants’ perspectives on current marine resource health ranged from neutral/medium to very high. One participant attributed their ‘Neutral/Medium’ response to a lack of opportunity to sufficiently access marine resources as a result of management restrictions, and felt they didn’t have enough information to accurately answer this question as a result.

- One participant believed global warming is a result of natural fluctuations that exist within ocean and fishery cycles. However, this did not cause them to have concerns about the current health and sustainability of local marine resources.
- One participant stated marine resource health is better now compared to decades past due to human interventions that have helped to improve water quality (i.e., removal of pesticides from harbor sediments).

Participant Quotes

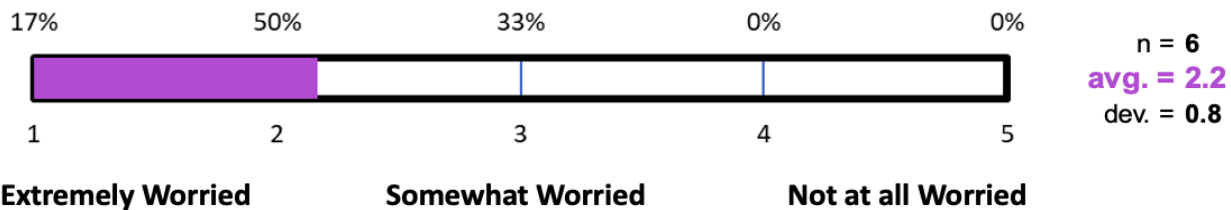
“I can't answer that question because 60 percent of the really good habitat near my harbor is unavailable to me. So I have no idea what's going on in prime fishing areas. I can't answer this question. [I selected ‘Neutral/Medium’], it's basically a nonanswer. I just don't think it's fair to ask a question about my opinion of the health of the resource when I don't have access to half of it, so I have no way of knowing.”

“You know, in 40 years [...] we have watched this ocean evolve with cold water, it evolves with warm water. And you know what? The resources change every year. And yes, we're not allowed to go fish certain areas [...] But we've learned to adapt around that. The ocean is a wonderful place. And we have fish right now because of global warming or whatever it is, I just call it

cycles, everything changes. And that's the nice thing about the ocean. Everyone thought the bonito were gone and we have all these bonito this year. As long as we give it [the ocean] a chance, we keep the water clean, we don't abuse it [...] it's going to change and we have to change with it. And we do have a lot more people here in California than we've ever had. So we have to adapt with that.”

“In my opinion, you know, I've seen better fishin’ the last 10 years than I did when I was a deckhand in San Pedro [...] in 1975. If [the boat] got 25 rockfish for the day, we were lucky. But you know, fishing in a hole in California, my opinion is it’s better now than it was 40 years ago. And that's because of everybody working together, you know, cleaning up the harbors. No bait would ever have lived in Newport Harbor [then]. Now we have a bait receiver, and bait actually lives there. Army Corps of Engineers dredged the harbor out, got rid of all the DDT. And here we are.”

2. Marine Resources - Future Concerns Overall, how worried are CPFV owner/operators from your region about the future long-term health and sustainability of the marine resource populations on which you rely?



Discussion Summary All participants were worried about the future health of the ocean and the fisheries they target, though their concerns varied in severity. Expressed concerns focused on both the future health of marine resources and perceived ineffectiveness of fishery management.

- One participant said San Diego fishermen are dependent on Highly Migratory Species (HMS) and was very worried about the long-term health of yellowfin tuna stocks. They were concerned about the potential impacts of industrial scale fishing and international management of HMS on local fishermen and CPFV businesses.
- One participant was concerned about the combined effects of future ocean changes and poor fishery management which they believed may negatively affect their business.
 - Another participant was concerned that fisheries managers have an incorrect understanding of bait fish (i.e., sardine) population health, which they believe leads to unnecessary harvest restrictions.
- One participant expressed some concern about rockfish populations in the long-term, though they were only somewhat worried about the overall future health and sustainability of marine resources. They added they are confident in the resiliency of fishermen to deal with potential future resource challenges.

Participant Quotes

“I went with ‘Extremely Worried’ for a couple of reasons. One, future ocean change, we have no control over that, right? It's going to happen regardless of how we want it to work out. It's going to do its own thing. And that kind of falls also on the effectiveness of the management. We don't have any control of how that's going to go.”

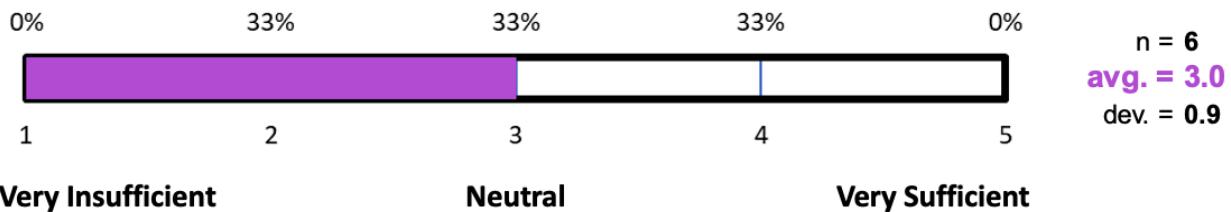
“Even though they may not be impacted at this time, I’m worried about the health of some of the resources. I’m from down here in San Diego, we are almost exclusively dependent on Highly Migratory Species [...] I’m personally quite worried about the health of the yellowfin tuna resource. The problem is it’s a Highly Migratory Species. The bulk of the fishing that’s going on is industrial-style fishing in countries other than the United States, and so it’s completely out of our control, but it’s got the potential to have huge impacts on us. And so I’m worried about that. I’d say that’s one of my biggest worries.”

“Well, I’m kind of worried because I’m afraid that because everyone is worried about global warming or they are not allowing us access to bait because they don’t see the bait, because they have antiquated science. That makes me worried. I don’t worry about the ocean, per se, I worry about somebody sitting at a desk in Sacramento making a decision about it. I mean, we’ve been fighting to be able to catch sardines for bait when there’s more sardines in the ocean [now than before]. But the sardines, because of the warm water, are not where the scientists are looking. And we can’t even show them to them, which is ridiculous. [...] We want our voices heard and we don’t want to be just shuffled under something.”

“I worry about [...] our impact on rockfish. To really get a good understanding of the health of the species or the ocean is difficult. I’m moderately worried or somewhat worried about the future because we’re fishermen, we are definitely a resilient group, and we tend to figure out a way to get through a lot of things. We have a lot of things thrown at us all the time. So that is probably what’s kept me from being extremely worried that I have confidence in ourselves as fishermen, as being ‘survivors,’ for lack of a better term.”

Well-Being, Economic

3. Income from Fishing Overall, how would you rate the income that CPFV owner/operators (including crew) from your port earn from fishing to support livelihoods?



Discussion Summary Participants’ views about CPFV owner/operators’ income to support livelihoods varied from insufficient to sufficient. They identified differences in CPFV operations between Orange County and San Diego ports, which affects CPFV owner/operators’ income.

- One participant believed local CPFV owner/operators tend to supplement their income from CPFV operations with income earned from commercial fishing.
- One participant said some San Diego-based CPFV owner/operators and crew often relocate outside of California during the off-season, at which point they rely on income earned during peak CPFV season.

- One participant said deckhands in Dana Point are usually employed on a seasonal basis. They explained that deckhands take on other jobs in the fishing industry during the CPFV off-season.
- One participant highlighted that CPFV operations are closed in January and February due to the rockfish season closure, which encourages CPFV business employees to seek additional sources of income during the off-season. They gave the example of employees helping out on the boat to prepare for the upcoming season, and considered maintenance-type work separate from typical CPFV duties.
- One participant characterized their Newport CPFV operation as a year-round business which offers consistent employment for their crew. They explained many employees have remained with their business for many years.

Participant Quotes

“I think there are quite a few of us [CPFV owner/operators] that participate in other [commercial] fisheries as well, which I think could be considered another job. But it's got to be something that can be very flexible, because sometimes the seasons are different. I think up and down the state, there's quite a few guys that are both involved in a CPFV fleet as well as some type of commercial fishery. There's a lot of guys that fish squid when they're around, or lobsters or various other things. They're still fishing all the time, but they might not solely rely only on their CPFV revenue.”

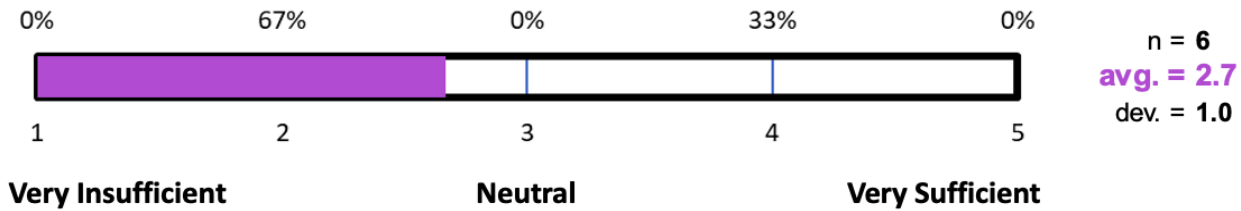
“We try to keep our captains [year-round in Dana Point]. Our deckhands can definitely be seasonal, but most of our employees are just doing one job at a time. But because they are seasonal, a lot of the guys that are more successful in the industry have a little more entrepreneurship and are working in other parts of the fishing industry in the off-season.”

“We [CPFV businesses] are closed for January and February. So some of the guys do other things, whether they're working on their boat or whatever. And so it has made the business more diversified because of seasons that the CDFW [California Department of Fish and Wildlife] has shut down with rockfish.”

“We shift from [running CPFV trips] to keeping the guys doing maintenance. We do a lot of maintenance when we're not fishing. So do they take second jobs? In a way they kind of do, because now if they want to work with me as a fisherman, they're going to work with us in vessel maintenance. So, it's a bit of a different job. [It's different here than in] the San Diego fleet. They come [to southern California] to work in the summer, then they go back to Arizona or wherever they go for the winter, wherever they can last the longest off the blanket they've knitted in the summertime.”

“Anybody in this business doesn't have time for another job. We have employees in our business that have been working for us for 20 years. Even office staff, captains, deckhands. Deckhands come and go a little more than captains and office staff, and we try to pay them well, and that's all I can say. For example, [name redacted]'s boat, if it's an overnight trip, you'll leave at 9:00pm, get back at 8:00pm, and leave again at 9:00pm. Where's the time for another job? If you work on the half-day boat, it's a 12-hour day. So there you have it. [...] The bottom line is in Newport Beach right now, we pretty much have a year-round business.”

4. Allocation of Resources Overall, how would you rate the allocation of fish resources for CPFV fisheries in terms of supporting the CPFV industry?



Discussion Summary Participants shared different views with regard to the allocation of resources for CPFV fisheries, from insufficient to sufficient.

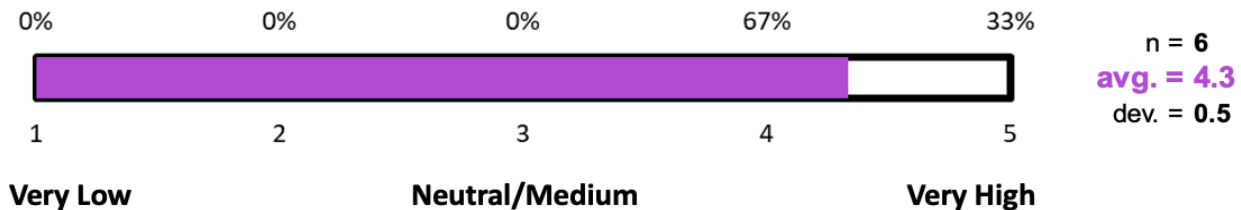
- One participant believed resource allocation was insufficient due to management restrictions that inhibit access and lead to compaction of fishing effort.
- One participant believed current California bag limits for HMS species are sufficient.

Participant Quotes

“I just went with ‘Insufficient’ based on the restrictions that did inhibit the access to the resource. I mean, just plain and simple. We're carpet-bombing one area because we can't focus efforts equally in other areas.”

“I think what happens in San Diego, at least with my business, is very different because we're dependent on Highly Migratory Species, which tend to be pretty good sized fish. And I'm of the opinion that we don't necessarily need to be taking a lot of individuals in order to satisfy our customers. I think, personally, that the current California bag limits, at least on HMS species, are more than generous. For some other species that may not be the case... I don't know. That's what I deal with, so that's what I see.”

5. COVID-19 Impacts How disruptive do you think COVID-19 has been to your region's CPFV fishing operations?



Discussion Summary Participants thought COVID-19 was highly or very highly disruptive to CPFV operations in the Orange County/San Diego area due to business closures, limited capacity following reopening, and crew shortages.

- Several participants stated their CPFV operations were negatively affected by COVID-19 protocols which prompted business closures. They explained how CPFV business picked back up again when they were allowed to reopen at 50 percent capacity, at which point trips were fully booked due to pent up demand since other recreational businesses were still closed.
- Participants discussed negative effects to CPFV revenues due to the period of full business closures, followed by half capacity trips after reopening. Several participants also said galley revenue had significantly decreased due to constraints on food service for health precautions.

They elaborated how the loss of galley revenue significantly affected CPFV operators who do not own the boats they operate, but do own the galley revenue.

- Participants shared that labor and crew challenges negatively affected CPFV operations. They heard that diminished crew labor force was an issue that affected CPFV businesses up and down the California coast.
 - One participant said they were being intentional about providing deckhands with more work opportunities in order to keep them employed.

Participant Quotes

“I think COVID was hugely disruptive, of course, just looking at the bottom line, we missed out on a very, very significant portion of our possible revenue this year when we weren't allowed to run. And there was very, very good fishing going on at the time, so that was pretty darn painful. And we were restricted in our capacity after that. So now I look at the bottom line this year compared to the previous couple, three years, and we're down very significantly, and it's 100 percent due to COVID. The fishing has been good, it's got nothing to do with the fishing. [...] [COVID-19] has very significantly impacted our bottom line.”

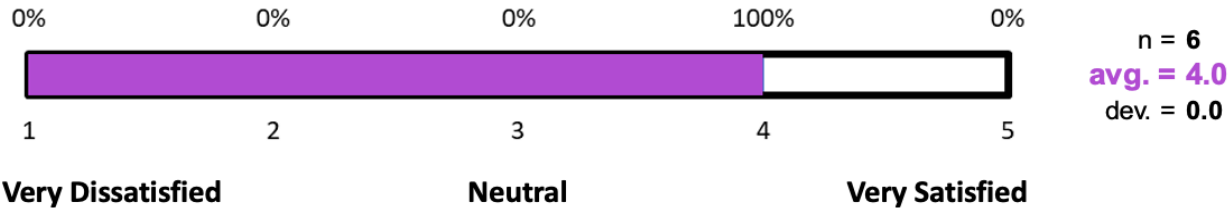
“[Impacts from COVID-19], it's kind of a double-edged sword because we were all affected by COVID when we were shut down. But as far as when we were opened up, every CPFV boat was limited to less than 50 percent of their capacity. Disneyland's closed, nobody could do anything, so we had no space available. It didn't matter what boat you were, who you were, the boats were full [reached their reduced capacity]. But they weren't full [compared to normal capacity]. We weren't using as much crew. They were 50 percent capacity, not as much galley money, but so were we affected? [...] We were at least open, but our revenues were affected.”

“We're very fortunate [to be] running. We're full [at 50 percent capacity], but we normally carry 45 people a trip and we're carrying 25 people a trip. So now I employ one less deckhand. And I don't own the boat I operate, but I do own the galley. And so obviously, with 25 people compared to 45 people, income from the galley has been considerably less than it has been for the last four or five years, but [...] we're very fortunate in that we have been running every single-day this summer once we did open up [again].”

“[COVID-19 has been] highly disruptive. When we were shut down, people had to find other jobs to pay bills. Maybe they found something that paid them better or not. But [we had] crew issues, people not coming back either because they didn't want to come back or they were fearful to come back or whatever. It was disruptive as far as finding crew to work. And I think that was across the board with everybody. Crew issues were difficult [up and down the California] coast. And people maybe made more money, and didn't want to come back, like the extra \$600 a week in unemployment. So it was disruptive.”

Well-Being, Social/Political

6. Job Satisfaction Overall, how satisfied do you think CPFV owner/operators from the region are with their jobs?



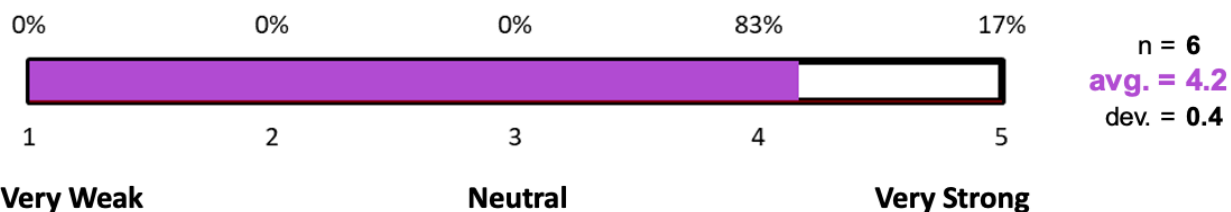
Discussion Summary All participants expressed satisfaction with their jobs in the CPFV industry.

- One participant believed other CPFV owner/operators were also satisfied with their jobs in the industry. They acknowledged how the job can be stressful, specifically due to the projected uncertainty related to job security over the next 20 years. Even so, they felt an overall sense of job satisfaction.

Participant Quotes

“I think everyone is satisfied. And if people weren't satisfied, certainly they wouldn't be here [working in the CPFV industry]. I think there are some questions with job security, possibly, right? I mean, who knows where we're going to be in 20 years? [...] It's stressful, that's part of the job, we understand it, we deal with it, we make do with it. But I think, certainly, the positives outweigh the negatives. I think everyone's satisfied, we wouldn't be doing this if there wasn't some sort of satisfaction out of it, that's for sure. I mean, we're not doing it because we're looking to get rich, right?”

7. Social Relationships - Internal Overall, how would you rate the strength of social relationships (or social capital) among CPFV owner/operators in your region?



Discussion Summary Participants believed internal relationships among CPFV owner/operators are strong or very strong due to good communication and shared interests.

- One participant said that although internal relationships among CPFV owner/operators are strong, there is some contention.
- One participant believed internal relationships among CPFV owner/operators are very strong because of CPFV owner/operators' willingness to communicate and work together; for example, to negotiate reopening plans for the CPFV industry during the COVID-19 pandemic.

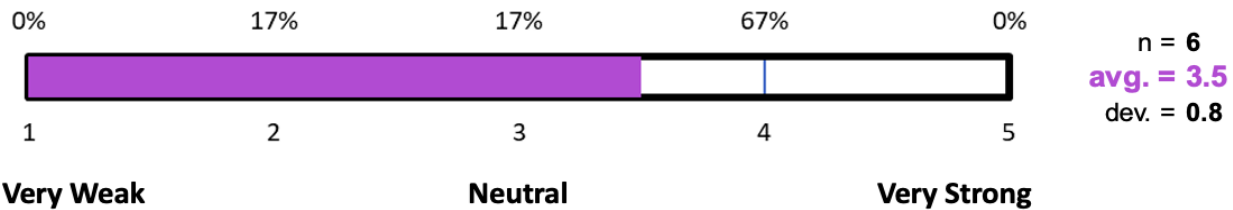
Participant Quotes

“Overall, I'd say the social relationships are pretty strong, but [when the question says] 'the ability to work together and gather together and to trust each other.' I mean, there's an old

saying: all fishermen are liars except for me and you, and I'm not too sure about you. So overall, I'd say it's pretty darn strong, but I don't know. The social relationships are good, but contentious overall... that's how I would put it.”

“I think that our organization as a whole right now is very strong and [so is] our communication. [We’ve] proved that in this reopening since COVID. We all worked really hard to make sure that we were heard and got back open again sooner than some other industries. And [our area reopened] soon compared to different counties and different tiers and different opening plans. That was all based on good communication within the [CPFV industry]. And to know that we communicate well with parts of our association [Sportfishing Association of California] in Santa Barbara County and the guys in San Francisco, it says a lot that we managed to get through this thing [COVID-19 business closures] because we were highly organized.”

8. Social Relationships - External Overall, how would you rate the strength of relationships between CPFV owner/operators in your region and external groups who could help support industry needs?



Discussion Summary Participants’ perspectives regarding relationships between CPFV owner/operators in the Orange County/San Diego area and external groups ranged from weak to strong.

- Several participants felt the local community was supportive of CPFV owner/operator interests.
- One participant expressed frustration and suspicion when discussing relationships with external groups, specifically environmental non-governmental organizations (NGOs), based on their experience participating in policy discussions, including the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) process, the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (ITTC), and the Pacific Fisheries Management Council (PFMC).
- Several participants explained that many people in the CPFV industry either aren’t aware of ongoing policy processes or prefer not to engage in these processes. They suggested this lack of engagement negatively affects opportunities for relationship building with external groups.

Participant Quotes

“In Southern California, the sportfishing industry has a lot of support from the broader community overall. We do have some people that are adamantly against us, that's clear and they're challenging to deal with, and a lot of them are [environmental NGOs]. But, especially in San Diego, I think the Port [of San Diego] is challenging to work with, but overall, for a very long period of time, they've been quite supportive of the sportfishing industry down there overall. And there are a lot of other community organizations that have our back when we need help. They've been willing to help a lot of times and are generally quite supportive.”

“You do have to remember that after being in an advisory body to the original MLPA process and all of that, I'm very, very suspicious. [And] as a member of the Pelagic Species Advisory

Panel to the [PFMC] and a U.S. commissioner representing recreational fisheries to the ITTC, I have had my fill of [environmental NGOs] and their just completely outrageous ideas. They basically want to make the ocean a great big viewing pond, no fishing. I don't think you can include any of those people in 'external groups who can help support industry needs.' The International Game Fish Association is an NGO, and they hate us, too."

"There's a lot of youth in this industry. They want to fish, they're here for the passion, they're here for the satisfaction of being on the ocean. And there are some of us in the industry who have been in there a little longer and [we're] a little bit more involved and aware of what's going on. There's the Sportfishing Association [of California], there's a lot of windfalls for even the recreational fishermen, and they don't realize the kind of fights that we're [fighting] for them. I'm not trying to say we deserve credit for it, but there's a smaller percentage of the industry that's even willing to engage in that conversation. A lot of guys say 'leave me alone. I'll go fishing.'"

Well-Being, Overall/Additional Comments

9. 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 CPFV fisheries?*
- *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 expressed their concerns about Assembly Bill (AB) 3030 and discussed worries about future regulations that could restrict fishing, including regulations related to interactions between marine mammals and fishing activity. They also discussed the status of infrastructure in their ports.

- Participants said Orange County ports' docks are in need of improvement. They explained how in Newport, CPFV owner/operators are working with landlords to get the docks fixed. They recalled that in Dana Point, there was a proposal in the past to fix docks, but no work was done.
- One participant said Oceanside docks are in fairly good condition, which they attributed to the long-lasting nature of concrete docks.
- One participant said infrastructure in San Diego is overall good, but parking is an issue for some operations. Another participant said parking was plentiful at their CPFV business in San Diego.

Participant Quotes

"Down the road with these things in the works with the state as far as AB 3030 [and other] things potentially coming down the pipe, I think we would be missing something if we weren't worried about additional loss of access and things along those lines."

"The challenges keep getting greater and greater. They come from different directions at all times. Sometimes it's the state, sometimes it's the feds. We have a lot of things that are affecting us in our nearshore fishing, marine mammals being one of them, that affects what we're doing on a daily basis, as well as a myriad of other obstacles. But I feel like we will evolve

into something because these guys are proof that we can do it, guys like [names redacted] who have been here for a long time.”

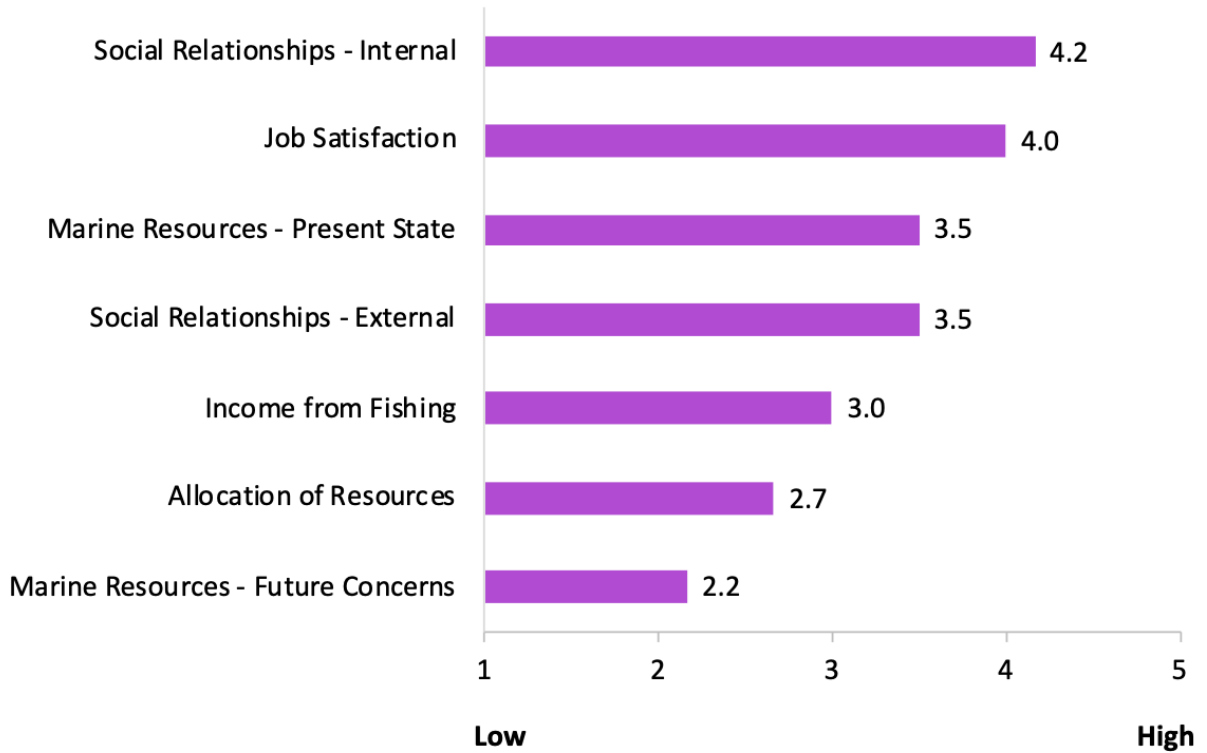
“The only complaint I would have in Newport would be some of our docks aren't in the best of shape, but we're working on negotiating with the landlords to get that rectified. But other than that, I mean, if you're talking about water and electricity and parking, it's all OK.”

“Oceanside has been great. The city of Oceanside has been in the process of doing some dock replacement. We're fortunate that our docks are concrete so they last a bit longer, but most of us here are in smaller harbors. And they're fighting to keep as much money that the harbor makes here in the harbor. It seems to get siphoned off somewhere else, I don't know where, downtown somewhere, golf games, dinner. But what does stay here, [I'm] pretty satisfied with the overall maintenance of our infrastructure.”

“Our only complaint down in San Diego, I would say we've got a perennial complaint about parking, which allegedly there's always something that's going to be done. But I don't know, it seems like it's probably not going to. But other than that, the infrastructure down there is pretty darn good. However, most of it's paid for privately. The docks are all owned by the landings so we end up paying for that indirectly by ourselves, really. But the port is supportive and they're reasonable about what needs to be done and what can be done. And so down there, I would say, other than parking, infrastructure is pretty darn good.”

Perceptions of Fishing Community Well-being, Average Responses for Questions 1-4, 6-8

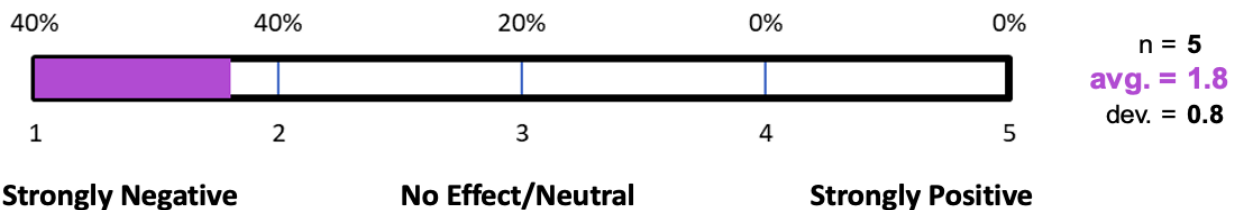
(Note: The following figure does not include the average rating for question 5. COVID-19 Impacts.)



Perceptions of MPAs

MPAs, Outcomes/Effects

10. MPA Ecological Outcomes How would you rate the effect that the California MPA network has had on marine resource health in your area?



Discussion Summary Participants rated MPA effects on marine resource health in the San Diego/Orange County area between strongly negative and no effect/neutral. Those that reported negative effects explained that fishing effort has shifted, not decreased, and believed MPAs do not improve the health of migratory species.

- Two participants discussed negative impacts from MPAs due to compaction and increased fishing effort in areas that remain open to fishing.

- Several participants said they have not seen spillover effects from local MPAs.
- One participant believed MPAs do not protect marine resources because fish are able to move in and out of the closures.
- One participant attributed their 'No Effect/Neutral' response to their inability to fish in MPAs and thus do not know how MPAs have affected marine resources.

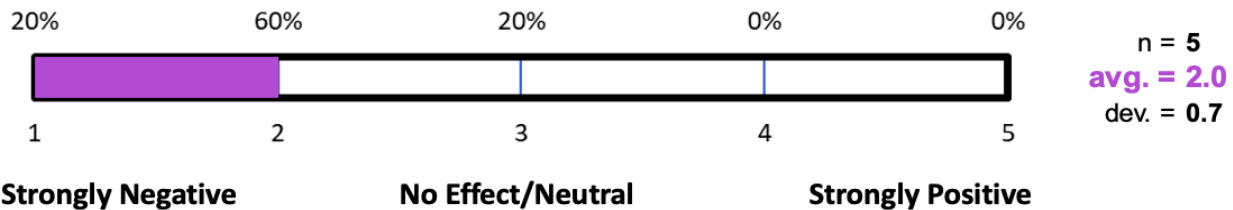
Participant Quotes

“I mean, it's pretty obvious. [...] One area closed means 100 percent of your effort is focused in a completely different area that has zero protection other than, you know, size limits and possession limits. Negative is negative, strong or not, it's definitely a negative impact. I mean, call it an unintended consequence of closing the area, knowing that that effort is going to have to be focused someplace else. I mean, you're absolutely hammering one whole area because that other option is off the table, you know, it's like trying to get a deck of cards with half a deck. You just can't.”

“There's not enough room for the boats. For what area they have, sometimes it's a postage stamp in the ocean. You cannot put five boats there. You know, where they had six boats that used to run, now they've got to put themselves in one little tiny area that's open. There's only so much kelp. There's only so much pinnacles. I don't think the MPAs have protected the resource because the fish move, the fish spawn.”

“This question is kind of tricky. ‘What effect has this [the MPA network] had on the marine resource health in your area?’ Who knows? Because we can't go in there and fish those areas. I mean, they might be really good versus serial depletion in the other areas and the average might be ‘No Effect/Neutral.’ So that's why I put that.”

11a. MPA Livelihood Outcomes Overall, how would you rate the effect that the MPA network has had on the ability for CPFV owner/operators from your region to earn a living?



Discussion Summary Please see the **Discussion Summary** following question 11b. *MPA Effects - Overall* which summarizes the conversations related to questions 11a and 11b.

11b. MPA Effects - Overall What other types of effects or impacts have CPFV owner/operators from your region experienced from MPA implementation?

Discussion Summary Participants discussed many effects from MPAs on CPFV owner/operators in the San Diego/Orange County area, including decreased overall fishing grounds and opportunity, compaction of fishing effort, uncertainty about long term CPFV business viability, and a smaller CPFV fleet statewide.

- Participants expressed that MPA implementation severely limited local CPFV businesses' fishing opportunities, including access to fishing grounds with kelp and reef habitat.
 - Several participants explained that the closure of local fishing grounds due to MPAs resulted in CPFV owner/operators having to travel farther distances to reach fishing grounds, which has led to an increase in fuel consumption and less time on the water for customers to catch fish.
 - One participant discussed the importance of having options to fish different sites, given variable ocean conditions (i.e., currents) that affect fishing success in a particular area.
 - One participant reported their CPFV business was negatively affected by the MPAs due to restrictions on targeting surface fish in the closures.
- Participants said MPA implementation led to compaction of fishing effort in areas outside the closures.
- Participants discussed MPA effects on CPFV business operations, including shifts away from half day trips to overnight trips in Mexican waters, which creates new challenges (i.e., more paperwork).
 - One participant said their business model now includes more whale watching trips relative to fishing trips, though they did not directly attribute this to MPA implementation.
- One participant believed that following MPA implementation, California's CPFV fleet was reduced by approximately 20 percent. Another participant said one of two landings in Mission Bay shut down shortly after MPA implementation, potentially due to MPA implementation. They highlighted the difficulty associated with relocating sportfishing operations to another port.

Participant Quotes

"They [MPA decision-makers] started in Newport Beach and [took] all the good areas from Newport Beach to San Diego. They didn't take the Huntington Flats [or] San Onofre [which are both sandy areas]. They took the kelp, they took the rocks, which were great for the half-day, three quarter-day boats. And we're the people that want fish for our kids, we want fish for our grandkids. We're the ones measuring the fish to make sure that they're legal size. But we're not abusing the [resource]. But yet we're being penalized, not being able to fish somewhere to make a living."

"[We have] less area to fish, have to run further, use more fuel, and less time for clients to fish."

"In North County San Diego and in Mission Bay, we have watched the fishing business evolve away from the half-day fishing trips. Now there's only one half-day boat out of those two areas because of the removal of fishable habitat [from MPAs]. I mean, it has a direct correlation with it. There were 7:00am to 4:00pm boats that fished every day in La Jolla, [...] and all of a sudden all these boats, [...] we had to go to Mexico. We had to take those trips and make them longer and go to Mexico [...] in order to make a viable living. Now we're playing on a 50 yard field in that area; they cut the fields right in half."

"When this all took place [MPA implementation], I think there were 220 CPFV boats or something like that. And now there's like 180 [CPFV boats]. So the fleet has had to either

expand to go fish further north or fish [south] in Mexican waters. But some of us don't have that choice..."

MPAs, Discussion of Specific MPAs

12. MPA Effects - MPA Specific Which MPAs have had the most impact on CPFV owner/operators from your region and why?

Discussion Summary Participants highlighted several MPAs that have negatively affected CPFV owner/operators from the Orange County/San Diego area. One participant believed the MPA process failed CPFV operations by prioritizing environmental NGO interests, resulting in MPAs that severely limited access to local fishing grounds.

- *Laguna Beach State Marine Reserve (SMR), Laguna Beach State Marine Conservation Area (SMCA), Dana Point SMCA, and Crystal Cove SMCA:* Several participants were frustrated about not being able to access historically important fishing grounds in the contiguous MPAs between Newport and Dana Point, which they said is the best fishing habitat near their home ports.
 - One participant explained how the Laguna Beach SMR forces half-day CPFV boats to travel farther to access target species. They said their fuel costs have doubled since MPA implementation due to farther travel distance.
- *Swami's SMCA:* One participant said this MPA encompasses a large area of the best habitat structure that Oceanside fishermen relied upon prior to MPA implementation.
- *South La Jolla SMCA:* One participant expressed frustration about driving through this MPA daily and not being able to stop to fish due to MPA restrictions on targeting surface fish, even when they see schools of yellowtail and other species.
- *Point Dume SMR and Point Dume SMCA:* One participant believed the Point Dume SMR was expanded and specifically positioned, based on input from environmental NGOs, to ensure that CPFV operations could not harvest any fish from the reef at Point Dume.
- *Farnsworth Onshore SMCA and Long Point SMR:* One participant said these MPAs affect Newport CPFV businesses' fishing for rockfish and yellowtail, among other species.
- *Cabrillo SMR:* One participant said this MPA does not affect CPFV businesses, but thought it did affect local commercial lobster fishermen.

Participant Quotes

"Our half-day boat, before the Laguna [SMR was implemented], we used to fish anywhere from five to eight miles either south [or] north of the harbor. And now almost every day, the half-day boat runs 15 miles to the southeast bank to catch rockfish because they can't go south. And we've got the serial depletion issue going on north [of the harbor]. So that's all we can do and we gotta do it. So we've doubled our fuel cost on the half-day run ever since the MLPA process went through."

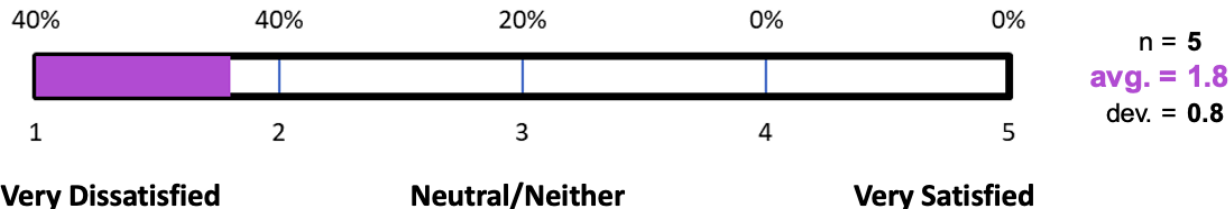
"What we are talking about here is serial depletion, which was supposed to be considered during the MLPA process. And it was not. They specifically arranged several MPAs so that there could be no spillover. The big kelp reef up at Point Dume is an example: the original MPA was supposed to just cover about half of the reef. And I overheard the conversation when these [environmental NGOs] were going 'we can't do that because they'll just fish in the rocky area

that's outside the MPA and they'll catch fish that are coming out of the MPA.' The Laguna [Beach SMR], there's a half mile of mud on either side of it, so there is no spillover, I mean, there might be a little bit, but we're not seeing it. So the bottom line is that the MPA process failed miserably in how they arranged these MPAs."

"We've lost a lot of lower La Jolla [fishing grounds]. Every day, I drive past fish that I can't stop on. Schools of yellowtail, every single day. I just gotta put my feet on the dash and my blinders on until I get to the upper end of La Jolla. Everybody knows that lower La Jolla was... man if you had a south breeze and uphill current, you could have some doozer days on yellowtail man. Barracuda, bonito, big calico bass, very nice."

MPAs, Management

13. MPA Management Overall, how satisfied do you think CPFV owner/operators from your region are with the management of the MPA network?



Discussion Summary Participants were generally dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with MPA management. One participant scored this question as 'Neutral/Neither' because MPA management goals are unclear and they have not received any information about MPA management, monitoring, or enforcement.

- Several participants expressed that MPA management goals have not been communicated to stakeholders, including CPFV owner/operators.
 - One participant did not know where they could find information about ongoing MPA management.
- One participant recalled fishery managers stating during MPA implementation that MPA designations would be reversed if they were not managed or enforced.
- One participant was interested in a management system where MPAs are opened for CPFV fishing for several years at a time, then closed again. They believed this approach would relieve existing fishing pressure on areas outside the closures.
- One participant was frustrated that fishing for surface fish (i.e., barracuda, bonito, yellowtail) is not allowed in MPAs. They shared the understanding that MPAs were intended to protect bottom fish, not surface fish.
- One participant believed fishery managers are not interested in information shared by CPFV owner/operators as it relates to MPA management.

Participant Quotes

"I couldn't tell you what we're trying to achieve with these MPAs other than it looks great on paper and maybe somebody feels warm and fuzzy about it... We don't know, and we [CPFV owner/operators] do this for a living."

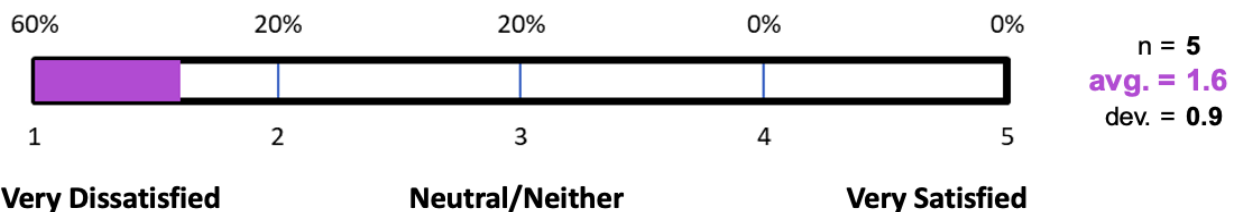
“I mean, they [fishery managers] told us that if it [the MPA network] was not managed [...] and it could not be enforced, the MPAs would go away. That's public record. But yet, who's changing it?”

“You know, there was some talk during the [MLPA] process, [...] about maybe every five years, opening up a couple of MPAs to the CPFV fleet and then closing them again for another five years. There was some kind of talk about that maybe happening, but I can't say for sure that that was actually part of the mandate. [...] Absolutely, I'm interested in this happening. Take some pressure off those other areas. Give us a season once in a while, you know.”

“These MPAs were designed basically to protect the local environment: kelp, bottom fish, bass, sheephead, all the stuff that lives on the bottom. When you've got pelagics moving through an area, you know, barracuda, bonito, yellowtail and they're not really a coastal pelagic, but they're not an offshore pelagic, they're kind of an in-between. When they're moving through one of these things [MPAs], you should be able to stop and fish them, as long as you're not catching anything else, you know, if you're outside of the kelp at 100 yards, fishing reefs for yellowtail, and there's no structure there.”

“My question would be how open are they [fishery managers] to our information? I mean, how really open are they to the information from people that are on it and around it on a routine basis that have good, solid, legitimate [information to share]? They seem to call it ‘anecdotal,’ right? But this, it's good feedback. And it just seems like we give it so many times and nothing ever happens.”

14. MPA Monitoring Overall, how satisfied do you think CPFV owner/operators from your region are with the monitoring of the MPA network?



Discussion Summary Participants expressed their dissatisfaction with MPA monitoring due to poor communication about monitoring studies and results, lack of inclusion of fishermen’s knowledge in study design, and logistical challenges to participation in monitoring efforts. One participant responded ‘Neutral/Neither’ as they have not received any information about MPA management, monitoring, or enforcement.

- Several participants were unaware of MPA monitoring studies or the availability of results.
 - One participant desired better communication of MPA monitoring results, given the extensive information collected from CPFV vessels by CDFW.
- Several participants who were involved in MPA monitoring studies were frustrated with the lack of inclusion of fishermen’s knowledge in study design.
- One participant reported challenges obtaining permits from CDFW to assist with MPA monitoring activities.

Participant Quotes

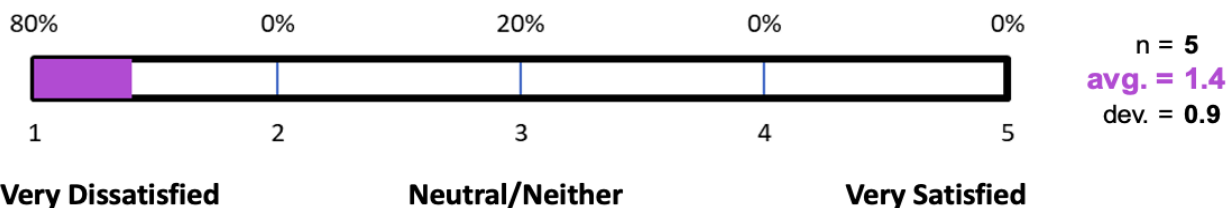
“Who's doing the monitoring? I remember during the MLPA process, we had a handful of scientists on the panel that seemed like they were trying to create little research fiefdoms for themselves in perpetuity. And I've never heard anything, there's never been anything published that I know about. [...] So I don't know. The whole thing is just beyond my understanding.”

“Show us what you're doing, give us some sort of proof. We're open to having their samplers [for the California Recreational Fishing Survey] on the boat so that they can get information. We're under penalty of fines required to submit all this information to the state for their benefit. Where's our ability to have that reciprocity on that transparency?”

“I've done probably 25 tagging trips in the last seven or eight years. We tagged in the MPAs, but it doesn't make sense because we're only allowed to use shrimp flies with squid, I believe, and swim baits. They don't let you pick where to fish, they give you the coordinates and they give you a 15 minute drift. Some of the blocks have good habitat and structure, but you can't fish the way that we fish in Southern California. You can't fly line a bait, you can't throw a surface iron. Last year [...] we're in the south La Jolla closure and we're doing our drift and this big ol' breezer of yellows comes up. And I'm like, pardon my french, 'what the f*** do I do?' I got my [bait] and [the researcher said] 'you can't throw it.' So we watched as this breezer of yellowtail literally go off our stern, and we ended up catching one on a shrimp fly. And the scientists were the happiest creatures you've ever seen on Earth. They're like 'this is awesome!' If I had two tanks of sardines and if I could have chummed and we could have fly lined, we could have tagged all the yellowtail you wanted.”

“I can tell you that the Northwest Fisheries Science Center hook-and-line survey, which I participate in every year - I run one of the boats - we fish in quite a few marine reserves. For some reason, it's getting harder and harder to get permits from CDFW to go in there and fish 'em. It's like they don't want to see any monitoring of them. But I can tell you that in one spot [...] at Long Point out in 45 fathoms, there's been a big increase in bocaccio and vermillion rockfish. I can tell you that one rock in that MPA is working. But other than that, I have no idea.”

15. MPA Enforcement Overall, how satisfied do you think CPFV owner/operators from your region are with the enforcement of MPAs?



Discussion Summary Several participants were very dissatisfied with MPA enforcement due to inconsistent enforcement efforts for CPFV vessels versus private vessels. One participant responded ‘Neutral/Neither’ as they have not received any information about MPA management, monitoring, or enforcement.

- One participant reported seeing unofficial MPA enforcement in the Orange County area by private citizens rather than CDFW wardens.
- One participant believed MPA enforcement is inconsistent and unfair. They reported CDFW wardens do not enforce MPA restrictions for small, private boats fishing in the Catalina Island MPAs. They perceived CPFV boats to be disproportionately targeted by enforcement officers.
- One participant recalled the enforcement boat assigned to the MPAs between Dana Point and Newport not enforcing MPA restrictions; rather, enforcement activity is focused on the Catalina Island MPAs.

Participant Quotes

“The only enforcement that I see in the Laguna Beach MPA is rich people living in multi-million dollar houses up on the hills. They look out with their binoculars, and if they see somebody fishing in the MPA, not us [CPFV operations], but private boats, they call the Dana Point or Newport Harbor Patrol. I don't know what goes on in the rest of them, but the Long Point SMR at Catalina gets violated all the time, and there's no enforcement there.”

“If a [CPFV] boat even slows down to look in [the Catalina MPAs], a charter boat, [...] it's game on. We're the targets because they're not just writing one ticket to an individual, they're writing tickets to 50 people on a boat. It's not a level playing field [compared to enforcement of small, private boats]. You can take any Saturday or Sunday and fly the coast in an airplane and see all the small boats, including the kayakers and the guys fishing in their little rubber rafts, in all these MPAs.”

“[The] enforcement boat in [Dana Point] is never in that MPA area, ever. They're always at Catalina [Island]. You can drive from Dana Point to Newport and drive through the closure and see numerous boats [fishing in the MPA], but I've never seen a patrol boat in there citing people.”

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

Discussion Summary Participants shared concerns and hopes for the future related to MPA and fisheries management more broadly.

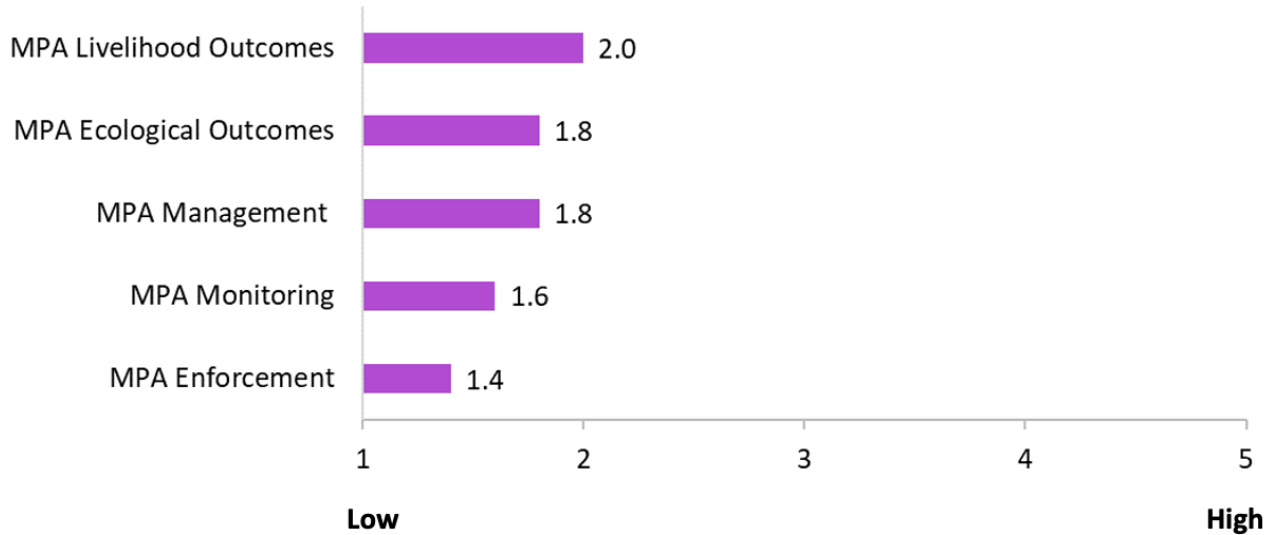
- One participant expressed concern about the potential impact that AB 3030 could have on Newport Beach CPFV operations given the already large amount of area closed to fishing.
- Another participant hoped management restrictions do not restrict fishing opportunities for future generations.

Participant Quotes

“AB 3030 was such a blow. [...] In Newport Beach, we've given up 30 percent of our area already. [...] We're just trying to make a living and protect the resource. I don't think the MPAs have protected the resource because the fish move, the fish spawn. Sure, [the 30x30 initiative] is good for the aquarium, for Governor Newsom to show a picture of a big sheephead and a big calico bass. But is that more resource? It's just a bigger fish.”

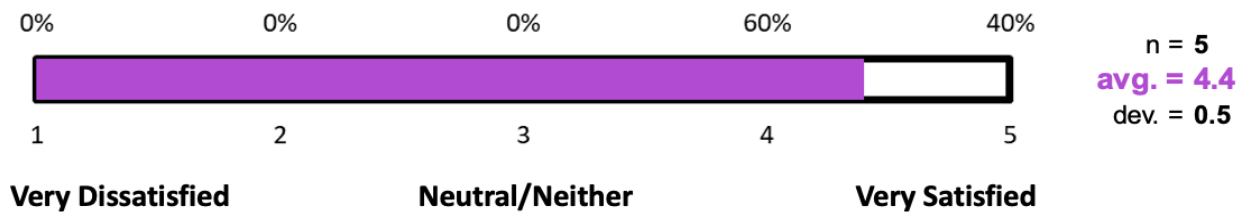
“I hope my kids can see the fishing in the future because I remember my grandfather and my dad taking me out on the *Nautilus*, the *Freelance*. I remember going on overnight trips on the *Amigo* when I was a kid. And I hope that I can actually take my kids and let them see the same things I experienced with my dad and my grandfather. I want to take my sons and let them experience the same thing.”

Perceptions of MPAs, Average Responses for Questions 10-11a, 13-15



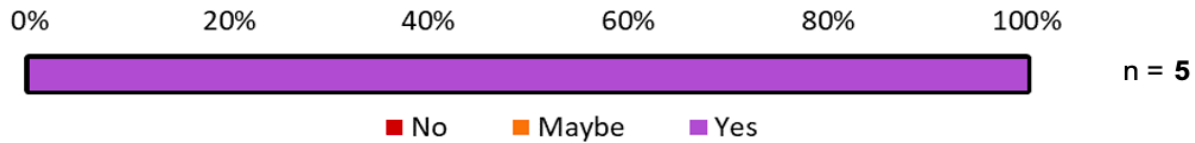
Feedback on Virtual Process

17a. Satisfaction with the Virtual Process Overall, how satisfied were you with your experience participating in this virtual focus group?



17b. 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?*

(Note: For the following figure, the length of the purple bar indicates the percent of participants who responded 'Yes' to question 20b. If participants responded 'No' or 'Maybe,' a red or orange bar would appear, respectively.)



17c. 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 One participant acknowledged their positive experience during the meeting and appreciated the Zoom training and orientation held at the start of the focus group.