

Focus Group Conversation about the Health and Well-being of California's Commercial Passenger Fishing Vessel (CPFV) Fishing Communities in Relation to the MPA Network

Preparation Packet

Welcome

We are very grateful that you have agreed to participate in this conversation about the state of your Commercial Fishing Passenger Vessel (CPFV) fishing community and the effects of MPAs. We want you to be prepared for the discussion with an understanding of the focus group process and the topics planned for discussion. Please review the following instructions and reach out if you have any questions, concerns, or comments.

Enclosed in this Packet

1. Focus Group instructions
2. Focus Group agenda
3. Focus Group agreements
4. Consent form
5. CPFV Fishing Community Expert Well-being Questions

Requirements for Participation

Based on considerations for the online focus group format, additional criteria for participation includes:

- Access to a computer or tablet
- Access to a stable internet connection
- Availability to participate in a short training to familiarize participants with webinar Zoom functions

For more information about the focus group recruitment process, see Appendix C (page 22) [here](#).

Instructions

Please complete the following steps to participate:

BEFORE THE FOCUS GROUP

- Read the consent form (page 5). We will ask for your consent to participate in this study prior to the focus group conversation.
- Read and consider the 'CPFV Fishing Community Expert Well-being Questions' (page 8).
- If you need training in order to access Zoom prior to the focus group, please reach out to Jocelyn (jocelyn@strategiearth.com or 707-832-4088). We will conduct a brief training session at the beginning of the focus group to familiarize participants with the Zoom features needed for this focus group conversation.

DURING THE FOCUS GROUP

- Confirm the 'focus group conversation agreements' (page 4), including any friendly amendments.
- Provide consent to participate in this study if you have not done so before the focus group.
- Participate fully in the focus group conversation.
- Provide feedback and suggestions for Project Team to improve focus group experience for participants.

AFTER THE FOCUS GROUP

- ❑ Complete the compensation information form (will be sent in advance of the focus group) and send via email to Strategic Earth at kelly@strategicearth.com.
- ❑ Should you desire, provide additional feedback via email to hello@mpahumanuses.com.

Thank you

Thank you in advance for your participation! Materials included in this packet will be made available on the project website, mpahumanuses.com. If you have any additional questions or follow up needs, please reach out to Jocelyn at jocelyn@strategicearth.com.

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Date TBD | Time TBD

Zoom Conference: [Joining information to be shared]

Please join 5-10 minutes early to ensure you can log on successfully.

For troubleshooting support during the webinar, email Jocelyn at jocelyn@strategiearth.com

Goal: To collect information about CPFV owner/operators' perspectives on their community's socioeconomic health and well-being. Information gathered during the conversation will inform California's 10 year MPA network performance review, and final results from this study will be shared via a publicly available website that also includes information about trends in landings, value, and participation.

Agenda

Zoom Orientation

Brief overview of Zoom platform, including polling, video, chat functions, etc. to ensure all participants can actively engage throughout the discussion.

Welcome & Introductions

Introduce Project Team, invite focus group participant introductions, and review focus group goals and agreements. Provide overview and instructions for 'CPFV Fishing Community Expert Well-being Questions.'

CPFV Fishing Community Expert Well-being Questions - Well-being and MPA-specific Indicators

Invite focus group participants to respond and discuss Well-being and MPA-specific questions. Participants will also have the opportunity to provide feedback and suggestions on the focus group process/approach, including what went well, what needs improvement, etc.

Concluding Remarks

Discuss next steps, reporting out, and adjourn.

For more information about this focus group conversation, including reference materials, please visit mpahumanuses.com, email jocelyn@strategiearth.com, or call Strategic Earth at 707-832-4088.

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Meeting Agreements

- Be available to focus fully on focus group conversation during the entirety of the conversation
- Be patient when listening to others, do not interrupt
- Respect the opinions of others even if you do not agree
- Explore ideas with curiosity and creativity
- Speak openly and honestly, keep comments concise and focused
- Approach discussion from a place of diversity and inclusion, considering voices and perspectives that may not be present in the focus group composition
- All responses are valid—there are no right or wrong answers
- It is okay to abstain from discussing specific topics
- Protect others' privacy by not discussing details outside the group
- Personal attacks or discrimination of any kind will not be tolerated
- Address any concerns about the conversation with the Project Team

Focus group participation is voluntary. Please avoid revealing detailed information about your personal health.

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Consent Form

Before you participate in this project, we want to make sure that you understand how our study is designed, what we are asking you to do, and how we plan to protect your confidentiality and rights as a study participant. Please review the consent form below and direct any questions that you might have to a Project Team member before or during the meeting.

**CONSENT FORM: CPFV Owner/Operator Virtual Focus Group Related to
Socioeconomic Monitoring of the California MPA network**

Project Title: Long-Term Marine Protected Area Socioeconomic Monitoring Program for Commercial and Commercial Passenger Fishing Vessel Fisheries in the State of California

You are invited to take part in a research study conducted by Humboldt State University, Ecotrust, and Strategic Earth Consulting (collectively referred to as the Project Team) related to long-term socioeconomic monitoring of California's MPA network. Before you decide whether or not to participate in the study, please read this form and direct questions to the Project Team if there is anything that you do not understand.

Project Purpose: The primary goal of this research is to gain information about the well-being of fishing communities in California and about the socioeconomic aspects of California's MPA network. The data will inform long-term monitoring of the MPA network and potentially be useful to policymakers and fishing communities. This project was funded by the California Ocean Protection Council and California Department of Fish and Wildlife's MPA Monitoring Program with funding administered through California Sea Grant.

What you will be asked to do: If you agree to participate in this study, we will ask you to engage in a focus group conversation over video conference with other individuals from your regional port group related to the overall well-being of your fishing community and socioeconomics of California's MPA network. The focus group conversation will be audio and video recorded. We will ask you to respond to approximately 20 questions using Zoom polling software and then follow up your responses with a conversation about the topic with other members of the focus group to add context to the responses received. We anticipate that the focus group conversation will take approximately 4 hours.

Protection of Information: The focus group conversation will be audio and video recorded. We will also be taking typed notes during the focus group. Audio and video recordings and transcripts will not be made available to anyone outside the Project Team. Research records will be kept in a password-protected Google Drive folder; only the Project Team will have access to these records. Your responses will be aggregated with other focus group participants' to create final, publicly available products from this research, including a key themes summary, reports, and a project website. Direct quotes from the conversation may be used in final products to help illustrate sentiments in your own words; direct quotes will be selected in a way **to ensure your**

confidentiality is protected and will not be attributed by name. In reports, quotes and findings will only be referenced based on the regional port group/focus group they came from, not the individual who said them. Data, including direct quotes from the focus group, will be retained for possible use in research reports, publications, or presentations in the future. You can choose whether or not to have your name listed as someone who participated in the study. You can view summaries from previous conversations ([here](#)) to see how direct quotes and information from the conversation will be presented.

We ask that participants in the focus group also help to respect the confidentiality of other participants in the group. Please refrain from sharing personally identifiable information from the focus group conversation outside the meeting unless permission is granted.

Possible Risks and Benefits: We believe that there are little to no risks to you for participating in this study. It is possible that other individuals could identify your quotes, although we will make every effort to remove any identifying information. You will receive direct benefits through the receipt of a stipend for your time. Other benefits, likely indirect, vary by how you choose to use the results from this study. Information will be used to inform the 2022 MPA management review. The Project Team is committed to producing products that will be useful to policymakers as well as to the fishing community to advance your collective priorities and needs.

Compensation: You will receive a stipend to compensate you for the time spent participating in this focus group.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation in the study is voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw at any time. You may skip any questions you do not want to answer. If you feel uncomfortable answering a question or need to take a break, please let a Project Team member know.

Contact Information: Thank you for taking the time to participate in this focus group. If you have any questions or concerns about this research, please feel free to contact Laurie Richmond, project co-principal investigator, at (707) 826-3202 or laurie.richmond@humboldt.edu.

If you are not satisfied with how this research is being conducted, or if you have any concerns with this study or questions about your rights as a participant, please contact the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects at irb@humboldt.edu or (707) 826-5165 to speak to an informed individual independent of the Project Team and this research.

Statement of Consent: *I certify that I understand the information in this consent form, and understand that the Project Team will answer any questions I may have concerning the research study or the procedures at any time. I also understand that my participation in any study is entirely voluntary and that I may decline to enter this study or may withdraw from it at any time without any consequences to me. I understand that the project team may terminate my participation in the study at any time. I have read the above information, and have received answers to any questions I asked. I consent to take part in the study.*

Confidentiality:

1. Please indicate whether or not we may list your name as someone who participated in the study in summaries and reports:

_____ Yes _____ No I give my consent for you to list my name as a participant in the study in summaries and reports.

Your Signature _____ Date _____

Your Name (please print) _____

NOTE: We will reach out to you to confirm your consent and agreement to participate either over email, over the phone, or during the focus group meeting itself. You do not need to print out and manually fill out this form.

The Project Team will keep a record of your consent for the duration of the Institutional Review Board approval.

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Process Description and CPFV Fishing Community Expert Well-being Questions

Project: Long-Term Marine Protected Area Socioeconomic Monitoring Program for Commercial and Commercial Passenger Fishing Vessel Fisheries in the State of California

Funded By: California Ocean Protection Council and California Department of Fish and Wildlife's MPA Monitoring Program and administered through California Sea Grant

This document provides a brief overview of the process for the CPFV focus group discussions that will be held in seven regional groups in California to discuss fishing community well-being and outcomes or impacts from marine protected areas (MPAs). The end of the document contains a list of the questions that will be asked. We will be asking for CPFV owner/operators to reflect on the well-being of the CPFV industry in their region as a whole, looking beyond their individual experiences. To prepare for the discussion, it may be helpful for owner/operators to reflect on the questions themselves and with other owner/operators from their port or region. This document contains a summarized version of the focus group approach. For a more detailed description of the focus group process, please refer to our [project website](#).

1. Process

Seven virtual focus groups will be held with CPFV owner/operators in California (see Appendix A for a list of the port groupings). The focus groups will consist of 4-10 CPFV owner/operators who operate out of each region. We will work with port leaders to help select a group of focus group participants that includes representation from a wide range of interests in the region (e.g. include owner/operators from each major port, incorporate different size/scales of operation, and incorporate diverse fisheries of participation). Given that focus groups will be held in a virtual format, we will also consider access and familiarity with remote meeting technology in our selection of participants. We will offer training on the use of Zoom, our virtual meeting software, before the focus group to anyone who is interested.

The focus groups will be structured to lead participants through a process to score and discuss about 20 questions related to their perceptions of both overall well-being of the CPFV industry in their region and MPA outcomes (see the question list below). First, the facilitators will pose a question and ask participants to score their region using polling software in Zoom (if individuals have phoned in, they can recount their scores orally or via text). Some of the questions are broad, but we will ask the participants to do their best to make an overarching assessment based on experiences in their region. For this we will ask CPFV owner/operators to reflect on the state of the industry region-wide, beyond just their individual port. We will be asking fishermen to reflect beyond their individual experience and to try to score the different questions based on how they feel about their port or region as a whole.

The numerical scores for each question will act as an invitation toward a more detailed discussion. These discussions will be recorded. After the participants score each question, the facilitators will encourage participants to engage in a discussion about why they chose their scores. During the conversation participants can bring up regional, port, and individual thoughts and concerns. There will be about 10 minutes of discussion allowed for each question or question group. To start the conversation, the facilitator will show the spread of

the individual scores and ask participants to discuss why they scored the questions the way that they did as well as how and why their individual scores differed. At the end of the discussion, the facilitators will ask the participants to score the questions again and the group can see if and how the scores changed after the conversation.

Participation in this study is voluntary. At the beginning of the focus group we will ask participants to confirm their consent to participate in the study. A consent form that outlines information about the study, rights as a participant, how the information will be used, and how participants’ confidentiality will be protected is contained in Appendix B. Focus group recordings will not be made available to anyone beyond the project team and materials produced from this project will not release any identifying information about the participants unless they agree. We ask participants to review the consent form before the focus group if they can. We will discuss any questions about the study and the consent form at the beginning of the focus group and then ask for oral consent to participate before we start asking questions.

2. Focus Group Questions

Below are the questions for the assessment tool we plan to implement in each port. Questions that are marked as the same number with an **a and b (or c)**, we envision that during the focus groups we will ask the group to score both those questions one after another before embarking in the discussion. At the end of the discussion, the questions will be scored again. This is to avoid repetition and save time, and because we feel the content of the questions is linked.

CPFV FISHING FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

Topic	Question	Responses
Well-being Indicators (WB)		
1a. Marine Resources - Present State ENVIRONMENTAL WB	Overall, how would you rate the current health and sustainability of the marine resources on which CPFV own/op from this region rely? Consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Abundance - Diversity - Size/weight - Habitat - Water quality *Facilitator to acknowledge there are natural fluctuations and variation, but to try to do their best to describe overall*	(1) Very Low (2) Low (3) Neutral/Medium (4) High (5) Very High
1b. Marine Resources - Future Concerns ENVIRONMENTAL	Overall, how worried are CPFV own/op from your region about the future long-term health and sustainability of the	(1) Extremely Worried (2) Moderately Worried (3) Somewhat Worried (4) Slightly Worried

<p>WB</p>	<p>marine resource populations on which you rely?</p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Effectiveness of management - Future ocean change (e.g., climate change) 	<p>(5) Not at all Worried</p>
<p>2a. Income from Fishing</p> <p>ECONOMIC WB</p>	<p>Overall, how would you rate the income that CPFV own/op (including crew) from your port earn from fishing to support livelihoods?</p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need to take on other jobs - Costs compared to revenue - Income earned compared to similar types of jobs 	<p>(1) Very Insufficient (2) Insufficient (3) Neutral (4) Sufficient (5) Very Sufficient</p>
<p>2b. Allocation of Resources</p> <p>ECONOMIC WB</p>	<p>Overall, how would you rate the allocation of fish resources for CPFV fisheries in terms of supporting the CPFV industry?</p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Amount (e.g., bag limits) - Diversity or sustainability of fisheries - Restrictions that inhibit access - Equity 	<p>(1) Very Insufficient (2) Insufficient (3) Neutral (4) Sufficient (5) Very Sufficient</p>
<p>2c. COVID-19 Impacts</p> <p>ECONOMIC WB</p>	<p>How disruptive do you think COVID-19 has been to your region’s CPFV fishing operations?</p> <p>Open-ended question to be brought up during Economic discussions: How would you rate/describe the state of the infrastructure to support the CPFV fleet in your region?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Existence of key pieces of infrastructure (e.g. boat launches, docks/marinas, navigation and dredging, fish cleaning stations) 	<p>(1) Very Low (2) Low (3) Neutral/Medium (4) High (5) Very High</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintenance, quality and functionality of infrastructure 	
3a. Job Satisfaction SOCIAL WB	<p>Overall, how satisfied do you think CPFV own/op from the region are with their jobs?</p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sense of fulfillment/purpose - Sense of job security - Level of stress - Extent to which positives outweigh negatives 	(1) Very Dissatisfied (2) Dissatisfied (3) Neutral (4) Satisfied (5) Very Satisfied
3b. Social Relationships - Internal SOCIAL WB	<p>Overall, how would you rate the strength of social relationships (or social capital) among CPFV own/op in your region?</p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leadership - Trust - Engagement - Sense of shared identity - Ability to work and gather together 	(1) Very Weak (2) Weak (3) Neutral (4) Strong (5) Very Strong
3c. Social Relationships - External SOCIAL WB	<p>Overall, how would you rate the strength of relationships between CPFV own/op in your region and external groups who could help support industry needs?</p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engagement in policy processes - Relationships with gov, NGOs - Community support <p>*Facilitator to note that government includes local, state, federal government*</p>	(1) Very Weak (2) Weak (3) Neutral (4) Strong (5) Very Strong
4. Overall/ Open-ended	<p>Is there anything not captured above that you would like state managers and other readers to know about your fishing community/industry?</p>	Open-ended

	<p>What do you think federal and state managers could do to better support California's CPFV fisheries?</p> <p>What do you think members of your fishing industry could do to support the well-being or sustainability of your fishing community?</p>	
MPA Specific Indicators (MPAs)		
MPAs: Outcomes/Effects		
5. MPA Ecological Outcomes	<p>How would you rate the effect that the California MPA network has had on marine resource health in your area?</p> <p>Consider MPAs Effects On:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Abundance - Diversity - Size - Habitat - Market quality - Other <p>*Remind the group to focus on trying to tease out effects from MPAs against other non-MPA related ocean changes that have been occurring since MPAs implemented and overall marine environment quality was already discussed in previous questions*</p>	<p>(1) Strongly Negative (2) Negative (3) No Effect/Neutral (4) Positive (5) Strongly Positive</p>
6a. MPA Livelihood Outcomes	<p>Overall, how would you rate the effect that the MPA network has had on the ability for CPFV own/op from your region to earn a living?</p> <p>Consider MPAs Effects On:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Income: price and number of clients - Cost (e.g. fuel) - Percent of income from CPFV 	<p>(1) Strongly Negative (2) Negative (3) No Effect/Neutral (4) Positive (5) Strongly Positive</p>
6b. MPA Effects - Overall	<p>What types of effects or impacts have CPFV own/op from your region experienced from MPA implementation?</p>	<p>Open-ended</p>

	<p>*Note question to be incorporated as part of discussion related to Question 6a*</p> <p>Possible Effects to Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Change in ability to fish in or go to traditional grounds/areas - Change in travel distance to fishing grounds - Change in safety or risk associated with fishing - Change in fisheries or activities participate in with clients - Change in crowding/ competition in certain areas - Change in participation in local industry (CPFV own/op leaving industry or moving ports) - Change in ability to recruit clients and price charged - Effects on political engagement, organization, and activity - Effects on relationships within and external to fishing community - Effects on public interest in/demand for fishing opportunities - Other 	
7. MPA Effects - MPA Specific	<p>Which MPAs have had the most impact on CPFV own/op from your region and why?</p> <p>*Facilitator will show an interactive map of the MPAs to aid this discussion*</p>	Show a map of the different MPAs and allow them to select
MPAs: Management		
8a. MPA Management	<p>Overall, how satisfied do you think CPFV own/op from your region are with the management of the MPA network?</p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fairness - Communication of information/decisions - Opportunities for involvement - Effectiveness in achieving goals 	<p>(1) Very Dissatisfied (2) Dissatisfied (3) Neutral/Neither (4) Satisfied (5) Very Satisfied</p>
8b. MPA Monitoring	<p>Overall, how satisfied do you think CPFV own/op from your region are with the</p>	<p>(1) Very Dissatisfied (2) Dissatisfied</p>

	<p>monitoring of the MPA network?</p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Design of the studies - Communication of results - Collaboration with CPFV own/op - Inclusion of CPFV own/op perspectives 	<p>(3) Neutral/Neither</p> <p>(4) Satisfied</p> <p>(5) Very Satisfied</p>
8c. MPA Enforcement	<p>Overall, how satisfied do you think CPFV own/op from your region are with the enforcement of MPAs?</p> <p>Criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clarity of the rules and regulations - Fairness in CDFW's interpretation of the rules/regulations - Effectiveness 	<p>(1) Very Dissatisfied</p> <p>(2) Dissatisfied</p> <p>(3) Neutral/Neither</p> <p>(4) Satisfied</p> <p>(5) Very Satisfied</p>
MPAs: Overall		
9. MPA Overall	<p>Any additional comments or concerns about the MPAs and MPA management you would like to communicate?</p>	Open-ended

Feedback on Virtual Process		
10a. Satisfaction with the Virtual Process	<p>Overall, how satisfied were you with your experience participating in this virtual focus group?</p>	<p>(1) Very Dissatisfied</p> <p>(2) Dissatisfied</p> <p>(3) Neutral/Neither</p> <p>(4) Satisfied</p> <p>(5) Very Satisfied</p>
10b. Willingness to Participate in Virtual Process in Future	<p>Would you be open to participating in a virtual focus group or meeting like this in the future?</p>	<p>(1) No</p> <p>(2) Maybe</p> <p>(3) Yes</p>
10c. Process Open-ended	<p>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?</p>	Open-ended

APPENDIX A. List of port groups for CPFV focus group discussions (based on commercial fishing port groupings from [this document](#))

Group A: Crescent City, Trinidad, Eureka, Shelter Cove, Fort Bragg, Albion, Point Arena

Group B: Bodega Bay/Bolinas

Group C: San Francisco Area Ports, Princeton - Half Moon Bay

Group D: Santa Cruz, Moss Landing, Monterey Bay

Group E: Morro Bay, Avila-Port San Luis, Santa Barbara, Ventura, Port Hueneme-Oxnard

Group F: Los Angeles - Long Beach Area Ports

Group G: Orange County Area Ports, Dana Point, Oceanside, San Diego Ports