

**Background:** Ecotrust has been retained to collect, compile and analyze information pertaining to commercial fisheries on the north central coast. The project is designed to provide spatially explicit socioeconomic information to the MLPA Initiative.

**Project Goals:** The goal of the Fisheries Uses and Values Project is to compile a comprehensive picture of the commercial fishing use patterns along the north central California coast, using the expert knowledge of fishermen themselves. The purpose of this project is fourfold:

1. Incorporate commercial fishermen's knowledge into the deliberations of the MLPA North Central Coast Regional Stakeholder Group in the MLPA North Central Coast Study Region;
2. Use this information to improve on the spatial resolution and accuracy of California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) landings and logbook data;
3. Develop accurate maps of the local fishing grounds and their economic importance to the local fleets; and
4. Estimate the maximum potential socioeconomic impact of proposed MPAs to the commercial fishery sector.

This kind of spatially explicit information on commercial fisheries and their value will ensure representation of socioeconomic values in the design, implementation and management of marine protected areas.

**Methods:** During the summer months of 2007 (June through August) Ecotrust personnel will interview approximately 150-200 fishermen along the north central coast. Fishermen will be selected based on CDFG data and recommendations by peers and the MLPA North Central Coast Regional Stakeholder Group. The interview approach is based on peer-reviewed, social science techniques for collecting local expert knowledge. The sample is designed to capture the majority of landings for the most significant regional fisheries, as well as the depth of expertise of longtime and successful fishermen. Ecotrust personnel are working with port liaisons to contact fishermen directly, and arrange for interviews with contracted staff based in San Francisco, Half Moon Bay\Pillar Point, Bodega Bay and Point Arena. The format includes one-on-one or small group interviews, with follow-up meetings by fishery and/or gear group in which the information collected will be validated by fishermen. Results from this project will be made available to CDFG for use in the context of the MLPA Initiative and the discussion, implementation, and management of marine protected areas in California state waters—specifically the MLPA North Central Coast Study Region.

**Summary:** This project is designed to bring better information to the MLPA process in California, using fishermen's knowledge of the fishing grounds and giving an explicit place for their socioeconomic values. The information collected in this project considerably improves on what is currently available, especially for several important fisheries that would otherwise be seen through landing blocks. This project is a unique opportunity to bring fishermen's knowledge directly to bear on MPA planning in California. We have designed the methods and process so that we can work closely with fishermen and the regional stakeholder group on validating and verifying the information collected in this project.

If you have any questions or concerns, contact Charles Steinback at [charles@ecotrust.org](mailto:charles@ecotrust.org) or 971.404.5632. The project website is [www.ecotrust.org/mlpa](http://www.ecotrust.org/mlpa).