



COMMUNITY
News in Brief for May, 2010

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Chairman’s Report

By Harry Liquornik, Chairman

With my unopposed election to Chair the California Sea Urchin Commission I sense a real conspiracy to keep me off the fishing grounds, going to more meetings and spending time in front of the computer. In order to address this I will be adding a couple hundred feet to my dive hose and redefining a hose length as about fifty feet - this will help me get your input when out on the fishing grounds.

The CSUC is facing some challenging times. For the first six years, we have had a surplus of funds that have allowed the Commission to fund a wide variety of projects, from data collection to marketing, while being engaged in many ongoing political processes and management issues.

This surplus will most likely be used up in the upcoming year and we are going to have to run a very lean organization so we can remain effectively engaged in these processes and continue funding projects.

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Update on the Sea Otter Lawsuit

The lawsuit filed by the Otter Project and the Environmental Defense Center against the US Fish & Wildlife Service moves forward this year, and the Commission’s new status as intervener offers an opportunity for divers to represent their interests in this case.

On May 5th, intervener status was granted by the federal court judge. This allows the Commission to provide arguments in court on the status of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife’s sea otter management plans, including the experimental population at San Nicolas Island, the no-otter zone, and the potential impacts of sea otters on the sea urchin fishery as well as two endangered abalone species, white and black abalone.

The Otter Project and the Environmental Defense Center have sued the Fish & Wildlife Service over “failure determination”, a term meaning the USFWS needs to determine whether the experimental population of sea otters at San Nicolas Island, and the no-otter zone, have failed in their goals. The Otter Project contends that the activities have been a failure,

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Marine Life Protection Act on the North Coast

By Autumn Bremer

The North Coast is currently fully immersed in the wonderful MPLA process. For all us lowly fishermen this has been a very sharp learning curve, but we have done a wonderful job this far. As of this writing (05/19), we are in Crescent City at the third RSG meeting, the round-two stakeholder meeting. At this meeting the RSG is reviewing all the mapping that has been done, finalizing the round two proposals which are to be done by the end of tomorrow, May 20th. After this, the proposed maps will be vetted by the DFG, BRTF and State Parks. They will then be returned to the RSG, who will meet again in Fort Bragg July 29th after the Fort Bragg BRTF meeting July 21-22, and revise the maps once again. And so the process will continue until October when the MLPAI runs out of money and goes home leaving all of us to deal with their mess.

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REPORTS FROM THE PORTS

No reports from the ports were submitted by commissioners for the newsletter.

Election of new Commission

On April 30th, the newly elected Commissioners sat down for their first meeting. Presently, all but two Commission and Alternate seats have been filled.

The new Commission includes:

<u>DISTRICT</u>	<u>COMMISSIONER</u>	<u>ALTERNATE</u>
2	René Rojas	Bob Bertelli
3	Harry Liquornik	Jack Buttler
4	Christopher Nelson	Dan Williams
5	Harry Barnard	Mike Carpenter

As District 1 had no nominees to be elected to the Commission, the Commission is now tasked with appointing a diver to both the Commission and Alternate seats. In the interim, per state law, the vacant seats will be held by the District's previous Commissioner, Rob Case, and Alternate, Gary Harle.

As their first major order of business, the new Commission elected its Chairman, Vice Chair, and Treasurer. Harry Liquornik became the new Chairman of the Commission, (you can read his first Chairman's Report here in the Newsletter), with Harry Barnard elected Vice Chairman, and René Rojas elected Treasurer.

The new Commissioners begin amidst changing times for the Commission. With processors no longer a part of the Commission, Commissioners must contend with a budget less than half its earlier size, with the MLPA and sea otter lawsuits both demanding much in time and money. If you are interested in helping our new Commissioners through volunteer efforts, please visit the website, www.calurchin.org, to contact your local Commissioner.

Chairman's Report *(cont. from page 1)*

In the upcoming year the Commission will begin focusing more work on improving our own management, which means we have to work with each other and be respectful of others if we want to make progress and accomplish real changes.

I would like to extend a big thanks and appreciation to all past and current Commissioners, to Vern for 14 years of work for this industry, and to all those who help and contribute to this organization to improve the sea urchin fishery. A special thanks to Dave Rudie at Catalina Offshore Products, Tom Trumper at Pacific Rim Products, Bob Juntz at Ocean Fresh, and Jin Soo Choi at Kloofish; these processors are paying an additional ½ cent contribution on their own and that has been a huge help for this organization.

As always, anyone who has any questions, ideas or concerns, feel free to call me anytime.

Harry Liquornik
805 451 2504

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

By Vern Goehring, Executive Director

New Commissioners and alternates were seated at the April 30, 2010, meeting of the CSUC (see list in this newsletter). Some are taking on a leadership role within the fishery for the first time, while others are continuing or returning. We welcome you all.

When the CSUC was first established, many were concerned that an insufficient number of people would step forward for the Commission to function under term limits. But that has not been the case. I feel this is testimony to the fact that, while there are strong opinions about its effectiveness and accomplishments, the Commission is serving a valuable purpose that is recognized by most divers and even some processors.

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Executive Director's Column *(cont. from page 2)*

New officers were also elected for two year terms. Whether or not you would have voted for these officers, I hope everyone will support them and the other commissioners – giving them the freedom to make necessary decisions.

In more than ten years working with the urchin fishery, I've seen a common trait: those minimally engaged are often quick to criticize. Rather than allow people to work, trusting that they've given reasonable thought and analysis to decisions, far too many presume the opposite and that they know better.

I heard Neil Simon, the preeminent singer/songwriter, interviewed the other day. He said everyone he works with is smarter than he and it takes them all to be successful. He also said of all the outstanding people he's come across in his life he'd never met one that didn't feel the same about those they worked with.

Financial reports for the end of the fiscal year ending March 31, 2010, show a carryover reserve of \$58,335. Combined with estimated new revenue in 2010/11, approximately \$195,000 will be available in the new year. In considering a proposed budget for the new FY, the CSUC cut each major category by 10% and voted to authorize expenditure of just one quarter – preferring instead to revisit the budget as the year unfolds.

In addition to required assessments paid on behalf of divers, four processors continue to voluntarily pay ½¢ per pound for CSUC advocacy/legal program efforts (MPAs, sea otters, legislation, regulation, etc.). These include: Catalina Offshore, Kloon Fish, Pacific Rim, and Ocean Fresh. If you work with either of these, please let them know their support is appreciated.

When processors voted to terminate their formal participation with the CSUC, the requirement that a non-voting processor representative be appointed took effect. The Commission chose Dave Rudie, Catalina Offshore, to serve this role. Dave will seek to communicate with other processors to inform the CSUC of their views, as may be appropriate.

While there are many different things divers what to take on, most recognize that MPA's and sea otters are two big issues that will absorb much of the CSUC's limited resources in the near term.

Diver Survey Summary

By Ana Pitchon

The recent survey conducted among members of the California Sea Urchin Commission revealed some interesting points, specifically regarding degrees of satisfaction with the Commission itself, and also future directions the Commission could take for the success of the fishery.

32% of the members surveyed think the Commission is doing an OK job, and 32% believe that it is either getting better or doing a very good job. Some divers would like the Commission to be more transparent in its efforts, and that these efforts should be concentrated on marketing and fisheries policy. Working as a unifying entity was another theme that was expressed. At the same time, 32% of the members have not attended any fishery meetings, and more divers (46%) have attended local port meetings over CSUC meetings (27%). Low meeting attendance is attributed to busy schedules or a feeling of nothing being accomplished.

Members were asked about how they thought certain marketing efforts would affect the fishery. Most divers thought that either a marketing cooperative or collective bargaining would increase prices for divers (39% each). Sustainable seafood certification was not a popular program priority, but a Commission-sponsored promotional campaign was seen as possibly helping. Most (61%) of the members thought that a direct sales effort would be most likely to increase prices for divers. However, in order to get any of this off the ground, divers realized that it would take money, diver involvement, and overall agreement. Naturally, many divers (46%) would not be interested in additional financial contributions to support these initiatives.

Members also understand that there are more barriers to marketing cooperatives and/or direct marketing campaigns other than money, among which include diver cooperation, free riding, lack of commitment, inability to work together, motivation, product demand, quality control, and the possibility of being black-balled by buyers if it doesn't work. On the other hand, most members saw the Commission undertaking promotional campaigns/marketing cooperatives/direct sales as either favorable or

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Diver Survey Summary *(cont. from page 3)*

strongly favorable. So, while divers understand the barriers, and are skeptical of these ideas due to understanding the characteristics of both the divers and the fishery, they are still looking for change in the fishery, and would like the Commission to take the lead.

Lastly, the major issues that members would like the Commission to prioritize are related to regulatory activities – 41% (MPAs, MLPAs, sea otters, ITQs) and marketing and promotion-related activities – 20%.

It is clear that members have many concerns regarding the fishery, and they cover various areas, from policy to marketing. While it is clear that divers would like to see change, and to have more direct control over the fishery, overcoming the barriers expressed in the survey will need to be the first priority among the members if the Commission is going to be able to act as the unifying entity that most people express they would like it to be.

Marine Life Protection Act on the North Coast *(cont. from page 1)*

The largest concern at this time to the sea urchin industry is the fact that the 0-30 hard bottom habitat that exists in our proposed MPA's is not being recognized by the Science Advisory Team. We are working with the MLPA process, attempting to get this information on the map, but at this time we have not been successful.

Much of the conversation has been focused on the tribal rights issue, something that had not been figured out before the process began, as it should have been. Tribes and tribal communities have worked together to oppose the MLPA, and assert their rights as sovereign nations. Meanwhile, the state has refused to recognize the tribes as sovereign nations and has stated that they cannot allow one user group access to an area while denying that access to others. Their suggestion is to make areas that would be reserves into state marine parks, allowing for specific tribal uses which at this point do not have a set level of protection. Essentially they are asking the RSG members to create marine protected areas without the full knowledge of what they will be proposing.

What our industry needs right now in this process is community support. Please show up at the meetings and offer your public support for the work that is being done for you at these meetings. Countless hours have been spent on your behalf fighting for this industry and we need you to show up.

There is strength in numbers. If we can get the Blue Ribbon Task Force to understand how many people will be affected by their decisions, then we will have a better chance at the outcome not being too devastating. I know public speaking is hard for some, but we are not looking for a speech. We are looking for you, your friends and your family to come to these meetings and ask for the BRTF to strongly consider the socioeconomic and economic impacts of their decisions in a region that is already struggling. The best way we have found for them to do this in Mendocino County is to respect the ten-mile safety buffer that we have asked for around our harbors.

If you have any questions about how you can be involved or would like an email reminder when we need you to show up and comment please email me at pacificrimseafood@gmail.com.

Sea Otter Lawsuit Update *(cont. from page 1)*

and they demand that USFWS declare failure, end the no-otter zone, and keep sea otters at San Nicolas Island.

The Commission had asked for intervenor status, the ability to make the divers' case before a judge, because we understand the threat this lawsuit may bring to the fishery and divers' livelihoods, as well as the threat sea otters pose to endangered abalone species in Southern California. Currently, state and federal abalone recovery plans include sea otters as a potential threat, but dismiss them specifically due to the no-otter zone. Additionally, scientists mimicking sea otter impacts on near-shore habitats simply remove every sea urchin from the study site, and watch the results.

The Commission remains committed to ensuring that divers' voices are heard whenever sea otter management issues arise.

Upcoming Events

June 23 rd & 24 th	Ca. Fish & Game Commission meeting, Lake Natoma Inn, Folsom
June 29 th & 30 th , 9 AM	MLPA Science Advisory Team, Eureka
July 6 th	MLPA Summer Public Open House, Fort Bragg
July 7 th	MLPA Summer Public Open House, Briceland and Eureka
July 8 th	MLPA Summer Public Open House, Orick and Crescent City
July 21 st & 22 nd	MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force, Fort Bragg
July 28 th	MLPA Science Advisory Team teleconference/webinar
July 29 th & 30 th	MLPA North Coast RSG Meeting and Work Session, Fort Bragg
July 30 th	CSUC Annual Commission meeting, Ventura
July 31 st	CSUC Annual Fishery Meeting and Barbecue, Santa Barbara
August 4 th & 5 th	Ca. Fish & Game Commission meeting, Santa Barbara

If you have a date for an important, fishery-related event you would like posted in the CommUNITY calendar, please call or email the Commission!



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