



Ocean Protection Council Science Advisory Team Workshop

Readying California's Fisheries for Climate Change

Workshop Summary

February 25, 2015, 10:00AM - 5:00PM
Hosted by California Ocean Science Trust
Elihu M. Harris State Building, Room 2, Oakland, CA

OPC-SAT workshops are open to the public.

Workshop Summary

As the State's anointed conduit to the broader scientific community, the Ocean Protection Council Science Advisory Team (OPC-SAT) is the appropriate venue for the State to access external scientific expertise and support. At this workshop, Ocean Science Trust brought together the OPC-SAT, state managers and policymakers, and other experts to develop approaches to planning for the potential risks to our fisheries from climate change – a shared priority between the Ocean Protection Council (OPC), the Fish and Game Commission (Commission) and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). Below are the initial areas of agreement and outcomes that emerged, providing a sound starting point for efforts going forward.

Updating CDFW's Master Plan is an opportunity to expand partnerships between independent scientists and the State.

Emerging from the OPC-SAT September 2013 workshop, [Advancing Science in California Fisheries](#), was a commitment to expand partnerships between fishery decision-makers and independent scientists. CDFW is now preparing to update the Marine Life Management Act (MLMA) Master Plan, CDFW's guide for fisheries management, and is seeking scientific guidance on how best to approach fisheries and climate.

- **Outcome:** Ocean Science Trust should convene a working group including OPC-SAT members, additional experts, and the State to develop a fisheries and climate change chapter and appendix for the MLMA Master Plan update.

At its core, this conversation is about supporting resilient fisheries in a changing and uncertain future.

Understanding ways to bolster the resilience of our coastal communities demands building stronger linkages—not just across agencies, and academics, but also with stakeholders. Central to the conversation of climate change and fisheries are the impacts to fishermen and fishing communities.

- **Outcome:** The working group should elevate socioeconomic and cultural heritage impacts on the same level as the ecology and biology of the fish by in part incorporating a balance of interdisciplinary expertise.

More broadly, this conversation is about California's ocean health.

Supporting resilient fisheries raises a host of considerations, including community, governance, economy, and biology, just to name a few. Which raises questions: What are we managing towards, and at what scale? What scientific tools are at our disposal to evaluate tradeoffs and develop informed priorities? All questions that we began to explore at the last OPC-SAT workshop, [Exploring Ocean Health as a Scientific Concept and Management Goal](#).

- **Outcome:** This working group should consider framing its contribution to the Master Plan as a way to more clearly highlight the science needed to achieve California's management goals, which is a key component to the OPC's mandate to advance a healthy ocean for California.

This working group aligns with other key efforts to address climate change already underway.

From sea level rise to ocean acidification, to using marine protected areas (MPAs) to understand the health of our coastal and ocean ecosystems, California is working with the OPC-SAT and others to harness scientific knowledge towards thoughtful adaptation strategies. For example, the [West Coast Ocean Acidification and Hypoxia Science Panel](#) (OAH Panel), which was seeded by the OPC-SAT and convened by Ocean Science Trust, is an illustration of the kinds of innovative, cross discipline approaches that are required to support management and policy in the face of a changing future.

- **Outcome:** This working group should be presented as another science-policy effort putting the information building blocks in place to help the State confront the complex impacts of climate change.

Next Steps

Going forward, many OPC-SAT members volunteered to be part of a working group convened by Ocean Science Trust to collaborate with the State to develop a chapter and appendix for the updated MLMA Master Plan. In particular, OPC-SAT members highlighted additional perspectives they hoped to bring to the table, including traditional ecological knowledge, lessons learned from other regions, the robustness of management institutions, and land-sea interactions. Immediately following this workshop, Ocean Science Trust will scope next steps and work with the State to design the appropriate process.

