



PRESS RELEASE

California Fish and Game Commission to Extend Fishing Ban Recreational anglers challenge “revisionist” History of Marine Protected Areas

June 17, 2016 (Sacramento, CA): A week before the California Fish and Game Commission is set to adopt a controversial Master Plan for Marine Protected Areas, leading members of California’s recreational community released a letter taking the commission to task for failing to conduct timely assessments of MPAs and for disclaiming any promise that a recreational fishing ban would be lifted if fishing populations were effectively restored.

Despite the fact that no Commissioner has served more than three years on the Fish and Game Commission, and most were appointed within the last 12 months, Commission [Chair Eric Sklar said](#) no promises were made to restore recreational fishing in protected waters after the state completed a full assessment of MPAs.

“I think there was a misconception. I couldn’t find anywhere where it was stated that these areas were being protected so fishing could be restored in those areas,” Chairman Sklar said. “That may be a result, but I think it’s not a short-, medium-, or even a long-term result that fishing is likely to happen in few, if any, of these MPAs.”

This proclamation was in stark contrast to what anglers who served on the Marine Life Protection Act Initiative Blue Ribbon Task Force Stakeholder Group were told years ago. MPA assessments were to be conducted every 5-years and not every ten-years as currently proposed, and that fishing would be restored if MPAs effectively restored fishing populations.

In an open letter to the California Fish and Game Commission, leading members of California’s recreational angling community wrote:

“Clearly the California Fish and Game Commission of today has developed a revisionist view of history, and many of the fishing stakeholders sadly guessed at that time that those earlier assurances might fade with the years, and that reality has come to pass.

As recreational fishing stakeholders, we challenge the Fish and Game Commission to review the tapes and honor the commitment made during the MLPA process. The loss of our historic fishing grounds has been a real blow to us under any circumstances, but would be easier to bear

if we had scientific evidence of the benefits these MPAs were providing to the fishery resources of the Southern California Bight.”

[On June 22nd the Fish and Game Commission](#) will adopt a [2016 Master Plan for MPAs](#) that postpones 5-year assessments to every ten years, disappointing anglers who participated in stakeholder groups who were told that MPAs would be assessed in a timely fashion.

The [California Sportfishing League submitted a letter](#) to the commission seeking greater clarification as to how MPA will be financed, assessed and managed under the proposed 2016 Master Plan for MPAs, and whether they intended to lift the fishing ban anytime in the future. This clarification is sought so that California anglers will know whether assessments which are rarely conducted or completed due to lack of will or revenue, are really a rouse to ban recreational fishing permanently. CSL requested a response by the June 22nd hearing and to date, has not received a response.

[Click here for Marine Life Protection Act Initiative Blue Ribbon Task Force Stake Holder letter to the California Fish and Game Commission.](#)

[CSL Op-ed: Marine Life Protection Act: The Ultimate Bait and Switch](#)

The California Sportfishing League (CSL) is a nonprofit coalition of fresh and saltwater anglers, and small business owners devoted to protecting access to recreational fishing. Recreational fishing contributes over \$4.9 billion annually to California’s economy, a major source of outdoor tourism and jobs.

For more information about California’s leading recreational fishing organization and issues facing California anglers, visit www.sportfishingconservation.org , www.facebook.com/CASportfishingLeague and [@CASportfishing](https://twitter.com/CASportfishing)

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