



Preserving California's Fishing Heritage

The waters off California's coastline boast some of the most productive fisheries in the world and as a result, the state is defined by its rich fishing heritage. The Ocean Protection Council (OPC) in partnership with the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG), and the Fish and Game Commission (Commission) is committed to preserving and restoring California's valuable fisheries and the communities that depend on them.

California's fisheries are faced with many threats including pollution, habitat destruction, historic overfishing, and climate change. Each of these challenges can contribute to declines in fish numbers and changes in distribution that in turn threaten fisheries and associated businesses. Pursuing innovative policies and projects to help restore and promote our fisheries is a top priority for the OPC.

FUNDS SPENT

The OPC has invested over \$8 million dollars to fund 15 innovative projects to protect this rich fishing heritage.

EXAMPLES OF OPC INVESTMENT IN SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES

Building Regional Community-Based Fishing Organizations

- **The Central Coast Groundfish Project** is designed to transform the Central Coast Groundfish fleet into an economically and environmentally robust fishery.
- **The San Diego Watermans Association (SDWA)** project is a successful model for establishing leadership within a fishing community to improve data on fisheries and build collaborative relationships with fishery scientists and managers. The project also helped to develop approaches for improving the profitability of urchin markets.

Developing Innovative Programs

- **The California Fisheries Fund** is a revolving loan fund that supports fishing communities working to improve the sustainability of their fisheries.
- **The Collaborative Fisheries Research Organization** is a venue for fishermen, scientists, coastal managers, tribes, and non-governmental organizations to discuss and prioritize fisheries management data needs and implement projects that will sustain an active fishing community while improving sustainable harvesting.
- **The California Sustainable Seafood Initiative** is a voluntary program for qualified California fisheries to become certified as sustainable as specified through statute AB 1217.

The OPC invests in partnerships and innovative projects that change how we manage our ocean and coastal resources.

Improved Fishery Management

- **The California Dungeness crab task force (DCTF)** has provided recommendations to the legislature, DFG, and the Commission on Dungeness crab fishery management on short- and long-term fishery management objectives and a statewide trap limit program.
- **Baseline characterization** of California's marine protected areas (MPAs) provides important socio-economic and ecological data inside and outside MPAs that will be critical in evaluating effectiveness.
- **The Data Poor Fisheries project** is developing a stock assessment for California halibut, which was ranked as the highest priority finfish species for fishery management plan development.
- **The Logbook data collection project** is developing individual logbooks which will be centralized into one database accessible from various locations to ease DFG data entry and access.





Agency Collaboration and Essential Data Collection

- In 2006, the **OPC and DFG developed the Joint Workplan**, which included a variety of projects aimed at collecting, analyzing, and applying data essential to the implementation of the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) and the Marine Life Management Act (MLMA). Work plan projects focused on three activities: (1) improving methods and collection of fishery-dependent and fishery-independent data; (2) monitoring to inform the management of MPAs; and (3) equipment improvements to ensure capacity to collect and manage data.
- **The Marine Life Management Act Lessons Learned** project evaluated the performance of the MLMA to date and provides recommendations to improve future MLMA efforts.
- The OPC has funded three major **in-stream flow projects** to inform salmon recovery and determine water flow necessary for salmon survival in the Shasta River, the Santa Maria River, and the Big Sur River. In addition, the OPC in conjunction with Sea Grant has funded a research project entitled, *"The Future of the California Salmon Fishery: Roles of Climate Variation, Habitat Restoration, Hatchery Practices, and Biocomplexity"*. The goal of this project is to quantify the impacts of biotic and abiotic factors on Klamath River and Central Valley salmon runs at each life stage.



The OPC tackles important fisheries issues by working with a wide range of stakeholders including commercial and recreational fishermen, state and federal fisheries managers (DFG, the Commission, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration), non-governmental organizations, academia, tribes, and others.