California Department of Fish and Wildlife Webinar
Informing the Development of an Online California Fisheries Portal
Step 2: Review & Discuss Draft Mock-ups
Friday, March 22, 2019

Introduction

On March 22, 2019, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), in partnership with the Ocean Protection Council (OPC), convened a second focus group discussion to gain feedback on a draft interactive prototype that will serve as the framework for the first phase of the California Fisheries Portal (Portal). This discussion built off previous webinars in February 2017 (here) and March 2018 (here) where the concept of the Portal was first introduced and feedback was received on its design, form, and function.

An invitation was circulated to a diverse range of anticipated Portal users, including Tribes and tribal communities, fishermen (commercial and recreational), divers (consumptive and non-consumptive), environmental non-governmental organization representatives, Legislative representatives, researchers, college students, and state agencies. Approximately 20 participants representing a diverse range of perspectives joined the webinar. Targeted outreach was conducted in advance of the focus group discussion to help ensure equal representation of diverse target audiences and facilitate a focused discussion.

The following summary of key themes aims to capture the topics, key questions, feedback, and recommendations for CDFW's consideration that emerged from the focus group discussion. This summary is intended to capture high-level details and key themes and serve as a reference for both participants and the State of California as steps are taken to further the design and development of the Portal. The State will consider all feedback received as the Portal continues to evolve.

The focus group discussion was designed to support an open exchange of information, with discussion questions posed throughout the webinar in an effort to solicit focused feedback. These discussion questions are available at the end of the document as a reference, along with other materials shared to support the discussion.

CDFW, in partnership with OPC, looks forward to continuing to work with Tribes and tribal communities, stakeholders, and other interested members of the public to further refine the Portal to ensure it serves the needs of a broad number of users. Additional feedback and suggestions on the Portal are welcome at any time and can be shared by emailing Tom Mason, CDFW staff lead for the Portal Project (Tom.Mason@wildlife.ca.gov).

Background

California Fisheries Portal
The Portal has been identified in the 2018 Marine Life Management Act (MLMA) Master Plan for Fisheries (2018 Master Plan) as a way to meet MLMA directives engaging the public in management, research, and decision-making processes, and supporting meaningful constituent involvement. The Portal is intended to be a dynamic, web-based, central repository for the best-available fisheries information, data, tools and policies. CDFW's goal is for the Portal to increase the transparency of relevant management information and highlight opportunities for collaborative fisheries research efforts where students and partners can help to fill identified information gaps.

Enhanced Status Reports

As the basis of the 2018 Master Plan's scaled management approach, Enhanced Status Reports (ESRs) are intended to be more structured and comprehensive and better demonstrate management's consistency with the goals of the MLMA than the previous Status of the Fisheries Reports. The reports provide an overview of the state-managed target species, fishery, current management and monitoring efforts, and research needs. ESRs will also be used to identify management concerns and needs for Fishery Management Plans (FMP) and/or focused rulemaking. ESRs are intended to serve as the framework for the Portal that will allow CDFW to move beyond static documents to more easily update ESRs as new information becomes available so that they can remain current.

Portal Development, CDFW Progress to Date

Since the May 2018 webinar, CDFW, in partnership with OPC, has continued to consider the best approach to sharing fisheries information on the Portal as it relates to ESRs, while also ensuring linkages and efficiencies between the Portal and the Marine Region website. CDFW reviewed other websites for inspiration and guidance. Since summer 2018, the agencies have worked with an external consultant, Waterview Consulting, to develop a Portal framework and prototype.

Key Themes of Focus Group Discussion

The following captures high-level discussion topics shared among focus group participants, including suggestions, concerns, and clarifying questions made by individuals to inform the Portal's development.

Participants inquired about the relationship between ESRs in informing FMPs and the prioritization of ESRs.

- CDFW explained that the 2018 Master Plan outlines a scaled management approach in which ESRs are the basis. ESRs identify management and data needs and inform the development of future FMPs should they be needed. ESRs are only being developed for state-managed fisheries. CDFW is currently developing 35 ESRs for 38 species. Some state-managed species are being prioritized using a Productivity-Susceptibility Analysis (PSA)/Ecological Risk Assessment (ERA). Prioritization also considers the value of each commercial and recreational fishery based on ex-vessel price and landings, respectively.

Participants were supportive of the Portal prototype and experienced it as straight-forward, accessible to a broad audience, and having the ability to grow in future iterations to continue to meet stakeholder needs.

- Although participants appreciated the current format of the site for computer-based browsing, it was suggested the site's formatting could be improved for mobile viewers.

- Suggestions for other information and/or links to information to include in the Portal beyond the current scope of ESRs, include:

  ○ Links to the Marine Protected Area (MPA) maps and ensure the information throughout the Portal references these same MPA regions;

  ○ Add a link at the top of the site (as part of the navigation menu) that could bring users back to the homepage without having to use their computer's back button;

  ○ The species pages could have a "Future Management" tab which would include information when there are pending regulatory changes, upcoming events, etc. specific to that fishery;

  ○ Increased functionality including maps and downloadable data were requested. For example, at the top of the Fisheries-at-a-Glance page, include a range map of the species that could be overlayed with different downloadable shapefiles. Links could also be added throughout the site to the CDFW Marine statistical unit and downloadable, likely summarized, fisheries data; and

- ○ Add explanations of the Etymology of each of the Latin names.

- Participants were supportive of the Portal utilizing information from CDFW's Marine Region website to minimize duplication of information across sites and help users quickly access the information they are looking for. A participant suggested CDFW consider creating a mapping tool that could capture the differences between sport and commercial regulations on the Marine Region webpage.

  - ○ CDFW shared there are steps being taken to improve the Marine Region website, including a more streamlined and user-friendly approach to accessing information on the Marine Region website homepage, as well as regulations information, licensing details, and available fisheries data. CDFW staff involved in this updating process will be learning through these focus group discussions to inform that separate process.

The Portal homepage looks nice and is clear, but would benefit from minor improvements so it does not become confusing when more ESRs are added to the site.

- Participants stated that future functionality of the Portal should ensure the sorting function works properly and intuitively and is user-friendly so information can be found easily. Additionally, a request was made to create the ability to sort by the species Latin name.

- Participants generally felt the homepage contained the right level of detail and the resources drop-down menu contained the right resources.

  - ○ A suggestion was made that the "resources" drop-down menu on the homepage could link to a separate resources page.

The Fishery-at-a-Glance page on the Species page could be reorganized with more links throughout to make sure the information users want is upfront, more comprehensive, and more easily readable. Some participants felt the layout wasn't very accessible and could be improved with links and drop-down menus.

- Suggestions were made to pull the links to regulations up higher in the Fishery-at-a-Glance page while being mindful of how that may look on pages with more complicated regulations.

- Some participants felt the ESR table of contents located at the bottom of the page gets lost and could be integrated into the tabs at the top of the page to make navigating the ESR content easier.

- A participant suggested adding information at the top of the Fishery-at-a-Glance page highlighting whether the commercial and recreational fisheries are opened/closed. Other participants suggested each fishery could have a general overview of the regulations associated with that fishery, in addition to links to the Fish and Game code and California Code of Regulations (CCR). CDFW stated that during this first phase they may Include links to the sport regulations booklet and the commercial digest for fishing regulations and could consider additional updates in future iterations.

The Species pages are visually appealing, easier to access and navigate than a static PDF, and would benefit from minor edits to ensure they are user-friendly.

- When accessing image files on the Species pages, a few users struggled to close the enlarged images because they didn't know to click outside the image or could not see the "x" in the upper right corner to exit out of the pop-up window. Suggestions were made for the "x" to be clearer (e.g., increase font color contrast to background) or updating the "+/-" to expand the text boxes be more visible.

- A participant suggested adding a "back to the top" button to the bottom of each of the Species pages to

improve navigability.

- Some participants requested the Species pages be updated regularly (i.e., more than annually), particularly those where management has changed to ensure the available information remains relevant. When pages are updated, it was suggested to include the month and the year of the update at the bottom of the Species Page.

- CDFW highlighted that some ESRs/Species pages will contain media files and videos.

Focus Group Materials

- [Webinar agenda](#)
- [PowerPoint slide deck](#)
- Portal Prototype (https://cdfw.waterviewconsulting.com/)

Questions Posed to Focus Group Participants

The following discussion questions were asked to participants at key stages of the webinar to help support the discussion and focus the feedback and input provided:

- What is your first impression of the draft Portal prototype?

- How could the visual layout, functionality, usability, and navigability of the prototype be improved?

- Will you be able to find the information you need? Are the design and layout intuitive? Is there information that could be added/considered that could help improve this?

- Do you have recommendations to improve the Portal?

- CDFW envisions the Marine Region website will serve as a stepping stone to the Portal and will host information that will be linked on the Portal. With that in mind, what additional information/links would you like to see on the Portal (e.g. MPAs, regulations, etc.)?

Next Steps

Next steps highlighted at the close of the webinar include:

- Strategic Earth will work with OPC and CDFW to develop a Key Themes summary by April/May 2019;

- CDFW is continuing to develop ESRs for state fisheries;

- The State will also continue to receive feedback from CDFW staff, Tribes, and stakeholders to inform the Portal functionality and design. CDFW will consider the technical web development needs to be identified during the webinar to inform the design and continued development of Portal with the goal of potentially launching the first phase of the Portal in late 2019.