

California Marine Life Protection Act Initiative Common Misconceptions about the Marine Life Protection Act

- 1. There is a minimum total area or pre-determined percentage of how much of each study region needs to be put into marine protected areas (MPAs). For example: Some think that 20% of state waters must be set aside in no-take MPAs.**

There is no total area or total minimum percentages designated to be set aside for MPAs in each study region. The MPA design process is based on the goals and objectives of the MLPA and a set of science guidelines for achieving a sound network as outlined in a master plan for MPAs. The science guidelines do not set a specific percentage to include in MPAs; rather they provide a range of guidance for individual MPA size, distance between MPAs, and information on key habitats and species likely to benefit from MPAs.

- 2. MPAs are designed by members of the MLPA Master Plan Science Advisory Team (SAT) and/or the California Department of Fish and Game.**

MPA proposals are largely crafted by a regional stakeholder group in a collaborative, public process and are based on the MLPA-mandated “best readily available science” as outlined in a master plan for MPAs. In the MLPA Initiative process, the SAT does not “draw lines” on a map to create MPAs, but does provide scientific analysis of MPA proposals for meeting the goals of the MLPA and the guidelines of the master plan. The California Department of Fish and Game also provides analysis of MPA proposals generated by the regional stakeholder group relative to feasibility, but does not “draw lines” on maps or generate its own MPA proposal.

- 3. The private funding partners have final say over adoption of MPA proposals.**

The private partners in the MLPA Initiative do not provide input or have control over the details of proposals. Funding partners (private foundations) help only to ensure funding of the MLPA process and have no say in the creation of any alternative MPA proposal or in the final adoption of MPAs. Funding partners are considered a partner of the California Resources Agency and the California Department of Fish and Game, and their role in the MLPA process is clearly stated in a formal MOU. The California Fish and Game Commission, which receives no private funding, is the final decision making authority under the MLPA. The commission is not party to the MOU and does not receive funding from the private foundations.

- 4. There are no scientific data that show MPAs work.**

MPAs have been studied in a variety of locations around the world, including California. On average, science shows that there are increases in the number of individual animals, average individual size, numbers of young produced, and even the total numbers of different species inside MPAs. In some cases, these increases are very large. Many people also question whether the types of responses seen in MPAs in the tropics would also occur in waters offshore California. In studies of temperate reefs (including those off California) the increases are not only as much as in tropical reefs, but sometimes greater; even very small MPAs off California have shown these same types of results, as have MPAs at the Channel Islands, which recently underwent the first five-year evaluation process. For more information on the Channel Islands review or to access MPA related literature, visit www.dfg.ca.gov/mlpa and select the MPA Literature tab.