



Ocean Resources Enhancement and Hatchery Program

Ocean Resources Enhancement Advisory Panel

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, September 24, 2025
Time: 10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. (PST)

Location: 3020 Old Ranch Parkway, Suite 160, Seal Beach, CA 90740, and Microsoft TEAMS Video Conference

Attendees:

Ocean Resources Enhancement Advisory Panel (OREAP) members and alternate members: John Ballotti, Ken Franke, Jim Hendricks, Wayne Kotow, Merit McCrea, John Riordan, Michael Quill, Rob Ross, Theresa Talley, and Tony Vaught.

Hubbs-SeaWorld Research Institute (HSWRI): Mark Drawbridge and Mike Shane.

California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW): Kathryn Johnson, Helen Killeen, Kirsten Ramey (OREAP member), and Valerie Taylor.

Members of the Public: Chris Arechaederra and Tonie Bangos

1. Introductions and announcements

- Introductions from all attendees, both in-person and online.
- Valerie Taylor asked that attendees forward the [Scientific Advisory Committee \(SAC\) Nomination Notice](#) out to interested individuals. CDFW still looking for experts in: fish genetics and its use in understanding stock enhancement, and science communication/outreach or social science research.

2. Discussion and possible vote on new OREAP vice-chair (15 mins).

- Discussion on how to recruit new members for the OREAP and OREHP.
- Wayne Kotow announced his intention to resign from the OREAP as soon as his replacement has been appointed.
- Jim Hendricks nominated Michael Quill to replace Wayne Kotow as vice-chair of the OREAP.
- Michael Quill accepted the nomination. Roll call vote resulted in unanimous approval.

3. Receive update on hatchery and field operations from Hubbs-SeaWorld Research Institute (30 mins.)

- Mark Drawbridge provided an update on hatchery operations (broodstock management, production status, and releases), current research, field sampling and tag returns, and the Seabass in the Classroom (SITC) Program. A copy of



the presentation can be requested by e-mailing the OREHP Coordinator at OREHP@wildlife.ca.gov.

- Questions and Comments:
 - Jim Hendricks commented that the number of fish released from the Huntington Harbor growout pen is low compared to other growout pens.
 - Mark Drawbridge responded that the number of fish stocked at each growout facility is based on the volume (size) of the pens.
 - Discussion on questions listed on slide 10 of the presentation
 - Over the last few years, anglers have been catching larger white seabass along the Channel Islands; maybe young white seabass have not transitioned away from coastline yet.
 - Years where there have been the highest catch rates, there was a bigger contribution from white seabass swimming up from Mexican waters to off the coast of California.
 - The commercial fishery tends to catch bigger fish; looking at the 32-36-inch size range on the commercial fishery graph, why is contribution at 0% compared to the recreational fishery graph? Are commercial fishermen fishing in different locations?
 - The effectiveness of the coded-wire tags may decrease over time.
 - Merit McCrea asked about acoustic tagging of white seabass.
 - Mark Drawbridge stated that the OREHP would need to look at the pros and cons of technology and what kind of questions we are specifically trying to answer.
 - Wayne Kotow commented on possibly using spaghetti tags on white seabass to collect migration/movement data.
 - Michael Quill asked what the focus of the OREHP is – research or increasing the biomass of white seabass?
 - Theresa Talley commented that the results of the [stakeholder visioning project](#) showed that enhancement [of the white seabass wild population] was not the primary focus for stakeholders; stakeholders expressed support for broadening the OREHP (education, fisheries management, research, effective public engagement).
 - Wayne Kotow commented on the need to define success metrics for the program, emphasizing the need for objective criteria.

4. Receive update on the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) white seabass genetics study

- Valerie Taylor presented a brief update on the CDFW white seabass genetics study. The presentation can be requested by e-mailing the OREHP Coordinator at OREHP@wildlife.ca.gov.
- Questions and Comments:
 - Valerie Taylor commented on the need for OREAP members to assist in contacting anglers who received white seabass fin clip kits to turn in any fin clips they collected over the summer to CDFW.



- John Ballotti asked the CDFW genetics lab to provide an updated timeline to the OREHP.

5. Update and discussion on combined OREAP-Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) in-person meeting and site visit to OREHP facilities (15 mins.)

- CDFW is looking for a facilitator to assist with planning and facilitating an OREAP-SAC joint meeting/workshop.
- Travel expenses will be paid through OREHP stamp account.
- Goals and objectives of the meeting will be to (1) define/draft long-term outcomes and success criteria and associated short-term actions based off Table 1 in the OREHP Stakeholder Engagement and Visioning Process project, and (2) establish subcommittees and workplans for each short-term action plan, including roles, responsibilities, budget, and timelines.

6. Receive presentation from CDFW on the White Seabass Fishery Management Plan (WSFMP) Annual Review for 2023-2024 and the WSFMP update process and timeline (30 mins.)

- Valerie Taylor presented a summary of the WSFMP Annual Review for 2023-2024, which was submitted to the California Fish and Game Commission and received at their October 9, 2025, meeting under [Public Receipt of Documents](#). Helen Killeen presented a brief overview of CDFW's plan to update the WSFMP. The presentation and a copy of the WSFMP Annual Review for 2023-2024 can be requested by e-mailing the OREHP Coordinator at OREHP@wildlife.ca.gov.

7. Public comment on agenda items and closing of meeting

- No comments received from the public.
- Meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.