

Staff Summary for October 13-16, 2026

24B. Marine Resources Committee (MRC)**Today's Item****Information** ☐**Action** ☒

Discuss referred topics and consider revisions to topics and timing. Consider approving draft agenda topics for the next committee meeting to be held on November 12, 2026.

Summary of Previous/Future Actions

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|--|----------------------------|
| • Previous MRC meeting | July 16, 2026; MRC |
| • Today, consider approving MRC meeting agenda topics | October 13-16, 2026 |
| • Next MRC meeting | November 12, 2026; MRC |

Background

MRC works under Commission direction to set and accomplish its work plan (Exhibit 1).

Committee Work Plan

Topics referred by the Commission to MRC are displayed in a work plan for scheduling and tracking. Based on staff discussions with the Department regarding topic readiness and overall MRC workload management, the work plan has been updated to reflect four proposed changes in topic timing:

1. *Kelp Restoration and Management Plan (KRMP) Development – Schedule as a discussion topic for March 2027.*
2. *Commercial Coonstripe Shrimp Fishery Management – Keep November for an update and discussion as scheduled and move the recommendation to the March 2027 meeting.*
3. *Box Crab Exploratory Fishing Experimental Fishing Permit (EFP) – Receive a written update only at the November 2026 meeting and move the discussion to March 2027.*
4. *Emergency Recreational Gear Restrictions for White Shark – In August, the Commission approved adding this topic to the work plan based on an MRC recommendation, with a follow-up discussion and potential MRC recommendation scheduled for November.*

Proposed New Topics

The work plan includes one potential new topic, related to leasing for marine aquaculture.

State Water Bottom Leasing Requirements Rulemaking

This topic serves as follow up to the March 2026 MRC discussion on aquaculture leasing, when MRC discussed staff workload priorities related to aquaculture leasing mandates and commitments. In April 2026, the Commission approved an MRC recommendation directing staff to initiate updates to the standardized terms and conditions that apply to all aquaculture leases, as reflected in the current standard lease agreement template. The updates are intended to improve compliance accountability within standard lease terms, in preparation for several 2027 lease renewals.

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However, during the effort to update the standard lease template, staff identified several elements that cannot be addressed solely through template revisions and, instead, require regulatory amendments to Title 14. For example, Section 15408 of the California Fish and Game Code requires that lease termination requirements and processes be established through regulation; in general, new regulatory provisions can only be applied to leases at the time of renewal or issuance. With seven leases scheduled for renewal in late 2026 and 2027, timely action is needed to ensure updated terms and conditions can be applied consistently.

Referring this proposed new topic to MRC will provide an opportunity for the initial vetting of a narrow-in-scope rulemaking focused on formalizing key lease terms and conditions to improve clarity, transparency, and enforceability of state water bottom lease administration, and to support related needs such as CEQA contracting and reimbursement. Initial vetting could occur in November, followed by discussion and potential MRC recommendation in March 2027; if the Commission agrees with the MRC recommendation, it could allow for a mid-2027 rulemaking notice.

Next Committee Meeting

The next committee meeting is scheduled for November 12, 2026 in Sacramento, with public remote participation options via webinar and phone. Staff have conferred with the Department on the readiness of various proposed topics for November.

Discussion Topics

In addition to standing agenda items (i.e., general public comment, agency updates, next meetings, work plan review), there are six discussion topics and two updates identified for the next MRC meeting:

1. *California Halibut Review – Bycatch Evaluation for Trawl Gear* – Department update and discussion
2. *KRMP Development* – Department update and discussion
3. *Commercial Coonstripe Shrimp Fishery Management, Phase 2* – Department update and discussion
4. *Emergency Recreational Gear Restrictions for White Shark* – Department update and discussion of potential long-term measures
5. *State Water Bottom Leasing Requirements Rulemaking (new)* – Commission staff introduction and initial public discussion
6. *Coastal Fishing Communities Project* – Commission staff update, discussion, and potential recommendation.

Updates

- *Tidal Invertebrates Regulations* – Department update (either verbal or written)
- *Box Crab Exploratory Fishing EFP – Project Outcomes* – Department update and discussion

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Significant Public Comments (N/A)

Recommendation

Commission staff: Refer the proposed new agenda topic to MRC; approve the changes to the work plan as proposed in Exhibit 1; and approve the draft agenda topics for the November 12, 2026 meeting.

Exhibits

1. [MRC work plan](#), updated October 8, 2026

Motion

Moved by _____ and seconded by _____ that the Commission approves the changes to the work plan, including adding a new topic, and approves the topics for the November 12, 2026 Marine Resources Committee meeting, as discussed today.

California Fish and Game Commission
Marine Resources Committee (MRC) Work Plan
Updated October 5, 2026

Note: Proposed changes to topics/timing are shown in blue underscore or ~~strike-out~~ font.

Topics	Category	Jul 2026	Nov 2026	Mar 2027
Planning Documents, Fishery Management Plans (FMP)				
MLMA Master Plan for Fisheries – Implementation Updates	Plan Implementation			
Red Abalone Restoration Plan (statewide) Development	Restoration Plan			
CA Halibut Review – Bycatch Evaluation for Trawl Gear	Management Review		X	
Kelp Restoration and Management Plan (KRMP) Development	Restoration/ Management Plan	X	X	<u>X</u>
White Seabass Fishery Management Review	Management Review	X/R		
Regulations				
Commercial Coonstripe Shrimp Fishery Management, Phase 2	Commercial Take	X	<u>X</u>	<u>X/R</u>
Recreational Take of Pismo Clam (Petition 2025-14; granted for further consideration)	Recreational Take			X
Tidal Invertebrates Regulations	Recreational Take		*	
Commercial Lobster Tailing (Petition 2026-02; referred to MRC)	Commercial Take	X		X
<u>Emergency Recreational Gear Restrictions for White Shark</u>	Recreational Take		<u>X/R</u>	
<u>State Water Bottom Leasing Requirements</u>	Aquaculture Leasing		<u>X</u>	<u>X/R</u>
Marine Aquaculture and State Water Bottom Leases				
Status of Existing Leases and Leaseholder Requests	Current Leases	X		
Applications for New Leases - San Andreas Shellfish Company (Tomales Bay)	Lease Applications			
Lease Best Management Practices Plans (Hold, TBD)	Leases – Regulatory	X/R		
Special Projects, Informational Topics, and Emerging Management Issues				
Coastal Fishing Communities Project	MRC Project		X/R	
Kelp Restoration and Recovery Tracking	Kelp			
Barred Sand Bass Working Group	Informal Advisory Body			
Nearshore Groundfish Management Process	State/Federal Fisheries			X
Experimental Fishing Permit (EFP) Program				
Box Crab Exploratory Fishing EFP – Project Outcomes	EFP		<u>*</u>	<u>X</u>
Pop-Up Gear in State-Managed Fisheries EFP	EFP			

Key: X = Discussion X/R = Recommendation and may move to Commission * = Written or oral agency update