

# 4th Annual Heceta Head Coastal Conference

"Oregon's Ocean: Changes & Consequences"

Florence Events Center ~ October 24-25, 2008

## SUMMARY of CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

### Panel II. "Building and Ocean Legacy of a Healthy Marine Ecosystem"

**Peter Huhtala, Director of Governmental Affairs, Pacific Marine Conservation Council**

Ecosystem-based management of the ocean builds upon our knowledge of natural systems and human interactions. This approach is essential as we face the realities of climate change, sea level rise and acidification of marine waters. Competing demands for ocean resources and space are accelerating. Offshore aquaculture, wave energy, fossil fuel extraction, shipping and terminal operations are just a few potential uses that implore comprehensive ocean use planning.

Identifying ecologically important areas to set aside as marine reserves is a prudent conservation step in the early stages of ocean use planning. Preserving sustainable fishing opportunities can be accomplished with designation of marine protected areas that allow some types of fishing but bans non-compatible activities.

Fisheries could improve with closer matches of management units with the scale of fish populations, subpopulations, and ecosystem functions. Along the west coast of the United States, major capes such as Cape Mendocino and Point Conception are significant bio-geographic boundaries for many offshore groundfish populations and can be used to define management units that make more sense than managing coastwide.

Improved stock assessments will ultimately allow even finer scale management for some nearshore fish populations. Finer scale management may also be desirable for social reasons. Management at smaller scales can protect fishing communities from closures due to overfishing in distant regions, rewarding effective conservation. Community based marine research and cooperative management can accelerate progress toward approaches that match natural ecosystems with human reliance upon access to the resource.

**David Fox, Marine Resource Program, Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife**

**The State's Fisheries Management View.** State resource managers face a number of challenges in implementing a course of action to ensure sustainability of Oregon's nearshore ocean resources. The nearshore area extends from the shoreline to approximately 60 m. water depth and includes the state's Territorial Sea. Key challenges include:

- a large number of species to manage,
- the convergence of numerous and sometimes conflicting human uses of the nearshore,
- the lack of stock status and monitoring information needed to manage many fishery species,
- the lack of ecological and socio-economic information needed to implement aspects of ecosystem-based management and
- the lack of a funding structure to allow development of needed information.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife is making progress toward meeting these challenges by

developing a comprehensive Nearshore Strategy to guide management of nearshore resources. The Department is conducting several research and monitoring efforts to gather necessary natural resource information, developing partnerships with coastal communities and ocean users to develop collaborative research and management solutions. And finally, it is considering new funding mechanisms to provide the ability to address resource management needs.

**Leesa Cobb, Executive Director, Port Orford Ocean Resource Team**

**A Stakeholder's View.** There is a growing interest in the use of community and ecosystem-based ocean management approaches. Port Orford Ocean Resource Team (POORT) integrates these approaches in the Port Orford Stewardship Area.

POORT, a community-initiated and an inclusive organization, was founded in 2001 and focuses on a sustainable fishery and healthy ecosystem. We seek to combine the best science and experimental knowledge available in order to make decisions that: 1) sustain and improve the habitat and population base of fish; 2) provide high quality, high value seafood products to consumers; and 3) support the economic viability of Port Orford.

As a local non-profit organization, POORT works to empower fleet members and other citizens to participate in bottom-up ocean management efforts. These activities include a significant focus on collaborative science and stewardship.

The community-based management model can offer a number of significant benefits as a complement to existing state and federal management structures. Foremost among these is an enhanced level of stewardship for ocean resources among community participants.

The Port Orford Stewardship Plan, developed by POORT through an extensive consensus-building process, provides a vision for community involvement in ocean management and science in our area. The Stewardship Area is 1,320 square miles, and includes 385 square miles of terrestrial habitat and 935 square miles of ocean habitat. The area is 30 miles long (north to south), extends 18 miles offshore (west), encompasses the uplands watersheds, and includes portions of both the Oregon Territorial Sea as well as federal waters.

**Keynote Address:**

**"Marine Reserves: The Need for Systems" Dr. W. J. Ballantine, Leigh Marine Laboratory**