

Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Research Activity Panel

Purpose and Protocols

January 2023

Purpose of the RAP:

- Advise sanctuary staff on science issues¹ that will influence policy (e.g., address research questions in the Management Plan)
- Review of research issues and documents for SAC and sanctuary staff
- Facilitate the exchange of regional research information and create opportunities for project coordination
- Convey regional research needs and opportunities to the SAC

Membership:

- Membership criteria:
 - Expertise in disciplines relevant to the sanctuary
 - Willingness to serve on the RAP and provide community service
 - Affiliation with one or more regional marine science institutions
 - Connectivity to the regional marine science community
 - Multidisciplinary research interests
- Membership will contain a group of disciplines relevant to the sanctuary, such as^{2,3,4}:
 - Biological Oceanography
 - Deep-sea Environment
 - Estuarine Environment
 - Fisheries
 - Marine and Coastal Geology
 - Marine Conservation Biology
 - Nearshore Environment
 - Physical Oceanography
 - Shelf & Slope Environment
 - Social Sciences
 - Water Quality
- Membership should reflect the broadest marine science institutional diversity possible. Regional institutions from which to seek membership:
 - Universities and associated marine labs
 - State and federal agencies
 - Private marine research institutions
- The Sanctuary Research Coordinator will be a standing member. A standing invitation will be given to the Research Coordinators at the Gulf of the Farallones and Cordell Banks National Marine Sanctuaries.
- Selection of RAP members:
 - Candidates nominated by current RAP members on the basis of discipline expertise
 - Selection of members by a committee consisting of: RAP Chair (meeting leader), a volunteer RAP member, MBNMS Research Coordinator, MBNMS Superintendent and SAC Chair
- Members must have an alternate, also selected by the committee

¹ Former wording was, “conservation science issues.” Changed at 9/9/2005 RAP meeting.

² Former wording was, “Members should represent the following disciplines:” Changed at 9/9/2005 RAP meeting.

³ Former disciplines were “Estuaries, Marine & Coastal Ecology, Deep-sea Benthic Ecology, Nearshore & Shelf Benthic Ecology, Biological Oceanography, Physical Oceanography, Marine Conservation Biology, Seabirds & Shorebirds, Marine Mammals, Ichthyology, Marine Policy, Social Sciences, Fisheries, and Water Quality” Changed at 5/12/2006 RAP meeting.

⁴ Former "Ecology" disciplines changed to "Environment" disciplines, including: Deep-sea Environment, Estuarine Environment, Nearshore Environment, and Shelf & Slope Environment. Changed at 9/9/2016 RAP meeting.

- Members serve three-year terms, renewable by agreement between the selection committee and the RAP member
- Meetings are open to all researchers and the public

RAP Meeting Format:

- Four⁵ meetings per year
- Standing agenda items:
 - Updates, requests for information, and discussion on Management Plan Action Plans, led by sanctuary staff
 - Responses to requests from SAC and sanctuary staff
 - Opportunities to facilitate regional research collaboration
 - Updates on regional science capabilities or needs

Responsibilities of RAP Members:

- Attend all meetings (member or alternate should attend at least 4 meetings per year)
- Coordinate attendance between member and alternate and remain knowledgeable about current RAP issues in absence of meetings
- Help address research questions related to the Management Plan
- Invite participation by and facilitate connection to regional experts on Management Plan Action Plans
- Advise SAC and sanctuary staff on basic and conservation science issues, including, but not limited to:
 - Review and comment on technical reports
 - Write brief reports or notes
 - Suggest potential panels to address specific science issues
- Convey sanctuary-related research concerns and opportunities to the SAC through the RAP Chair
- Participate in the nomination and voting process for the Ed Ricketts Memorial Award and Lecture

Responsibilities of RAP Chair:

- Serve on the SAC as Research Representative, as described in SAC protocols
- Chair and facilitate RAP meetings
- Meet with sanctuary staff 2 weeks prior to each RAP meeting to set the agenda
- Debrief with sanctuary staff after each RAP meeting and follow-up on action items
- Provide leadership to improve and maintain RAP function

Responsibilities of RAP Vice-Chair:

- Serve on the SAC as an alternate for the Research Representative seat, as described in SAC protocols
- Fill the role of RAP Chair when he/she is not available

Voting:

- Decisions are reached mostly by consensus
- When voting is necessary, both members and their alternates can vote

⁵ RAP meeting frequency reduced from five to four meetings per year. Changed at 1/13/2023 RAP meeting.

Interacting with MBNMS SAC, other SAC Working Groups, and Staff⁶:

- The RAP will review, comment and advise on issues and documents upon request from the SAC or MBNMS staff
- The RAP will focus their reviews on the research and science aspects of the issue or document
- In response to requests, the RAP may have experts on the panel willing to review topics, may suggest colleagues willing and capable of providing reviews, or may provide a list of relevant literature on the topic. Since the RAP is a voluntary body, for extensive reviews, it may simply provide a list of capable scientists and research organizations with whom the SAC or staff can arrange contracts
- MBNMS staff benefit greatly from requests to individual RAP members on a variety of small-scale issues
- The RAP may also convey requests to the SAC or staff through the RAP Chair, particularly for issues relevant to the research community

⁶ Accepted by unanimous vote at 3/8/2013 RAP meeting.