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Combined Economic and Environmental Indicators of Coastal and Ocean Health: Working Waterfronts

Linwood Pendleton*, Allison Chan and Scott Norris
Coastal Ocean Values Center, The Ocean Foundation

Since July of 2006, we have worked to develop historical data on marine-dependent economic activities and environmental conditions in three California estuaries: Morro Bay, Moss Landing/Elkhorn Slough, and Santa Monica Bay. Our focus is on business and economic activities that are in some way dependent upon the local marine environment with a focus on “the waterfront.” Using these historical data we show how environmental change, management and regulation affect the intensity and composition of economic activities on the waterfront and surrounding areas. We provide three examples, each of increasing sophistication of how economic indicator data can be linked to data on environmental indicators and data on regulation. We provide results from a historical narrative of the link between regulations and commercial rockfish harvests in Morro Bay, a correlation analysis of data that links commercial fish catch to hypoxia in Elkhorn Slough, and a fixed effects panel data analysis of the effects of wetlands restoration on beach attendance in Santa Monica Bay.

Linwood Pendleton
The Ocean Foundation
Coastal Ocean Values Center
PO Box 9
North Sandwich, NH 03259
linwoodp@coastalvalues.org