



May/June, 2026

From Michael Kraft
CFRA Grants Manager



Michael Kraft here. Normally, Ken Bates writes this intro. But apparently, he and Linda Hildenbrand-- that's them on the left, touring Eureka city staff on a waterside tour of Humboldt Bay--got so excited about the first commercial salmon fishing season in years that they motored off and just left me here in Eureka. Alone. So you get me this time.

(They did just check in long enough to say their first day fishing was a good one.)

There's still plenty going on. The state continues planning for offshore wind development. Oil and gas exploration presents itself as a real possibility. There's pressure to expand Marine Life Protected Areas (MPAs). Newer technologies, such as wave and tidal energy, still could affect the space available to fishermen off the California coast.

This edition of the newsletter includes links to a number of informative articles, an MPA workshop and a profile of our friend John Barnett. But first, some photos featuring my dogs. That'll learn 'em to put me in charge.

This Month's Pretty Photos



Noteworthy articles

The Trump administration bought out two more offshore wind projects, including Golden State's project off Morro Bay. From US News & World

Report: <https://www.usnews.com/news/business/articles/2026-04-27/trump-administration-to-pay-2-more-companies-to-walk-away-from-us-offshore-wind-leases>

Offshore wind developers often underestimate HVDC cable risks, where rare failures can cause months of downtime and tens of millions in lost revenue. From CleanTechnica:

<https://search.app/ikdoNNAxSGQLZfz88>

Marine Protected Areas are of interest and concern to fishermen. Here is a place to learn about recent MPA petitions, from our member association the Ventura County Commercial Fishermen's

Association: <https://www.venturacountyfishermen.org/home/mpa-petitions>

Speaking of MPAs, you should plan to attend "Lessons Learned a Decade After Implementation," an on-line program featuring the University of Washington's Ray Hilborn and UC Santa Cruz's Mark Carr. Zoom

Link: washington.zoom.us/j/92097261246

For the Humboldt wind area, transmission infrastructure represents a tall hurdle. Here, the Lost Coast Outpost provides an in-depth discussion on building electrical transmission lines out of Humboldt:

<https://lostcoastoutpost.com/2026/mar/7/econews-report-transmission/>

Staying in Humboldt, the consulting firm Xodus produced a lengthy report on the workforce needs and shortages OSW projects will require. The Redheaded Blackbelt provides a summary here: <https://kymkemp.com/2025/12/12/humboldt-has-offshore-wind-potential-lacks-supply-chain-and-workforce-says-consultant/>. Still too long? The upshot is that Humboldt's not ready and relatively few jobs are likely to go to locals.

As we've noted before, the folks at The New Bedford Light continue to provide a great source for tracking offshore wind developments, especially on the East Coast. They provided several updates here: <https://newbedfordlight.org/vineyard-wind-completes-installation/>

<https://newbedfordlight.org/offshore-wind-tracker-whats-happening-to-massachusetts-projects/>

<https://newbedfordlight.org/vineyard-wind-sues-ge-renewables-to-block-it-from-abandoning-project/>

Meet Bay Area Fisherman and CFRA Board Member John Barnett



John Barnett counts either as a second- or a third-generation commercial fishermen, depending on how you figure it. (His father loved fishing recreationally but worked for the phone company.) John fished with his grandfather his whole life, he says. In addition, grandad got John jobs on passenger carrying boats, sports fishing in Dana Point, where he learned many aspects of running a boat, from rigging everything to running a business.

I asked John what kept him here, fishing in Northern California. Although he went to Cal State Fullerton, studying a mix of commercial photography, advertising, and business, he ultimately decided he wanted to make his living on the ocean. He and his family moved to San Francisco, where worked at a lighthouse-based hospitality operation, saved up, and then bought a party boat he named the *Chubasco*, a word that refers to a kind of Mexican monsoon. John drove that boat from its location in Rhode Island to Texas, trailered it to San Diego, and then drove it up to San Francisco Bay.

John believes that the worst of the downturn of San Francisco tourism is in the rear-view mirror. Though not easily evident on Fishermen's Wharf, he's read that tourism is increasing. And although nothing like the heyday before Covid, John expresses confidence that the city's clean-up efforts are going to help tourism industry. That will hopefully help his charter business on the *Amigo*, his charter boat.

I asked where he thought the CFRA should go in the future. He replied, “It was so important to have CFRA oppose wind power” in the way it was being rolled out, “unregulated, with no thought, no concern, and not enough attention paid to how giant ugly-ass windmills off the coast will affect the ocean and us.” He likened it to damming rivers without thinking about all of the consequences. Going forward, John believes the CFRA can be a key organization that advocates on behalf of fishermen “when it comes to protecting our space on the ocean.” That could apply to oil and gas projects, tidal energy, or Marine Life Protected Areas (MPAs).

After three years of cancellations, John looks forward to an actual commercial salmon season on the *Topoleno*, his 40-foot commercial boat. In the end, he says, “I really love fishing. It’s a choice to make good money, but less than in other things I’ve done or could have done.”

Most Recent Board Report

All CFRA board reports are published. Here is the most recent one, for the first quarter of 2026.

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