



CALIFORNIA WETFISH PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION

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CALIFORNIA WETFISH PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION WELCOMES A NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

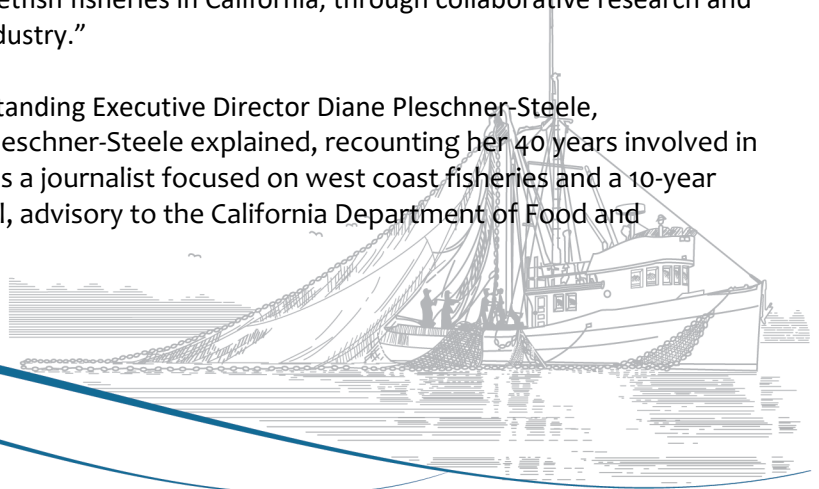
Longstanding Executive Director Diane Pleschner-Steele steps down after 40 years in fisheries

Buellton, CA, May 23, 2022 On May 18, 2022, the California Wetfish Producers Association (CWPA) welcomed Mark Fina, Mark Fina Consulting Services, as the Association's new Executive Director. Mark brings long experience in North Pacific fisheries to his new position. He started his analytical career working for the Anchorage-based consulting firm Northern Economics. After a year, he chose to focus his work on fisheries, taking a position as senior economist for the North Pacific Fishery Management Council. There, he led the analysis of several major fisheries management actions regulating the groundfish and crab fisheries off the state of Alaska. In this role, he also participated in a broad range of community, industry, and stakeholder forums across the state.

After a decade with the North Pacific Council, he joined United States Seafoods where he represented the company in the fishery regulatory process. He also served as President of the Alaska Seafood Cooperative, the entity overseeing the harvest of quota in the offshore Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands multispecies groundfish fisheries. For the past five years, he has worked in seafood certification, and currently serves as the chair of the board of the Responsible Fisheries Management program, a North American seafood certification program benchmarked by the Global Sustainable Seafood Initiative. Mark has a J.D. from the University of Minnesota and a Ph.D. in Agricultural and Applied Economics from Virginia Tech.

Mark commented, "I am very happy to be joining the CWPA and look forward to working with members to promote the sustainability of the coastal pelagic/wetfish fisheries in California, through collaborative research and facilitating dialogue both within and outside the industry."

Mark takes the helm of CWPA from outgoing longstanding Executive Director Diane Pleschner-Steele, "My family has been urging me to slow down," Pleschner-Steele explained, recounting her 40 years involved in fishery issues, including more than two decades as a journalist focused on west coast fisheries and a 10-year stint as manager of the California Seafood Council, advisory to the California Department of Food and



Representing California's Historic Fishery

Agriculture. She has spent the past 18 years at the helm of CWPA, a non-profit organization that she created with help from the CWPA Board. She recently retired from 18 years on the Pacific Fishery Management Council's Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel.

Although Pleschner-Steele is stepping down as Executive Director of CWPA, the Board has asked her to stay involved part-time behind the scenes to help manage CWPA's extensive research program. CWPA partners with both the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Southwest Fisheries Science Center, conducting collaborative field surveys targeting sardine, anchovy and market squid. The goal of these projects is to improve the science governing fishery management policies.

California's fishing industry faces myriad challenges in the coming years, with offshore wind development on the fast track, NOAA's initiative to foster ocean aquaculture recently identifying Aquaculture Opportunity Areas in Southern California, and the national and California campaigns to conserve 30 percent of all land and coastal waters by the year 2030, all threatening to usurp valuable fishing grounds. "The future of fishing as we know it is threatened," Pleschner-Steele said, "But the future of California's historic wetfish industry lies in improving the science underpinning fishery management." She added, "I'm delighted that Mark has joined this association. I'm happy to help but I'm confident that this association will be in good hands with Mark Fina manning the helm of CWPA."

Mark Fina is Executive Director of the California Wetfish Producers Association, a nonprofit dedicated to research and to promote sustainable Wetfish resources. More info at www.californiawetfish.org

