

HABITAT COMMITTEE REPORT ON
COUNCIL OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR REVIEWING AND INCORPORATING
PROPOSED CHANGES TO GROUND FISH ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT (EFH)

The Habitat Committee (HC) reviewed the proposed Council Operating Procedure (COP) for Groundfish Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) Review and Modification. Our comments cover the composition and duties of the Groundfish EFH Oversight Committee and the Review Procedure timelines.

The HC was uncertain of Council intent for composition and duties of the Oversight Committee. The HC believes that any such committee should include technical expertise adequate to review proposals to modify habitat areas of particular concern. The HC suggests that any new committees draw on a wide variety of fisheries constituents including various commercial gear types, recreational interests, and government agencies, including National Marine Fisheries Service EFH consultation staff.

We understand the two-year EFH review to address fishery management issues related to fishing impacts on habitat, rather than the designation of EFH per se. To clarify this, the HC recommends the following change: On page 4 of the Agenda Item B.4.a, Attachment 1 (Draft COP), propose striking “EFH and” in the first sentence under “short term EFH reviews.”

PFMC
06/12/07