

## GROUND FISH ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT (EFH) AND ROCK FISH CONSERVATION AREA (RCA) AMENDMENT 28 ALTERNATIVES

At the November 2016 meeting, the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) will consider an analytical document (Agenda Item F.4.a, Project Team Report) describing alternatives for modifying Pacific Coast groundfish essential fish habitat (EFH) and trawl Rockfish Conservation Areas (RCAs). The Project Team consists of staff from the Council, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), the Northwest Fisheries Science Center (NWFS), with support from SoundGIS, Inc.

The Council adopted a range of alternatives (ROA) at its September 2015 meeting, and narrowed the ROA at its April 2016 meeting. Also in April, the Council identified 7 of the 10 alternatives as preliminary preferred alternatives (numbers 4-10 below). At this meeting, there are three subject areas under consideration, each containing two to four alternatives (numbers 1-3 below):

### Fishery management alternatives:

1. EFHCA changes contained in public proposals (including the Collaborative proposal)
2. New EFHCAs within current RCA boundaries
3. Adjustments to the trawl RCA
4. Use of MSA Sec. 303(b) discretionary authorities in waters deeper than 3500m (preliminary preferred alternative, PPA)

### Administrative alternatives:

5. Life history descriptions, EFH descriptions, and major prey items (FMP Appendix B) (PPA)
6. Fishing gear effects (FMP Appendix C Part 2) (PPA)
7. Non-fishing effects and conservation measures (Appendix D ) (PPA)
8. Information and Research Needs (PPA)
9. Review and Revision Process (PPA)
10. Clarifications and Corrections (PPA)

In this document, the alternatives are analyzed individually, as per Council direction from April 2016. However, there is a brief integrated analysis section at the end, comparing the EFH-based alternatives to a scenario in which the trawl RCA is removed. The Project Team anticipates a much more detailed integrated analysis after the Council selects a PPA. This analysis focuses almost exclusively on habitat-based metrics. An analysis of landings and revenue metrics is expected as a supplemental briefing book item.

Subject areas 5 through 10 are administrative alternatives that do not need to be analyzed as part of this action. These items are products that can be developed and appended to the FMP after final action and Secretarial approval. The Project Team expects to develop a schedule to finalize those products, which will be dependent on workload, priorities, and available staffing.

**Council Action:**

1. **Consider and discuss the alternatives and the analysis.**
2. **Identify PPA.**
3. **Provide Additional Guidance.**

**Reference Materials:**

1. Agenda Item F.4.a, Project Team Report.
2. Agenda Item F.4.c, Public Comment.

**Agenda Order:**

F.4 Groundfish Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) and Rockfish Conservation Area (RCA) Amendment 28 Alternatives

- a. Project Team Report
- b. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies and Management Entities
- c. Public Comment
- d. **Council Action:** Consider Revisions to the Range of Alternatives, Identify Preliminary Preferred Alternatives, and Provide Additional Guidance as Necessary

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