

SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE REPORT ON
SALMON ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT (EFH) REVIEW

Mr. Kerry Griffin provided the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) with a situation summary and an overview of issues related to the evaluation and designation of Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) and Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (HAPCs) for Pacific Salmon. The EFH Review Oversight Panel provided two documents for SSC review: a review of Pacific Salmon EFH and a bibliography of pertinent information for the 2010 EFH update.

Mr. Griffin highlighted, and the SSC discussed, three major topics: 1) HAPCs are not currently designated for Pacific Salmon, 2) dams that are impassable generally limit the upstream extent of EFH, and 3) stock distribution maps may be out of date or inaccurate.

The SSC notes that EFH designation is based on imprecise science and is generally consistent with fish presence. There are many areas (e.g., coho salmon south of San Francisco) where ambiguity exists, particularly at the edge of a species' range.

The SSC recommends that HAPC designation criteria be clearly defined (e.g., rarity of habitat type). This is complicated by the nature of the HAPCs, some of which are geographically specific (e.g., San Francisco Bay), whereas others are more generically described (e.g., complex channels). The SSC suggests that physical description of habitat and its function should be consistently included for each HAPC in the review.

The SSC also notes that clear criteria for the relationship between fish presence, current and historical, and the designation of EFH are needed, as are criteria for the importance and potential for access to habitat above dams when designating EFH.

The SSC generally agrees with the five types of habitat identified by the Oversight Panel as potential HAPCs, but requests better documentation of why they were included and others were not.

The SSC highlights the value of documenting the process by which new threats were added to the list in Table 4 and fisheries and gear were included in Table 5.