

## HABITAT COMMITTEE REPORT ON OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT

The Habitat Committee (HC) discussed the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) report submitted under Open Public Comment (E.1.a, Supplemental NMFS Report) on an initiative to determine fisheries-specific habitat objectives, and presented by NMFS members on the HC. The initiative's goal is to develop proposals for examining habitat objectives for commercially harvested stocks and for defining the process by which these objectives might be determined. The proposal is due to NMFS Office of Habitat Conservation in mid-May, therefore NMFS is seeking input from the Council on the goals and concept now.

The HC enthusiastically supports the project goals and notes they are consistent with Council research and data needs. HC suggests that the Council send a letter of support for the proposal concept by the first week of May in order to improve its chances of funding. NMFS will keep the Council informed as the proposal moves forward.

The initiative currently has limited funding, so the HC recommends any proposal consider well-studied stocks and leverage other existing habitat assessment efforts (e.g., Pacific Marine and Estuarine Fish Habitat Partnership habitat assessments). HC members noted the importance for considering impacts of climate change, and for utilizing datasets with sufficient power to detect habitat-specific signals useful for establishing objectives from spatiotemporal noise. HC members representing California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Sanctuaries suggested their existing monitoring and datasets may help inform this proposal.

PFMC  
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