

ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT (EFH) REVIEW PHASE 2 REPORT AND PROPOSALS TO MODIFY EFH

The Pacific Coast groundfish essential fish habitat (EFH) review was initiated in December 2010. The Essential Fish Habitat Review Committee (EFHRC) met in person or via conference call several times since then, and compiled a report summarizing new and newly-available information regarding physical and biogenic habitats, habitat models, trophic interactions, and fishing and non-fishing activities that may affect groundfish EFH.

At its September 2012 meeting, the Council considered the EFHRC's Phase 1 Report, which included substantial new and newly-available information regarding Pacific Coast groundfish habitat associations, fishing activities, prey species, and many other elements of groundfish EFH. At its April 2013 meeting, the Council received and considered a National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) synthesis document that provided additional analysis and interpretation of the information and data compiled in the Phase 1 Report. At that point, the Council elected to issue the RFP for potential changes to elements of groundfish EFH. Eight proposals were received by the July 31, 2013 deadline, and those were summarized in a September Council meeting Informational Report (September 2013 Informational Report 3). The proposals and supporting materials are included in the November Briefing Book materials as electronic-only attachments (Agenda Items H.7.a, Attachments 1-8). Three letters from the National Ocean Service Office of Marine Sanctuaries West Coast Region, Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary, and the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary are included as agency reports under Agenda Item H.7.c.

The EFHRC met in September 2013 to evaluate the eight proposals and initiate completion of the Phase 2 Report, which will provide information regarding the evaluation of the proposals, as well as recommendations from the EFHRC to the Council. These recommendations are intended to answer the general question of whether there is new or newly-available information that warrants changes to current groundfish EFH. In its meeting, the EFHRC discussed whether the Council should move forward in considering modifications in all nine EFH subject areas:

- Identification and Description
- Magnuson Act fishing activities that may adversely affect EFH
- Non-MSA fishing activities that may adversely affect EFH
- Non-fishing activities that may adversely affect EFH
- Cumulative effects
- Conservation and enhancement
- Prey species
- Habitat areas of particular concern
- Research and information needs

The EFHRC also discussed whether each of the eight proposals should remain in consideration and available to inform the development of alternatives subsequent to the November 2013 meeting.

At the time of the Briefing Book deadline, the Phase 2 Report had not been fully reviewed by all members of the EFHRC due to the Federal government shutdown. Therefore, the Phase 2 Report and associated recommendations are anticipated to be submitted supplementally for Council, Advisory Body, and public review.

Council Action:

- 1. Consider the Phase 2 Report.**
- 2. Establish a process to consider changes to groundfish EFH.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item H.7.a, Attachment 1: Environmental Defense Fund Proposal (*Electronic only*).
2. Agenda Item H.7.a, Attachment 2: Fishermen's Marketing Association Proposal (*Electronic only*).
3. Agenda Item H.7.a, Attachment 3: Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary Proposal and Cover Letter (*Electronic only*).
4. Agenda Item H.7.a, Attachment 4: Greenpeace Proposal and Supporting Materials (*Electronic only*).
5. Agenda Item H.7.a, Attachment 5: Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Proposal and Supporting Materials (*Electronic only*).
6. Agenda Item H.7.a, Attachment 6: Marine Conservation Institute Proposal and Supporting Materials (*Electronic only*).
7. Agenda Item H.7.a, Attachment 7: Oceana/Natural Resource Conservation Council/Ocean Conservancy Proposal and Supporting Materials (*Electronic only*).
8. Agenda Item H.7.a, Attachment 8: Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary/Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Proposal and Cover Letter (*Electronic only*).
9. Agenda Item H.7.c, National Ocean Service, Office of Marine Sanctuaries West Coast Region Report.
10. Agenda Item H.7.c, Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary Report.
11. Agenda Item H.7.c, Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary Report.
12. Agenda Item H.7.d, Public Comment.

Agenda Order:

- a. Agenda Item Overview
 - b. Report of the Essential Fish Habitat Review Committee
 - c. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies and Management Entities
 - d. Public Comment
 - e. **Council Action:** Consider Proposals and Process for Modifying Groundfish EFH
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PFMC
10/15/13