

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

Groundfish EFH

The Habitat Committee (HC) believes there is sufficient new information to warrant revision of amendment 19 regarding groundfish essential fish habitat (EFH). This information is well-documented in the Phase I report and National Marine Fisheries Service synthesis document. As such, the HC recommends moving ahead with Phase III while concurrently completing the Phase II report. The HC suggests advancing all proposals into Phase III for further analysis, not limiting the scope of nine EFH subject areas, and considering existing discretionary deep sea coral authorities and protections under the Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA Section 303(b)(2)(B)).

The HC believes that the final Phase II report will be valuable, and recommends that the report be completed well in advance of the March meeting to allow thorough review by Council advisory bodies and the public, and to inform the scoping process for Phase III.

PFMC
11/01/13