

# Groundfish EFH 5-Year Review

Continuing to Lead the Way  
in Marine Spatial Planning

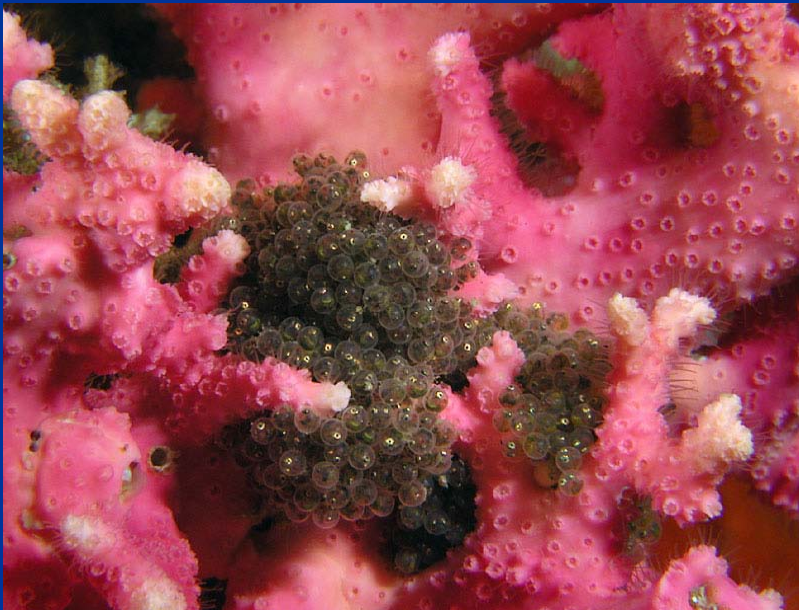
Geoff Shester, Ph.D.



Hydrocorals in Carmel Bay (90 ft.), Geoff Shester

# 2006 EFH Closures

- A huge step forward for precautionary ecosystem-based management by the PFMC
- Protected over 135,000 square miles of habitat while maintaining vibrant fisheries along the U.S. West Coast



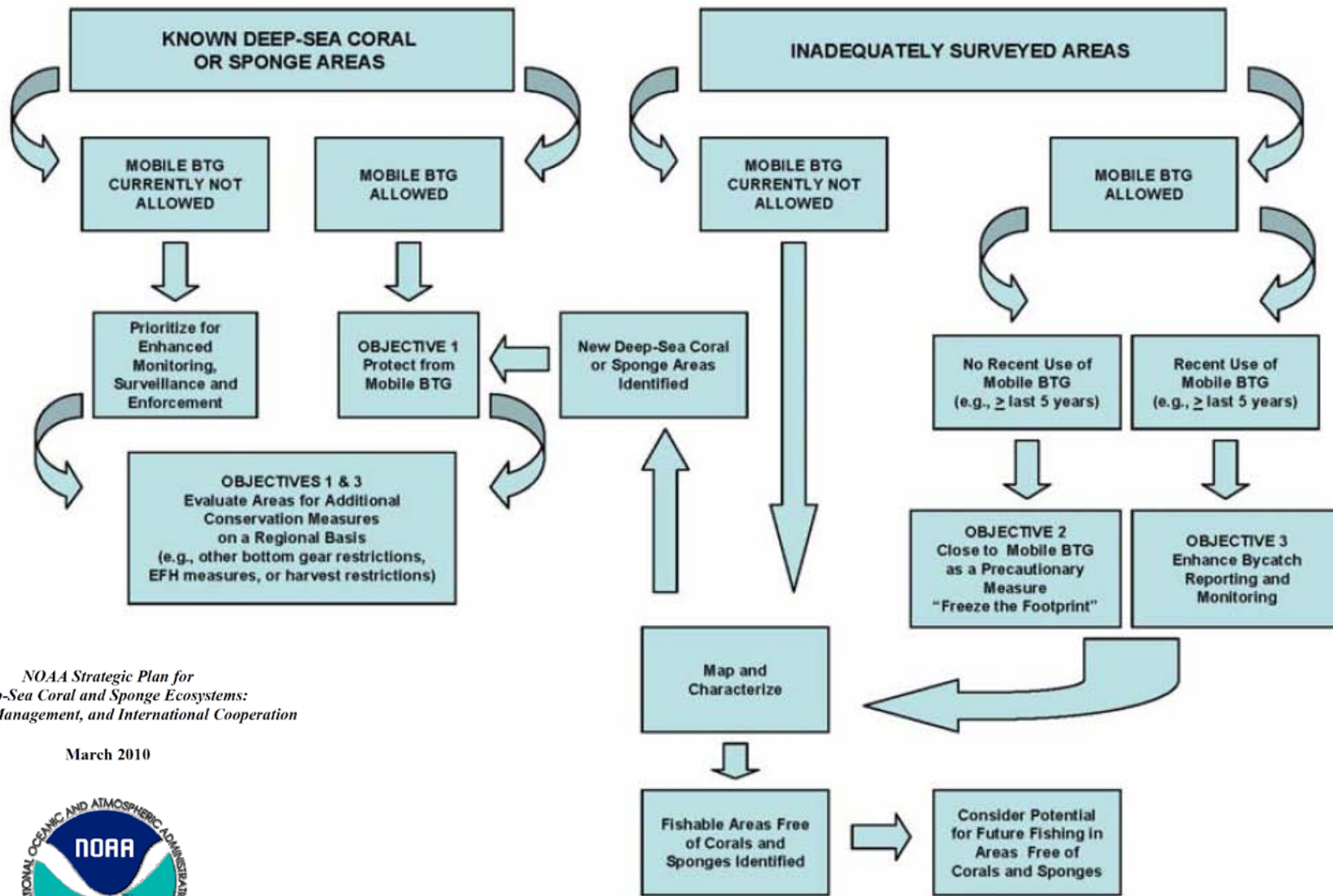
Fish eggs attached to California hydrocoral, off Monterey.



Biogenic habitat on Big Sur Bank.

**Figure 1. NOAA's precautionary approach to manage bottom-tending gear (BTG), especially mobile BTG and other adverse impacts of fishing on deep-sea coral and sponge ecosystems.**

## Approach to Manage Bottom-Tending Gear (BTG) Impacts



*NOAA Strategic Plan for  
Deep-Sea Coral and Sponge Ecosystems:  
Research, Management, and International Cooperation*

March 2010



# EFH Policy Objectives

- Minimize trawl footprint
- Prohibit trawling in sensitive habitats within footprint
- Adjust closures over time with new information
- Maintain/enhance economic viability of groundfish fishery



Courtesy Milton Love



Geoff Shester

# Role of EFH Committee

- Evaluate 2006 EFH measures
- Analyze and define recent trawl footprint
- Compile updated information on coral and sponge areas and seafloor mapping
- Review new studies on trawl impacts

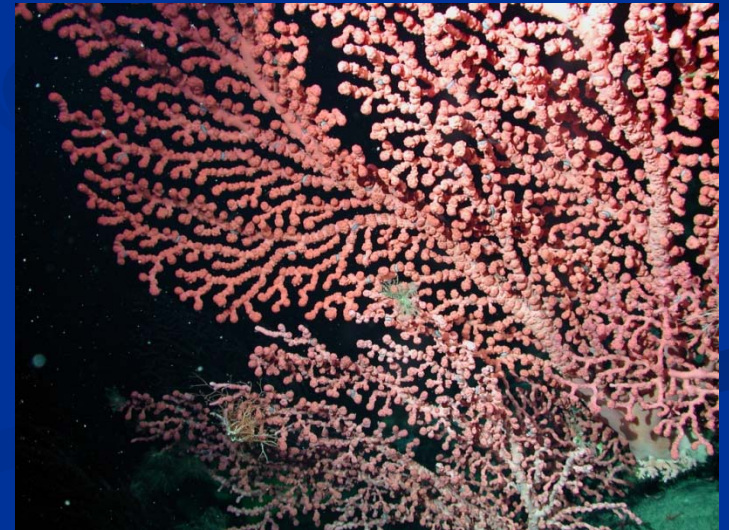
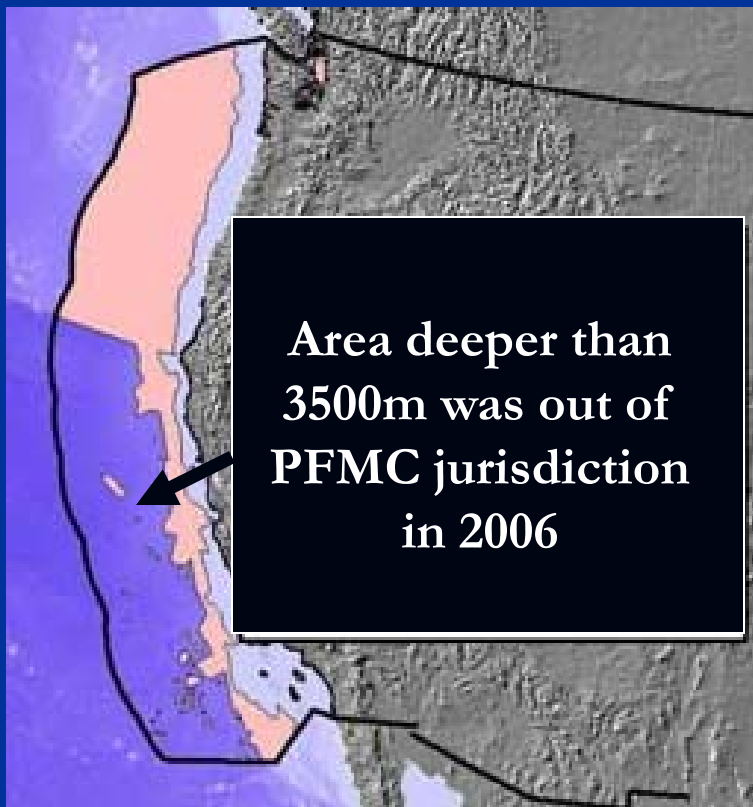
# Evaluating Effectiveness of 2006 EFH Management Measures

- Economic impacts of 2006 closures:
  - Evidence of decreased revenue or CPUE?
  - Increased fishing costs?
- Spatial extent of trawling before/after
  - Has trawling shifted to new areas?
- Compare coral/sponge bycatch before and after 2006 closures
  - Are there new bycatch hotspots?



# Revisions to Magnuson

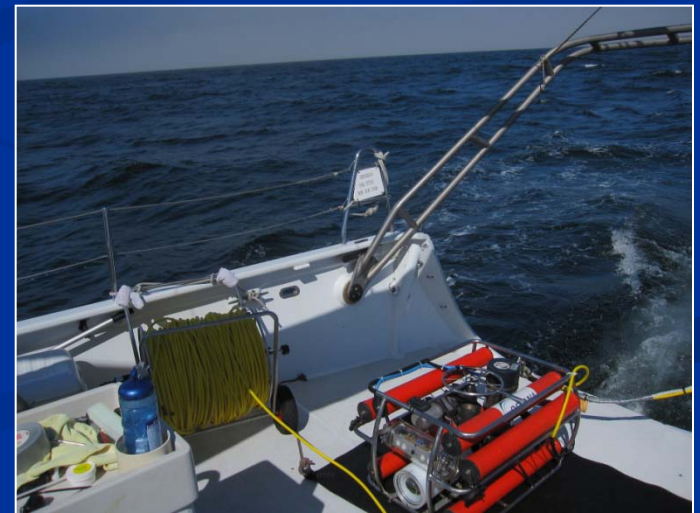
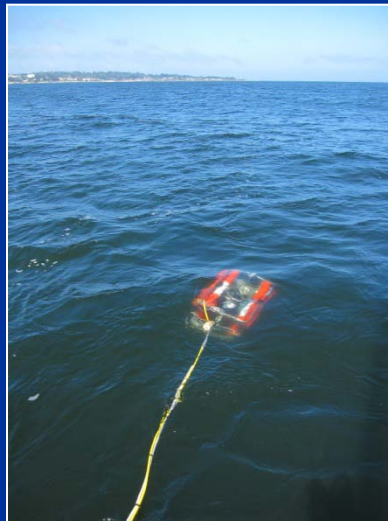
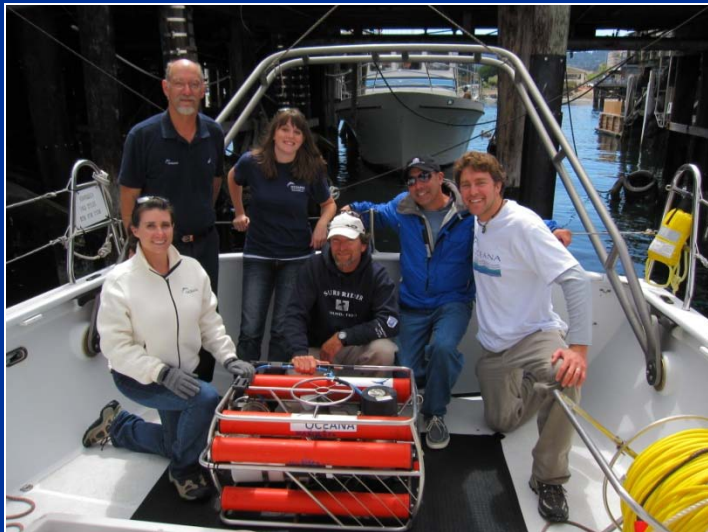
- MSA at Section 303(b)(2)(B).
- Council now has authority to close deep waters, as intended in the 2006 EFH Final Motion.



# Near-term Next Steps

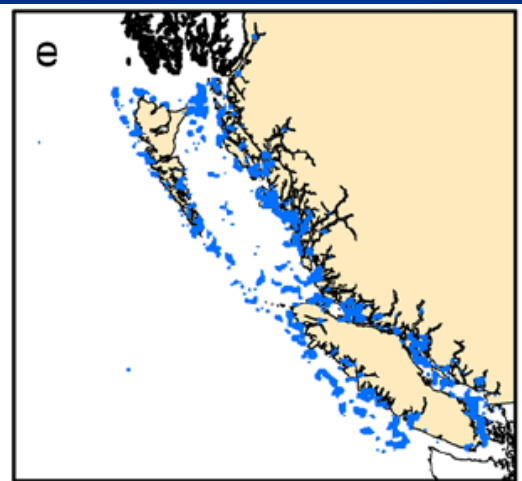
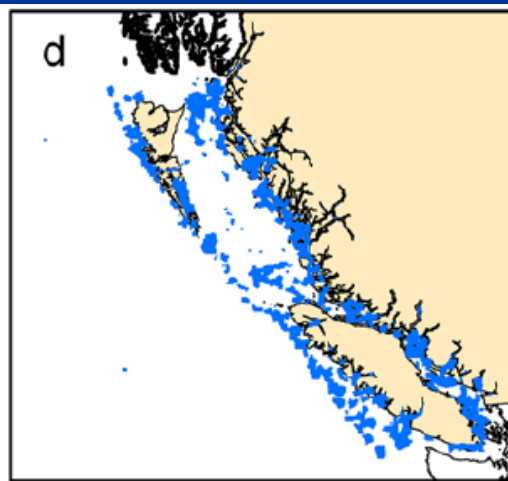
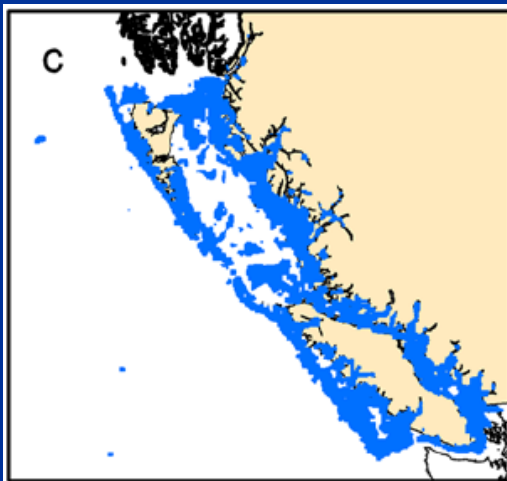
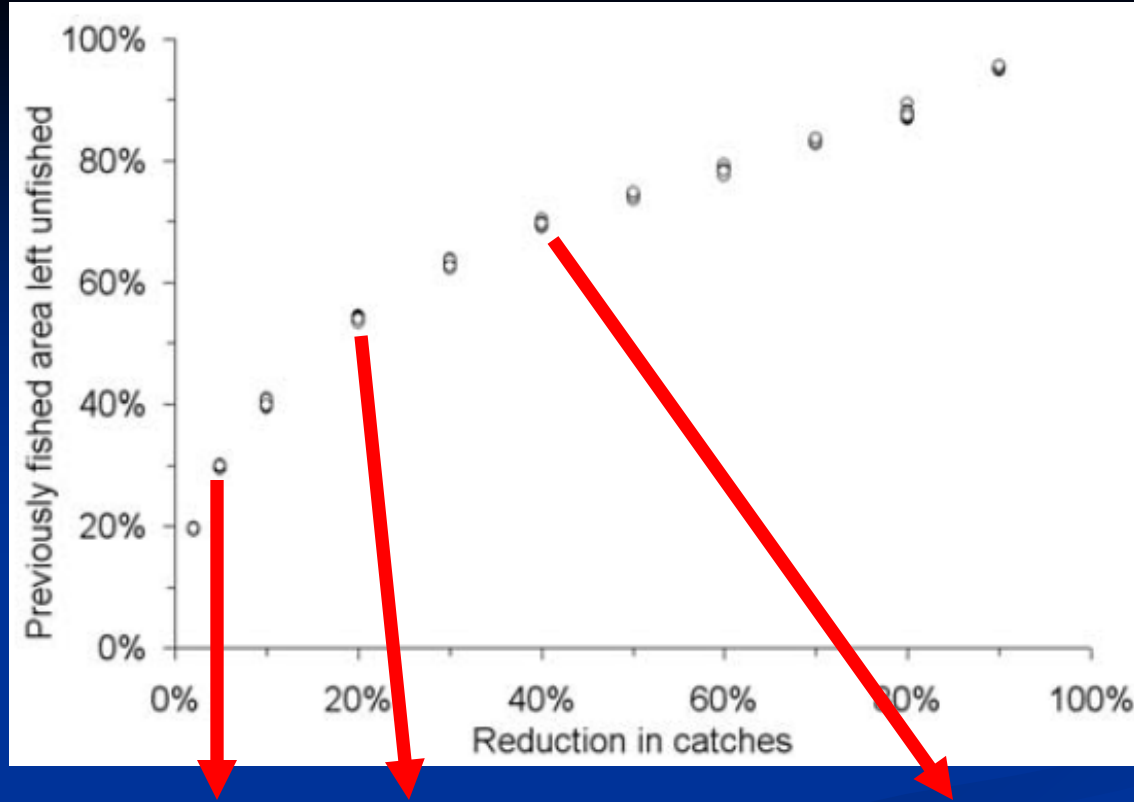
- Formal Data Request to Evaluate 2006 Closures
  - New trawl footprint
  - Observer data on coral/sponge bycatch
  - Catch data before/after closures
  - Seafloor habitat studies
- Updated literature review
- Craft proposal for revisions to EFH closures
- Obtain feedback from fishing community, tribes
- Submit and review at EFH Committee

# Oceana's ROV



# Minimize the Footprint

- Minimal area necessary to catch groundfish quotas
- Move toward “runway” approach
- Compare variability in footprint from year to year (how much flexibility/buffer is necessary)
- Many areas may not be necessary to maintain vibrant fishery



Ban NC, Vincent ACJ (2009) Beyond Marine Reserves: Exploring the Approach of Selecting Areas where Fishing Is Permitted, Rather than Prohibited.. PLoS ONE 4(7): e6258.