

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE REPORT: RESPONSE TO COUNCIL'S QUESTIONS CONCERNING  
THE EFFECTIVENESS, ACCURACY, AND COMPLETENESS OF PACIFIC COAST GROUND FISH EFH

At its March 2014 meeting, the Council requested that the Northwest and Southwest Fisheries Science Centers investigate the question of groundfish essential fish habitat (EFH) effectiveness, accuracy, and completeness, in the best way possible within the next five months, using existing staff resources, and to present their findings for consideration at the September 2014 Council meeting. Following the March 2014 meeting, environmental and industry representatives decided to work together to resolve diverging issues in competing proposals to modify groundfish EFH. Because of this effort, groundfish EFH was not on the Council's agenda for the September or November Council meetings. At the September 2014 Council Meeting, NMFS provided a Supplemental Report in response to March 2014 Council questions concerning Groundfish EFH. The report is available at the Council's September 2014 briefing book site:

[http://www.pcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/IR7\\_Sup\\_NMFS\\_EFH\\_EvalRpt\\_Sept2014BB.pdf](http://www.pcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/IR7_Sup_NMFS_EFH_EvalRpt_Sept2014BB.pdf)

In that report, Northwest and Southwest Fisheries Science Center, and West Coast Region staff presented information that was requested by the Council to inform discussions surrounding proposals to modify groundfish EFH. In September, the report was presented to the Habitat Committee and Groundfish Advisory Sub Panel.

NMFS will continue a dialogue with stakeholders during the groundfish EFH Phase III process and update or expand the analysis in the NMFS Report as appropriate. For example, NMFS has scheduled two informational sessions on bottom contact in midwater trawls with the first session at this November Council meeting (See [Supplemental Informational Report 6](#)). For more information, contact Waldo Wakefield, [waldo.wakefield@noaa.gov](mailto:waldo.wakefield@noaa.gov).