

PROCESS FOR DESIGNATING HABITAT AREAS OF PARTICULAR CONCERN

Situation: The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) presented a report to the Habitat Steering Group in April regarding habitat areas of particular concern (HAPC) and a potential process for designating them.

Since then, Council and NMFS staff have discussed several issues that need to be addressed. We expect NMFS to take the lead in identifying candidate areas, providing information about them, and consulting with the Council before formally designating them. The fishery management plan (FMP) should be amended to define HAPC and explain how they will be designated, what actions may be appropriate or necessary within them, and how they fit into the overall management program. The Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) document may be the most logical place for HAPC information to be compiled.

NMFS will address the Council on these issues and propose an initial process. The Council should provide initial response and consider initiating an FMP amendment.

Council Action:

- 1. Direction to NMFS, initiate FMP amendment.**

Reference Materials:

1. None.

PFMC
06/14/00