

HABITAT STEERING GROUP COMMENTS
ON THE CHANNEL ISLANDS MARINE SANCTUARY PROGRAM

The Habitat Steering Group (HSG) received a presentation from staff of the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary and others on the current process for development of marine reserves within the Sanctuary. The HSG recommends that the Council become actively involved in the Channel Islands process to ensure that marine reserves proposed for federal waters meet the Council's goals and objectives. The HSG recognizes the need for coordination between the process that the Council has developed and the emerging Channel Islands process and recommends that the Marine Reserve Development Team serve as the coordinating body.

The final product of this Channel Islands process, proposed to be available for review some time in early summer, should be evaluated by the Council through all appropriate advisory bodies (e.g., HSG, Groundfish Advisory Subpanel, Salmon Advisory Subpanel). Further, we believe that the Council should identify criteria to evaluate marine reserves proposed outside of its process. The HSG felt that these criteria should include evaluation of a proposed reserve for its contribution to rebuilding overfished species and therefore recommend that the Channel Islands proposal include habitat of ecological importance to overfished rockfish. The HSG notes the useful analysis and modeling tools that have resulted from the Channel Islands process. This information could prove beneficial to the Council as the Council continues to move through its own process on marine reserves.

PFMC
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