

HABITAT STEERING GROUP COMMENTS ON
STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

After reviewing the Marine Reserve Phase II Process document (Exhibit C.9 Attachment 3), the Habitat Steering Group (HSG) would like to commend Council staff for the thoroughness of the document and proposed options and make the following comments.

The HSG recommends that, contingent upon funding, the Council proceed with implementation of Phase II as the lead agency, and as the responding agency if funding cannot be identified. It is important that the Council, and its advisory bodies, continue to have the ability to comment on marine reserves proposals developed external to the Council process.

The HSG preferred alternative is that Council effort focus on the EFH for any FMP species that may benefit from marine reserves. In the event the Council chooses another alternative the focus on habitat, rather than individual species, should remain.

The HSG recommends establishing a "main new committee" to address marine reserves issues associated with the Council as lead agency and a new subcommittee to function in the role of responding to external marine reserves proposals (2nd option, p. 2). The "main new committee" should have diverse stakeholder representation (to include groundfish, salmon, coastal pelagic species, and highly migratory species, and commercial and recreational fishers) by state and include members of the original Marine Reserves Phase I committee to take advantage of the expertise developed during Phase I. The HSG requests membership on this committee.

The subcommittee could have adaptive stakeholder membership to address regional proposals. The initial task of the subcommittee should be to identify criteria to evaluate marine reserves developed external to the Council process.

PFMC
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