

HABITAT COMMITTEE COMMENTS ON
STATUS OF THE GROUND FISH ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT (EFH) ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT
STATEMENT (EIS)

The HC received a presentation on the groundfish EFH EIS that summarized the data gathering, GIS work, and modeling that is being done. This project represents a significant step forward in making new information available to the Council, including information on benthic substrates. The searchable databases and GIS-based maps also represent a major step forward in making the enormous quantity of existing groundfish data useable. This project will result in a useful tool not only for the EFH EIS process, but for many other Council applications.

A data quality layer for benthic substrates is an important component of the GIS data used in the modeling. This component is complete for Oregon and Washington. To increase the consistency and reliability of the model, it is important to complete this data quality layer for California. This will cost about \$10,000. The Habitat Committee recommends that the Council ask NMFS to provide those funds.

PFMC
06/16/03