

COUNCIL INPUT INTO NOAA FISHERIES CONSTITUENT SURVEY

From a habitat perspective, the most important issues facing fisheries in our region are the lack of knowledge about the offshore habitat on which Council-managed species depend and the lack of action to address **known** problems such as pollution; degradation and loss of wetlands and estuaries; and freshwater habitat loss.

To address the lack of information on our offshore areas, a consistently funded, long-term research program needs to be established.

Regarding the better-known problems, essential fish habitat consultation requirements need to be strengthened when the Magnuson-Stevens Act is reauthorized so that agencies seriously consider the effects of their actions on fish species and habitat, and respond to comments made by the Council in a detailed and effective way. For example, the Council has made detailed comments on issues such as Klamath and Trinity River flows and hydropower relicensing and has received only limited responses that do not address the Council's specific comments.

NMFS is currently developing an environmental impact statement addressing EFH in the Pacific region. As we move forward with this effort, agencies need to acknowledge the impacts of their actions on living habitat such as sponges, kelp, and coldwater corals. These non-fish species play an important and often unrecognized role in the health of the ecosystems that support our fish populations.

PFMC
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