

HABITAT COMMITTEE COMMENTS ON  
BYCATCH MONITORING PROGRAMMATIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Mr. Jim Glock made a presentation to the Habitat Committee (HC) summarizing the alternatives presented in the Bycatch Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (DPEIS). The HC appreciates the very substantial quantity and quality of work involved in preparing the DPEIS. The document is well organized, and the issues are clearly presented.

The DPEIS presents strategic alternatives for minimizing bycatch and meeting the Council's Magnuson-Stevens Act obligations, rather than a set of specific management measures.

From a purely habitat perspective, the HC notes that all gears contacting the bottom have some impacts; the most extensive impacts are associated with mobile, bottom-tending gear. The Council has already enacted measures including area closures and gear restrictions that reduce benthic habitat impacts. It is not possible to determine from the document which alternative would provide the greatest additional benefits in this specific context. Generic tools, such as further effort reduction, spatial management, and discard reduction, can also be beneficial in this respect. However, the HC is not able to offer a specific recommendation on any of the alternatives or a blend of alternatives based simply on habitat considerations.

Based on the management measures likely to be employed pursuant to each of the alternatives, Alternatives 4 through 6 offer the most significant benefits to Council-managed resources and the biological environment. The HC recognizes the implementation costs and challenges of these alternatives will be substantially greater than those associated with Alternatives 1 through 3.

PFMC  
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