

SAFE DOCUMENT AND FIVE-YEAR EFH REVIEW

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) sent a letter to the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) on April 30, 2004, describing the need for a five-year review of essential fish habitat (EFH) provisions of all fishery management plans (FMPs). The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act requires cooperation among NMFS, the Councils, fishing participants, federal and state agencies, and others in achieving EFH protection, conservation, and enhancement. Each Council and NMFS are expected to review the EFH components of FMPs at least once every five years and update EFH information and prepare a revised FMP amendment if necessary.

To facilitate the review process, NMFS, Southwest Region (SWR) sent a letter (May 18, 2004) requesting the Council to direct the Coastal Pelagic Species Management Team (CPSMT) to initiate the reassessment of EFH for coastal pelagic species. In order to help guide the CPSMT, the SWR Sustainable Fisheries Division (SFD) consulted with the Office of Habitat Conservation (HC) at NMFS Headquarters (Silver Spring, Maryland) in September 2004 and developed a process and documentation procedure for the five-year CPS EFH review.

The CPSMT reviewed CPS EFH at their August 5, 2004 CPSMT meeting in Portland, Oregon and at the September 2004 Council meeting in San Diego, California. The CPSMT concluded in its report that it was “not aware of any new information that could warrant modification of current EFH designations for CPS.”

Following consultation with the Office of HC at NMFS Headquarters, the SWR emailed the approved procedures to the Council on November 9, 2004 and received a letter (December 29, 2004) from the Council to Dr. Hogarth detailing the CPSMT’s initial conclusions about the current EFH information and the Council’s approval to use the process recommended by NMFS for formal Council review. The approach that NMFS and the Council agreed upon was to have the CPSMT write a detailed report of their five-year review of CPS EFH in the 2005 Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) document and to have the Council officially adopt this SAFE document at their June 2005 Council meeting.

The CPSMT has completed the 2005 SAFE (Agenda Item F.3.a, Attachment 1), including Chapter 13, which provides the required documentation for the five-year EFH review process.

Council Action:

Approve the SAFE document, including the EFH review.

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item F.3.a, Attachment 1: *Status of the Pacific Coast Coastal Pelagic Species Fishery and Recommended Acceptable Biological Catches – Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation 2005.*
2. Agenda Item F.3.a, Attachment 2: *EFH Excerpt from Amendment 8 – Coastal Pelagic Species FMP.*

Agenda Order:

- a. Agenda Item Overview
- b. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies
- c. Public Comment
- d. **Council Action:** Approve the SAFE Document,
Including the EFH Review

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PFMC
05/26/05