

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON
AMENDMENT 19 (ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT)

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) has the following recommendations on essential fish habitat (EFH) related language in Agenda Item F.3.a, Attachment 1.

1. Page 28, Section 6.2.4. The Habitat Conservation Framework. The GAP feels that clarification is needed. The third sentence should be replaced by:
“The Council shall recommend that the Habitat Committee or another committee designated by the Council review the areas currently closed to bottom trawling, and recommend the elimination of existing areas or the addition of new areas, or modification of the extent and location of existing areas.”
This would direct the effort to modify fishing activities for habitat conservation through the Council for review and consideration before going through committees. This gives the public and the Council opportunity to judge the merit of the proposal before extensive time is spent in committee.
2. Page 55, Section 6.9.4. Facilitating Public Private Partnerships to Reduce Capacity. The GAP wants to see the following language inserted as part of the fifth sentence after the word “conditions”:
“... while at the same time taking into account impacts on segments of the fishing industry and fishing communities that are not a party to the contracts, and taking into account related objectives 13, 15,16,17, stated on Page 7.”
3. Change Agenda Item F.4.a, Supplemental Attachment 3 to better reflect Agenda Item F.3.a, Attachment 1. Add bullet 15A: “Recreational Fishing Gear including hook and line, spear.” This should be done to capture the use of spear fishing as a recreational gear type.
4. The GAP would like to bring to the Council’s attention the following concern. We will not meet the goals of protecting EFH in the non-trawl areas which are located within the tribal usual and accustomed (UA) areas. Tribal fishers have their right and may continue to exercise the right to continue to trawl within these areas. Little benefit to EFH will be derived from EFH designation if all users are not in agreement on fishing practices. Nontribal fishers are disadvantaged with little benefit to EFH. Tribal fisheries have nowhere to go outside their UA areas. They have been placed in a position where they are faulted for exercising their treaty rights. The GAP encourages the Council to refer this matter to the review committee referenced in section 6.2.4 (page 28).