

EXCERPT FROM GROUND FISH AMENDMENT 19 SECTION 6.2.4

6.2.4 The Habitat Conservation Framework

In order to protect EFH from the adverse effects of fishing, the Council has identified areas that are closed to bottom trawling (see sections 6.8 and 7.4). These areas are described in Federal regulations and may be modified through the full rulemaking process as described under Section 6.2 D. The Council shall establish an EFH Oversight Committee (OC). At the request of the Council, the EFH OC would review the areas currently closed to bottom trawling and recommend to the Council the elimination of existing areas or the addition of new areas, or modification of the extent and location of existing areas. In making its recommendation to the Council, the committee should consider, but is not limited to considering, the best available scientific information about:

1. The importance of habitat types to any groundfish FMU species for their spawning, breeding, feeding, or growth to maturity.
2. The presence and location of important habitat (as defined immediately above).
3. The presence and location of habitat that is vulnerable to the effects of bottom trawl fishing.
4. The presence and location of unique, rare, or threatened habitat.
5. The socioeconomic and management-related effects of closures, including changes in the location and intensity of bottom trawl fishing effort, the displacement or loss of revenue from fishing, and social and economic effects to fishing communities attributable to the location and extent of closed areas.

When making its recommendation to the Council, the committee may also include in its recommendations proposed changes in the designation of habitat areas of particular concern (HAPCs) consistent with the proposed modification of the location and extent of areas closed to bottom trawling. For example, if a current closed area, which is also identified as a HAPC, is recommended for elimination, the committee may recommend whether or not to retain the HAPC designation. Any such recommendation with respect to a HAPC would trigger the process for the modification of HAPCs (by FMP amendment) described in Section 7.3.2. Upon receipt of a recommendation from the committee, the Council will decide whether to begin the rulemaking process described in Section 6.2 D for establishing, adjusting, or removing discretionary management measures intended to have a permanent effect.

PFMC
08/22/06