

HABITAT COMMITTEE REPORT ON REVIEW OF CHANNEL ISLANDS NATIONAL
MARINE SANCTUARIES DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
REGARDING FISHERY CLOSURES

The Habitat Committee (HC) discussed the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuaries (CINMS) Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). The HC reiterates its support for Option 2, for its habitat protection value, and encourages the Council to continue to work with the Sanctuary towards meeting shared goals of conserving and protecting fish stocks and habitat.

Most of the HC discussion centered on monitoring and evaluating the closed areas. As monitoring and evaluation plans are further developed, the HC recommends that the Council consider the effects of the closed areas over a range of appropriate spatial scales rather than simply focusing on the closed areas. It would be of interest to the Council to understand not only how the ecosystem within the closed areas reacts to fishing closures, but if any changes in fish stocks on a broader scale can be identified. It will be important for the Council to be able to understand if the effects of closed areas are localized or broad, and how they relate to Council-managed fisheries. To do this, the HC believes the Council will need to remain engaged with CINMS.

The HC notes that there may be different measures of “success” for these closures depending on whether they are created through the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act or the National Marine Sanctuaries Act. Finally, monitoring and evaluation programs should be flexible enough to be useful to both the Council and to the Sanctuary.

PFMC
09/12/06