

HABITAT COMMITTEE REPORT ON
MARINE PROTECTED AREA “NEED CRITERIA” FOR THE MONTEREY BAY
NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY (MBNMS)

The Habitat Committee (HC) reviewed the Sanctuary’s three stated reasons for supporting marine protected areas (MPAs). Not enough details were available in the February 15 letter (Agenda Item I.1.b, Attachment 2) to make useful comments on the rationale and management framework used to develop the needs criteria. We understand that a document that provides more detail on this subject is being developed by the Sanctuary, and ask that it be provided to the HC when available.

There is a need to improve coordination between the National Ocean Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, and the Council, such as improving synchronization of schedules. In addition, a review of the Scientific and Statistical Committee’s White Paper on marine reserves may prove useful to all sanctuaries interested in interacting with the Council.

There are several benefits to increased collaboration. The Sanctuary will benefit by considering areas already under MPA status (such as groundfish essential fish habitat (EFH), and rockfish conservation areas) to see if they meet their objectives, and can coordinate with existing research areas/projects to see if there can be progress on mutual goals for habitat protection. On the other hand, the Council will benefit because the National Marine Sanctuaries Act (NMSA) provides authority over non-fishing activities that affect EFH. This allows sanctuaries to comment on laws that are separate from the Council process. The Council may consider whether commenting and collaborating with sanctuaries through the NMSA will achieve greater protections needed for Council resources.

PFMC
04/08/08