

HABITAT COMMITTEE REPORT ON
REVIEW OF RATIONALE FOR MARINE PROTECTED AREAS IN THE MONTEREY BAY
NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY (MBNMS)

The Habitat Committee (HC) reviewed the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary (MBNMS) letter submitted to the Sanctuary Advisory Council on the decision rationale for marine protected areas (MPAs) in Federal waters of the Sanctuary. The HC notes that the stated objectives for MPAs in the MBNMS decision rationale are consistent with the objectives for heritage and research MPAs outlined in the white paper written by an Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) subcommittee on MPAs (*“Marine Reserves: Objectives, Rationales, Fishery Management Implications and Regulatory Requirements”*). In addition, the proposed research objectives of MBNMS MPAs could help achieve the Council’s current Research and Data Needs as outlined in the draft document.

The HC recognizes that the rationale document uses the term MPAs, and that this term can imply various types of spatial management, including some that allow fishing with certain types of gear (e.g. pelagic trolling, long lining) inside the MPA.

The HC recommends the MBNMS conduct a thorough analysis of the set of spatial management measures currently in place in Federal and state waters and evaluate how these measures address the proposed MPA objectives in Federal waters of the MBNMS.

The HC also reiterates the last two paragraphs of the HC statement of April 2008:

“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
06/10/08