

## GROUND FISH ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT (EFH) MODIFICATIONS

In March, 2009, Council staff solicited proposals for the modification of Groundfish Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) that were to comply with the Council approved Terms of Reference (Agenda Item E.1.a, Attachment 1). Two proposals were received, one to reduce the Eel Canyon EFH conservation area closed to bottom trawl gear (Agenda Item E.1.a, Attachment 2), and one to expand both the Olympic 2 and Grays Canyon conservation area closed to bottom trawl gear and to add areas closed to bottom contact gear within the Olympic 2 area (Agenda Item E.1.a, Attachment 3).

The Ad Hoc Groundfish Essential Fish Habitat Review Committee (EFHRC) met May 12-13 to review and evaluate the proposal for consistency with the Terms of Reference (Attachment 1) and to develop recommendations to the Council for further consideration of the proposals. The proposals were also posted on the Council website and notice was provided to Council advisory bodies to facilitate additional opportunity for review.

At this time the Council will determine if the proposals have sufficient merit to warrant further consideration. The Council should also identify additional information and potential sources to supplement the proposals as needed. The Council would then take final action in November 2009 to approve proposals for subsequent analysis in the biennial management specifications process, or another process as appropriate.

### **Council Action:**

- 1. Recommend proposals for further consideration at the November 2009 Council Meeting.**
- 2. Identify information gaps.**
- 3. Identify potential sources for supplementing proposal contents.**

### **Reference Materials:**

1. Agenda Item E.1.a, Attachment 1: EFHRC Terms of Reference.
2. Agenda Item E.1.a, Attachment 2: Proposal to Modify the Northeast Boundary of the Eel River EFH No-trawl Area.
3. Agenda Item E.1.a, Attachment 3: Proposal to the Pacific Fishery Management Council to Modify Groundfish EFH Conservation Areas - Juan De Fuca Coral Canyons and Grays Canyon Sponge Reefs Important Ecological Areas.
4. Agenda Item E.1.b, EFHRC Report: EFHRC Evaluation of Proposals to Modify Areas Closed to Bottom Trawl Fishing Gear.

Agenda Order:

- a. Agenda Item Overview
- b. Report of the EFH Review Committee
- c. Reports and Comments of Management Entities and Advisory Bodies
- d. Public Comment
- e. **Council Action:** Consider Adoption of Proposed Changes to EFH for Public Review

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