ONGOING AND NEW HABITAT ISSUES

Situation: The Habitat Steering Group (HSG) has no items for Council action.

From the Council's agenda (B.4), the HSG will discuss its obligations and a process to review the status of essential fish habitat (EFH) during the overfishing review for Queets wild coho that is due September 1, 2001. The salmon fishery management plan requires the HSG to work with federal, state, local, and tribal habitat experts to review the status of the EFH affecting the identified stock and, as appropriate, provide recommendations to the Council for restoration and enhancement measures that will help the stock recover. This report to the Council is not meant to be exhaustive, but rather a summary of information gleaned from the those directly involved in EFH management.

The HSG will receive an informational presentation on the marine reserve work of COMPASS (Communication Partnership for Science and the Sea) and its science advisory group. It will also receive an informational presentation from the Environmental Protection Agency on the designation of a part of the Columbia River as a Superfund site.

Additionally, the HSG will begin a review of the EFH guidelines presented to the public as compared to the requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Management Act. The HSG will also receive updates on salmon EFH implementation, including the technical guidance available to agencies and discuss the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) report *The Habitat Approach*, which describes implementation of Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) for salmon.[1/] NMFS will also provide other updates, including work on the Puget Sound Groundfish ESA listing, fishing gear impacts, habitat areas of particular concern, the Federal Columbia River biological opinion, and on the San Francisco airport expansion. Other updates will include those on California's kelp management plans and on Klamath water flow issues, including dam relicensing and water operation plans.

Council Action:

1. Consider comments and recommendations developed by the HSG at the November meeting.

Reference Materials:

1. Report of the Habitat Steering Group (Exhibit F.1, Supplemental HSG Report).

PFMC
10/17/00

1/ Please note that this report was distributed for the September meeting (Ancillary D). If you need another copy, please contact Fran Recht 541-765-2229, franrecht@newportnet.com.

REPORT OF THE HABITAT STEERING GROUP

The Habitat Steering Group (HSG) met on Wednesday, November 1, 2000. The HSG has one action item for Council consideration related to the draft Artificial Reef National Plan Revision. The HSG would like the Council to send a letter requesting that the deadline for comments be extended from December 11, 2000 to April 1, 2001 to allow adequate time for review. The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council has already submitted a letter to that effect (copy attached); the HSG is proposing that the Pacific Council send a similar letter. The HSG also received presentations on and discussed the following issues:

Rebuilding Plans for Canary and Cowcod Rockfish

The HSG appreciates the addition of the habitat protection goal to the rebuilding plans for cowcod and canary rockfish; however, last year, the HSG requested that the appropriate habitat descriptions from the EFH appendix to the groundfish FMP be appended to the rebuilding plans. We note that this was done for the rebuilding plans for lingcod, Pacific ocean perch, and bocaccio but was inadvertently left out of the canary rockfish and cowcod plans. We request that this oversight be corrected before the final plans are sent out.

Columbia River Superfund

Chip Humphrey, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Portland office, provided an orientation to the problems facing the Portland Harbor area of the lower Willamette River (from Swan Island downstream to Sauvie Island). The EPA has declared this water area a Superfund site designated under the provisions of the Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act. The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality will continue to work in conjunction with EPA's efforts to reduce input of pollutants into the river. This area of the river is home to three runs of chinook, two runs of steelhead, and two state endangered runs of coho. The river is contaminated by dioxins, pesticides, herbicides, and other hazardous chemicals. Some areas adjacent to highly contaminated upland sites in the harbor area have already been posted as "no fishing" with information on contamination. The next step will be for EPA to initiate a remedial investigation/feasibility study which includes ecological and public health risk assessments. The HSG will develop a letter for Council approval at the March meeting to provide input for these assessments.

COMPASS- NCEAS

George Leonard of the Communication Partnership for Science and the Sea (COMPASS) discussed the group's purpose and organizational structure as it relates to their objective to further marine reserve establishment. COMPASS is a partnership among the Monterey Bay Aquarium, SeaWeb (a group that focuses on communication to the public about marine issues) and Island Press (a publisher of scientific books related to conservation topics). It is advised by a scientific committee chaired by Jane Lubchenco of Oregon State University (OSU). The Council will receive a presentation by George Leonard following this report.

As part of this informational presentation, Heather Leslie, OSU, briefed the HSG on the work of the National Center for Ecological Analysis and Synthesis (NCEAS). The group of scientists of various disciplines at NCEAS have been focusing on the analysis and synthesis of information on marine reserves. Information resulting from the NCEAS process indicates: 1. Within marine reserves there is an increase in size, abundance, productivity, and diversity of marine fishes; 2. Adjacent to reserve areas there is an increase in size and abundance of marine fishes; and 3. Regional benefits are recognized as a result of larval transport which supports the concept of reserve networks. The conclusions of the NCEAS process indicate there is enough information to support siting marine reserves on the West Coast.

The HSG watched a video produced in the United Kingdom that explores the attitudes and perceptions of fishermen about the benefits and costs of marine reserve implementation for the purpose of fisheries management. The HSG will provide the Council with a copy of this video for circulation to members of the Council family.

Queets Wild Coho EFH Review

As a result of Council action on Tuesday, the HSG will review the Salmon Technical Team (STT) outline for the Queets River wild coho status report and information provided by WDFW and the Quinault Indian Nation at the March meeting. The HSG will work with the STT to summarize this information, and provide recommendations to the Council for restoration and enhancement measures that will help the stock recover.

NMFS Northwest Fisheries Science Center Update on EFH

Cyreis Schmitt, NMFS, provided an update on status review work for the Puget Sound ESA listings. She also provided an update on EFH work including Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (HAPCs) and fishing gear impacts. While research is ongoing, it is unclear at this time how consideration of these items may be affected by the national lawsuit regarding EFH. We also heard that the science center has created a new position for habitat work emphasizing MPAs.

Salmon EFH/ESA

Mark Helvey, NMFS Southwest regional office, provided an update on the status of NMFS consultations on salmon EFH. He also discussed how EFH consultation is integrated into ESA and other consultations (e.g., under NEPA).

The NMFS Northwest region has developed a report entitled, "The Habitat Approach (Implementing Section 7 for Salmon ESA)" to describe NMFS integration of EFH consultations with ESA Section 7 consultations. Section 7 requires federal agencies to ensure that any actions they take are not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of listed species or destroy critical habitat and requires that these agencies consult with NMFS. NMFS has attempted to integrate these two processes whenever possible.

The HSG requested that NMFS provide a status update on the EFH issues that the Council has commented on at the March meeting. This effort would be tracked and updated on an ongoing basis.

Klamath River Flow Issues

Michael Rode, CDFG, updated the HSG on three Klamath River Flow issues that affect salmon EFH: Klamath Hardly flow studies, FERC dam relicensing, and the Bureau of Reclamation 2001 operations plans and long-term project operations plan EIS. There was much concern expressed by CDFG and the Hoopa Valley Tribe regarding an estimated fish kill of tens of thousands of fish in June 2000. These fish were primarily juvenile chinook salmon and some steelhead. High water temperatures resulting from low flows and disease are thought to have been contributing factors. The Council has previously sent a letter to the Bureau of Reclamation recommending higher flows are needed to protect and recover anadromous fishery resources.

Trinity River

Mike Orcutt, Hoopa Valley Tribe, discussed the Trinity River EIS. The Council sent a letter earlier this year supporting the preferred alternative described in the DEIS. The FEIS is expected to be released on November 9, and the Record of Decision will be released after a 30-day review period. Given the short time frame, the HSG is encouraging individuals and agencies to send letters of support for the FEIS which provides for 250,000 acre feet of water for instream uses and additional restoration measures.

Other Issues

The HSG also received updates on the San Francisco Airport expansion, kelp management, and the NMFS Biological Opinion on Columbia River operations.

Council Action:

1. Approve a letter (similar to the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council letter) to be sent to NMFS regarding extension of the comment period on the Artificial Reef National Plan Revision.

GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
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October 18, 2000

Post-it® Fax Note 7671	Date 10/24	# of pages ▶ 1
To Frank Recht	From Wayne Swingle	
Co./Dept.	Co. PFMC	
Phone #	Phone #	
Fax #	Fax #	

Mr. Richard Schaefer
Chief, Office of Intergovernmental
and Recreational Fisheries
National Marine Fisheries Service
8484 Georgia Avenue
Suite 425
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Dear Mr. ~~Schaefer~~ Dick:

Your distribution date and the date by which you want comments precludes our Council and the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission from reviewing and taking action on revisions to the National Artificial Reef Plan. Both the Council and the Commission have standing artificial reef committees that probably would have provided proposed revisions. Inasmuch as the plan has not been modified since 1985, certainly it should not cause a problem to extend the comment period to allow our reviews. The Commission will not meet until next March; therefore, the deadline for comments would need to be extended to April 1, 2001.

Best personal regards.

Sincerely,

Wayne

Wayne L. Swingle
Executive Director

WES:ccm

c: Gulf Council
GSMFC - Larry Simpson
William Hogarth
Other Councils
Staff

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Office of Intergovernmental
and Recreational Fisheries
8484 Georgia Avenue
Suite 425
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

October 10, 2000

Dr. Donald O. McIsaac
Executive Director
Pacific Fishery Management Council
2130 SW Fifth Avenue, Suite 224
Portland, Oregon 97201

Dear ~~Dr. McIsaac,~~ Don

The National Artificial Reef Plan (National Plan) of 1985 was developed by the Secretary of Commerce as required by the National Fishing Enhancement Act of 1984 (Act). The National Plan was implemented in 1985 to provide guidance on various aspects of artificial reef use, including types of construction materials and planning, siting, designing, and managing of artificial reefs. The 1985 document was general in scope and provided a framework for regional, state, and local planners to develop more detailed, site-specific artificial reef plans sensitive to highly variable local needs and conditions.

The National Plan recognized that the document "...is intended as a dynamic, working document that will change as new information becomes available.". Since 1985, research has been conducted shedding new light on issues pertaining to artificial reefs. Accordingly, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has revised the National Plan. New language in the National Plan supports guidelines and recommendations that are consistent with state and interstate programs relative to state and interstate artificial reef development.

Enclosed is the DRAFT revision to the National Plan for your review and comment. Please provide your comments (including "no comments") by December 11, 2000. If you have any questions, please call Bill Price at (301) 427-2015.

Sincerely,

Dick

Richard H. Schaefer, Chief
Office of Intergovernmental and
Recreational Fisheries

Enclosure

F.I.C.
Draft

Scientific Consensus Statement on Marine Reserves[1]

Problem Statement:

The declining state of the oceans and the collapse of some coastal fisheries creates a critical need for new and more effective management of marine biological diversity, populations of exploited species and overall health of the oceans. Fully protected marine reserves are a management tool that can alleviate many of these problems but there are currently very few such reserves in United States waters.

Ecological effects *within* reserve boundaries:

1) Reserves result in long-lasting and often rapid increases in the abundance, diversity and productivity of marine organisms.

2) These effects are due to decreases in mortality and habitat destruction and to indirect ecosystem effects.

3) Reserves reduce the probability of extinction for all marine organisms resident within them.

4) These benefits increase with larger reserves, but even small reserves have positive effects.

5) Full protection is critical to achieve this full range of benefits.

Ecological effects *outside* reserve boundaries:

1) The size and abundance of exploited species increase in areas adjacent to reserves.

2) There is evidence that reserves replenish populations regionally via larval export.

Ecological effects of reserve *networks*:

1) There is evidence that a network of reserves, connected by larval dispersal, buffers against the effects of environmental variability and provides greater protection for marine communities than a single reserve.

2) There is evidence that a network needs to span large geographic distances and encompass a substantial area and variety of habitats to protect against catastrophes and provide a stable platform for the long-term persistence of marine communities.

COMPASS
Communication Partnership for Science and the Sea

(over)

Based on this scientific consensus:

- There is sufficient scientific information to justify the immediate application of fully protected marine reserves as a critical management tool.
- Reserves conserve both fisheries and biodiversity.
- Reserves are the best way to protect resident species and provide heritage protection to important habitats.
- Reserves must be established and operated in the context of other management tools.
- Reserves need a dedicated program to monitor and evaluate their impacts both within and outside their boundaries.
- Reserves provide a critical benchmark for the evaluation of the threats to ocean communities.

Participating Scientists

P. Dee Boersma	University of Washington
Louis W. Botsford	University of California, Davis
Mark H. Carr	University of California, Santa Cruz
Paul Dayton	Scripps Institute of Oceanography
Megan N. Dethier	University of Washington
David Fluharty	University of Washington
Mark A. Hixon	Oregon State University
Heather Leslie	Oregon State University
Stephen R. Palumbi	Harvard University
Daniel Pauly	University of British Columbia Fisheries Centre
Andrew Rosenberg	University of New Hampshire
Jennifer Ruesink	University of Washington
Robert R. Warner	University of California, Santa Barbara

[1]from "The Science and Development of Marine Protected Areas and Fully Protected Marine Reserves along the U. S. West Coast" held August 27-30, 2000 in Monterey, California

Draft: Please send comments to George H. Leonard, Marine Science Coordinator, COMPASS, 886 Cannery Row, Monterey, CA 93950; gleonard@mbayaq.org. 831-647-6830

COMPASS