

From: eddiek@hotmail.com <eddiek@hotmail.com>
Date: Sun, May 3, 2015 at 6:47 AM
Subject: Please protect pacific groundfish and deepwater ocean habitat
To: pfmc.comments@noaa.gov

Dear Chair Lowman and Council Members,

I am writing as to thank you for your past work to protect ocean habitat, including the recently concluded five-year review of Essential Fish Habitat for groundfish. The Council is now well positioned to protect habitat and the fishing economy.

In considering the upcoming amendment to the management plan for groundfish, I urge the Council to advance the following:

- Closure to bottom trawling of the deepwater areas off California south of the Mendocino Ridge.
- A coastwide scope for potential changes to the groundfish management plan.
- Potential designation of new Essential Fish Habitat (EFH).
- Potential creation of new EFH Conservation Areas or \adjustment of current EFH Conservation Areas.
- Inclusion of all remaining stakeholder proposals as potential alternatives.
- Adjustment of area-based management measures such as the Rockfish Conservation Area to improve fishing while also protecting habitat.
- Measures to address bottom contact by midwater trawl fishing gear.
- Designation of key prey species of groundfish.

Healthy marine habitats ensure a sustainable supply of fish for commercial and recreational fisheries. But these essential places, which contain deep-sea corals, sponges, and seamounts, can be damaged by fishing gear such as bottom trawls.

I urge the Council to move habitat protection forward and seek a broad set of solutions for fishing communities and a healthy ocean.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Regards,
Eddie Konczal
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