

# Essential Fish Habitat Conservation and Management



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F.5 PFMC Groundfish EFH and RCA Amendment

April 2016

# Overview

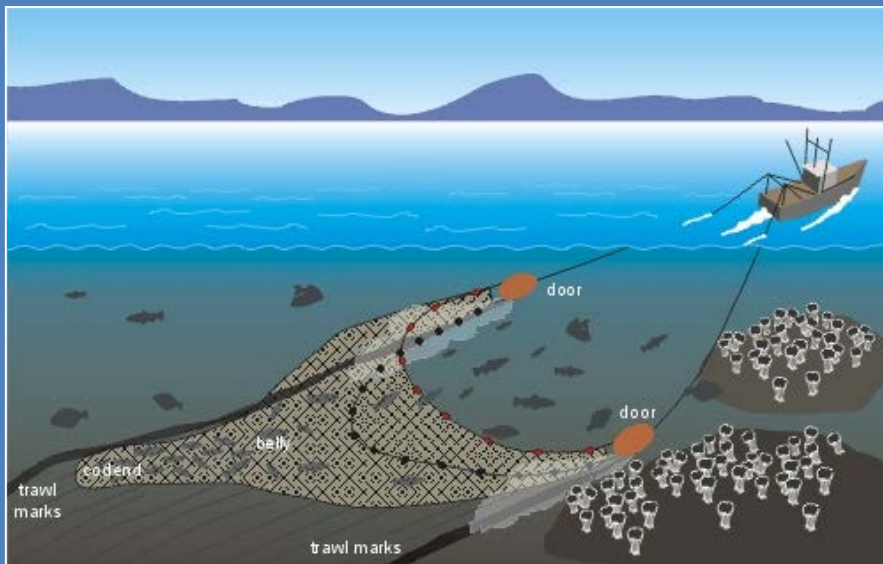
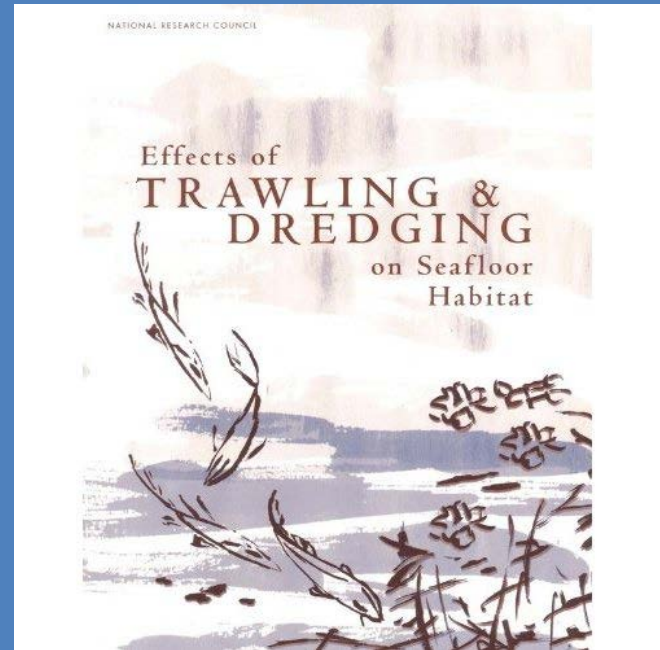
1. **Analyze New and Modified EFH Conservation Areas in Oceana, NRDC, Ocean Conservancy 2013 proposal as revised**
  - Establish 63 new and/or modified EFH Conservation Areas prohibiting non-tribal bottom trawling
  - Open 7 areas currently closed to bottom trawling off California
  - 6 polygons were deleted from original proposal
  - Suggest analyzing with removal of coastwide RCA to assess net changes
2. **Protect deep-water habitats (>3,500 m) using discretionary MSA authority (PPA)**
3. **Support consolidation of Alternatives (where there is overlap/duplication or where Purpose & Need not met)**

# EFH Objectives

- Maintain and increase protections for Amendment 19 priority habitats (i.e., biogenic habitats, hard rocks, canyons, etc)
- Minimize trawl effort displacement
- Net gain in fishing opportunities and habitat protection as RCA reopens



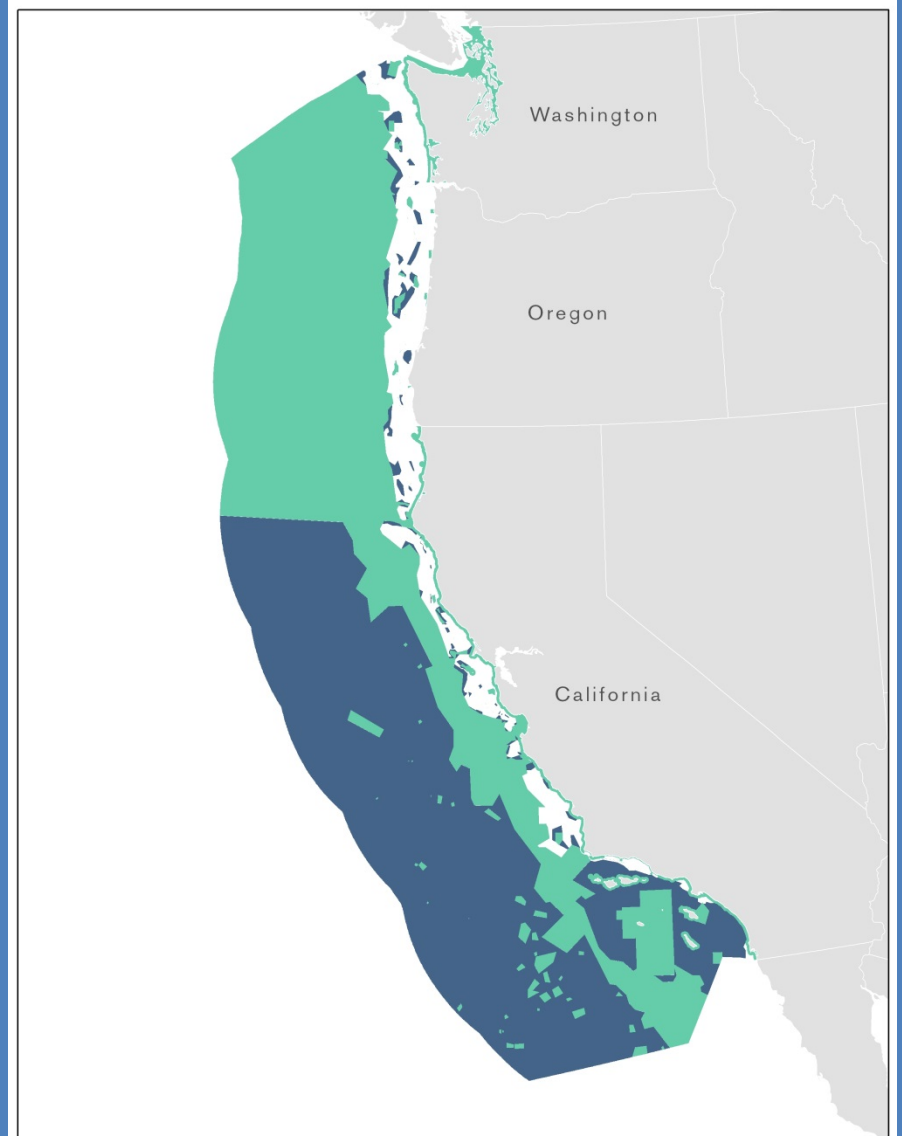




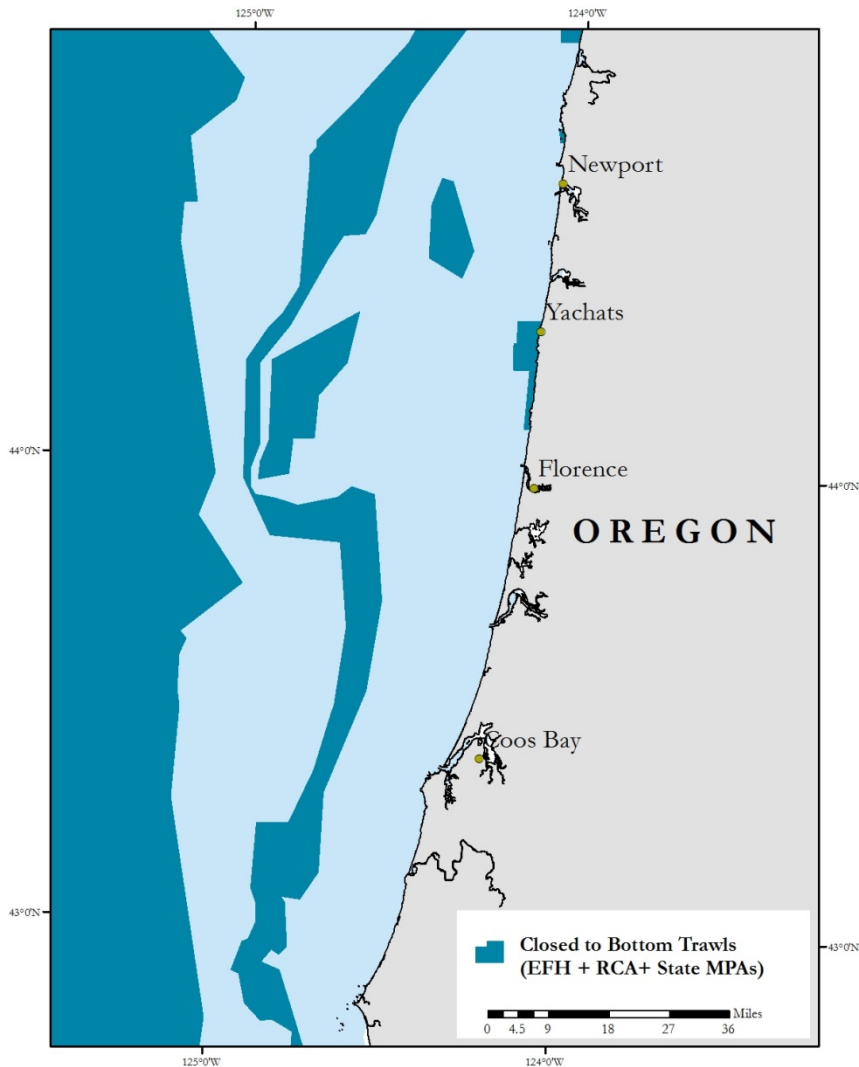
## Existing Bottom Trawl Closures (RCAs, EFH, States)



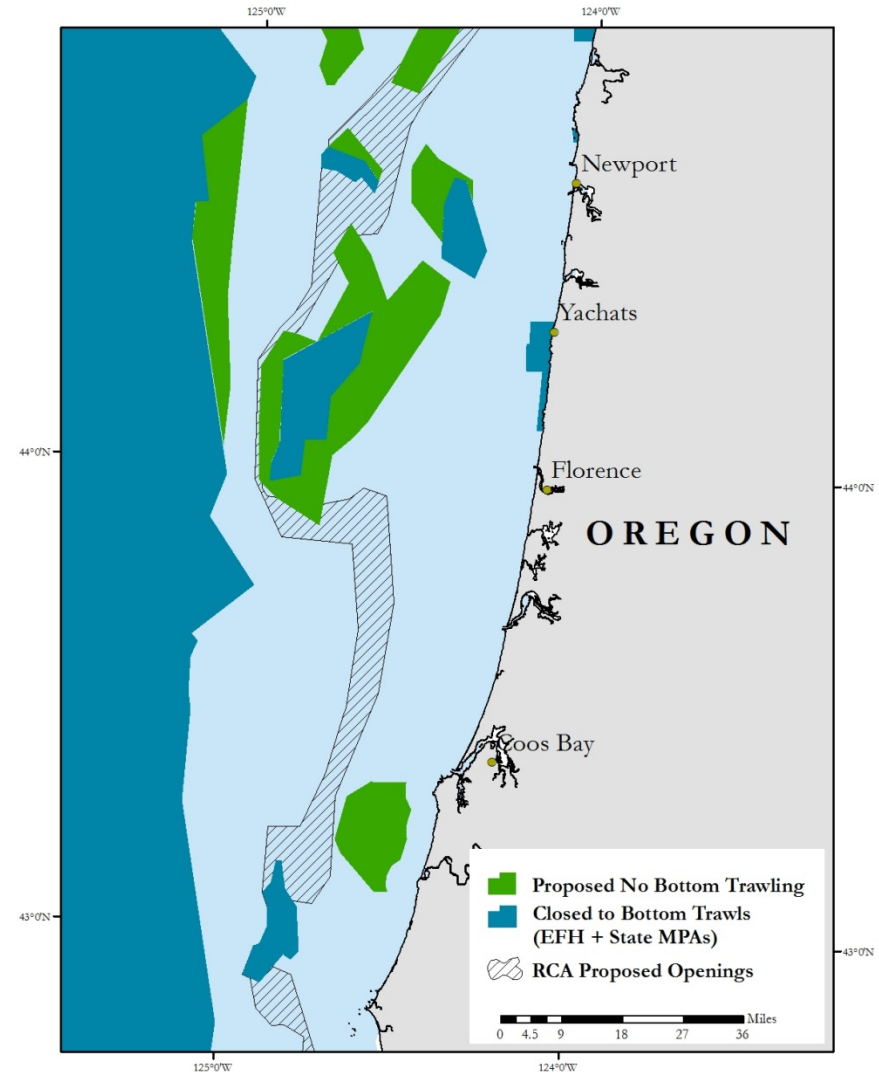
## Oceana et al. Proposed Bottom Trawl Closures with trawl RCA Opening



# Baseline (Trawl RCA closed)



# Oceana et al. Proposal (with Trawl RCA reopened)



# Analytical Approach: Assess Net Changes Priority Habitat Protection

- Analyze EFH alternatives with Trawl RCA removed
- Priority habitats (Amend. 19, EFH Data Catalog)
  - Hard/Rocky Substrates
  - Submarine canyons
  - Habitat-forming invertebrates
    - NOAA Deep Sea Coral Database (coral and sponge occurrences)
    - Coral and sponge bycatch locations
    - Predictive models
  - Habitat models for selected groundfish species
- Coastwide, Regionally, and Area by Area



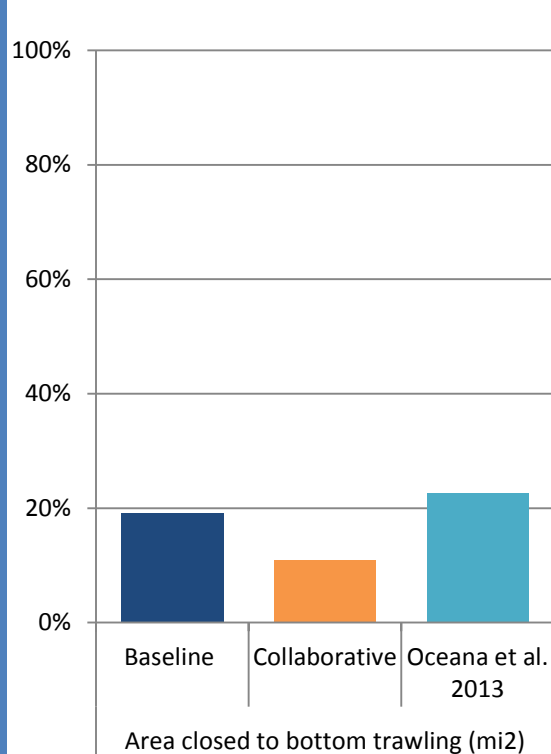


# Analysis of Net Changes in Habitat Protections by Bioregion

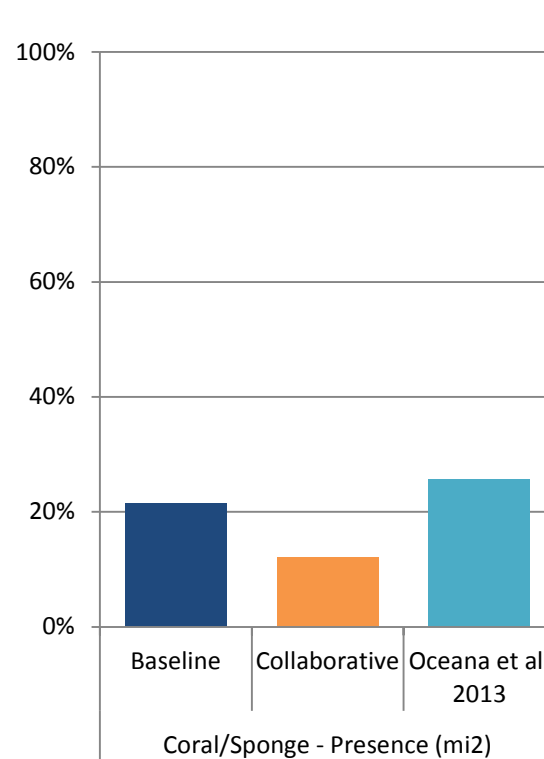
Example: Northern Upper Slope (N. of Cape Mendocino)

Baseline includes Trawl RCA; Proposals analyzed with Trawl RCA Removed

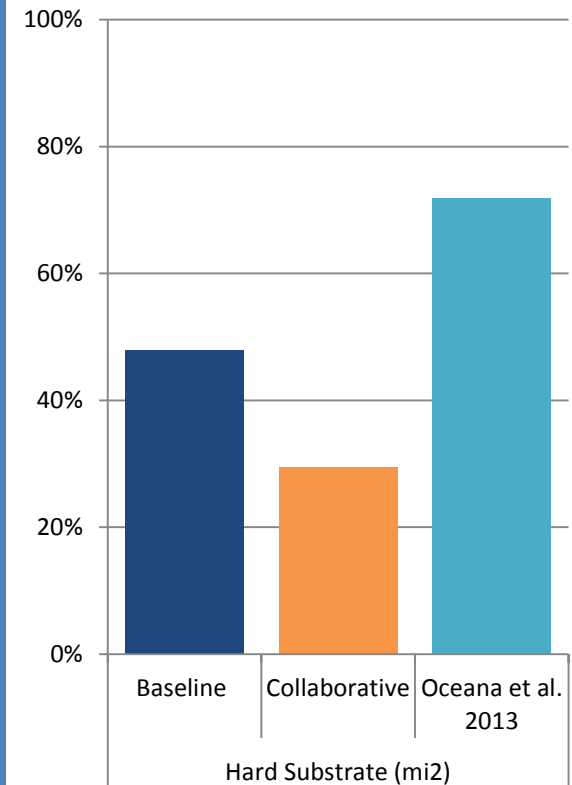
**A. Northern Upper Slope  
% Total Area Closed**



**B. Northern Upper Slope  
% Coral and Sponge Presence**



**C. Northern Upper Slope  
% Hard Substrate**

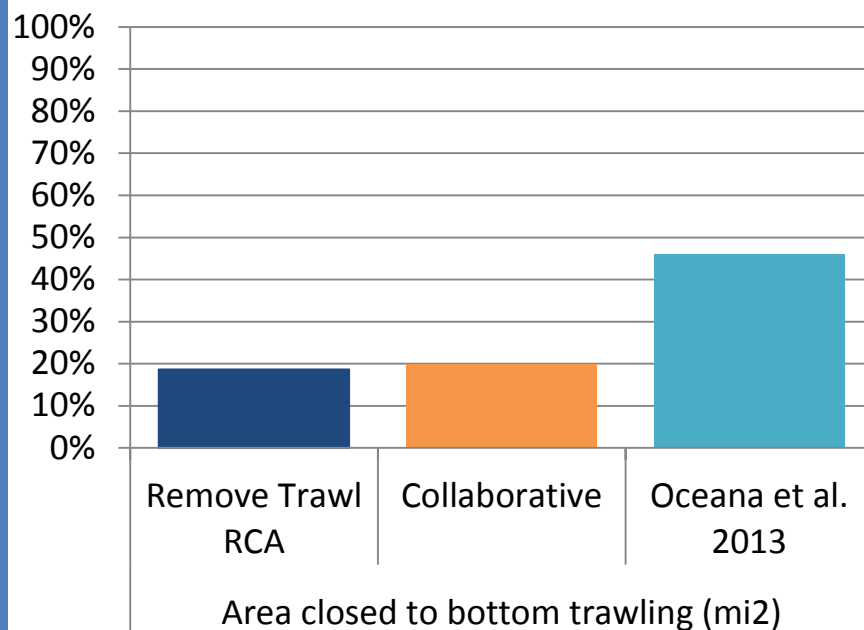


% of each habitat feature inside year-round bottom trawl closure

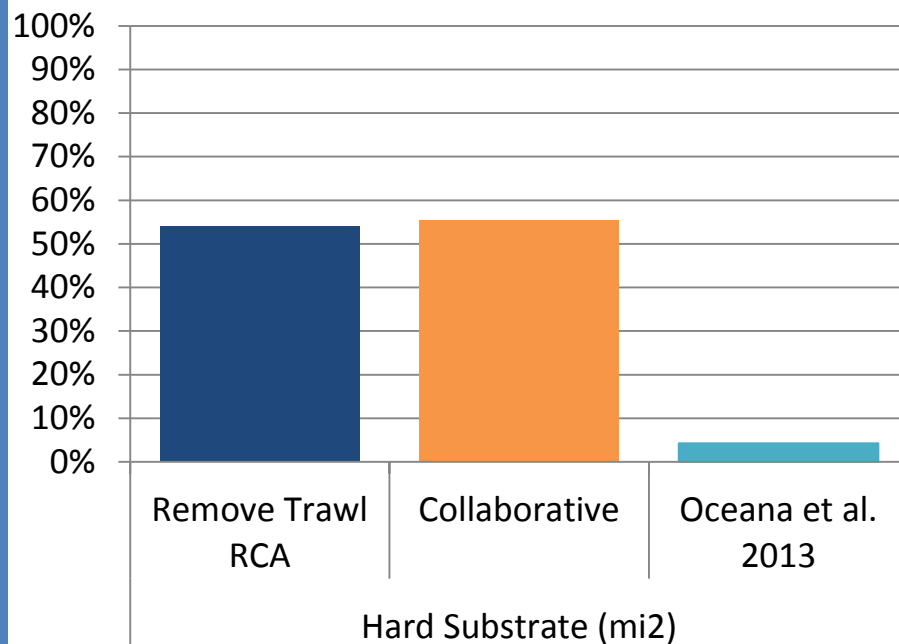


# Focused Analysis of Priority Habitats within Year Round Trawl RCA if Trawl RCA is Reopened

**A. Percent of Coastwide RCA that would remain closed as an EFHCA or state closures with the removal of the trawl RCA**



**B. Percent of hard substrate within Coastwide Trawl RCA that would be opened to trawling**



**Goal: Maintain sensitive habitats within the RCA closed to trawling as EFH CAs**

# Analyzing Economic Impacts

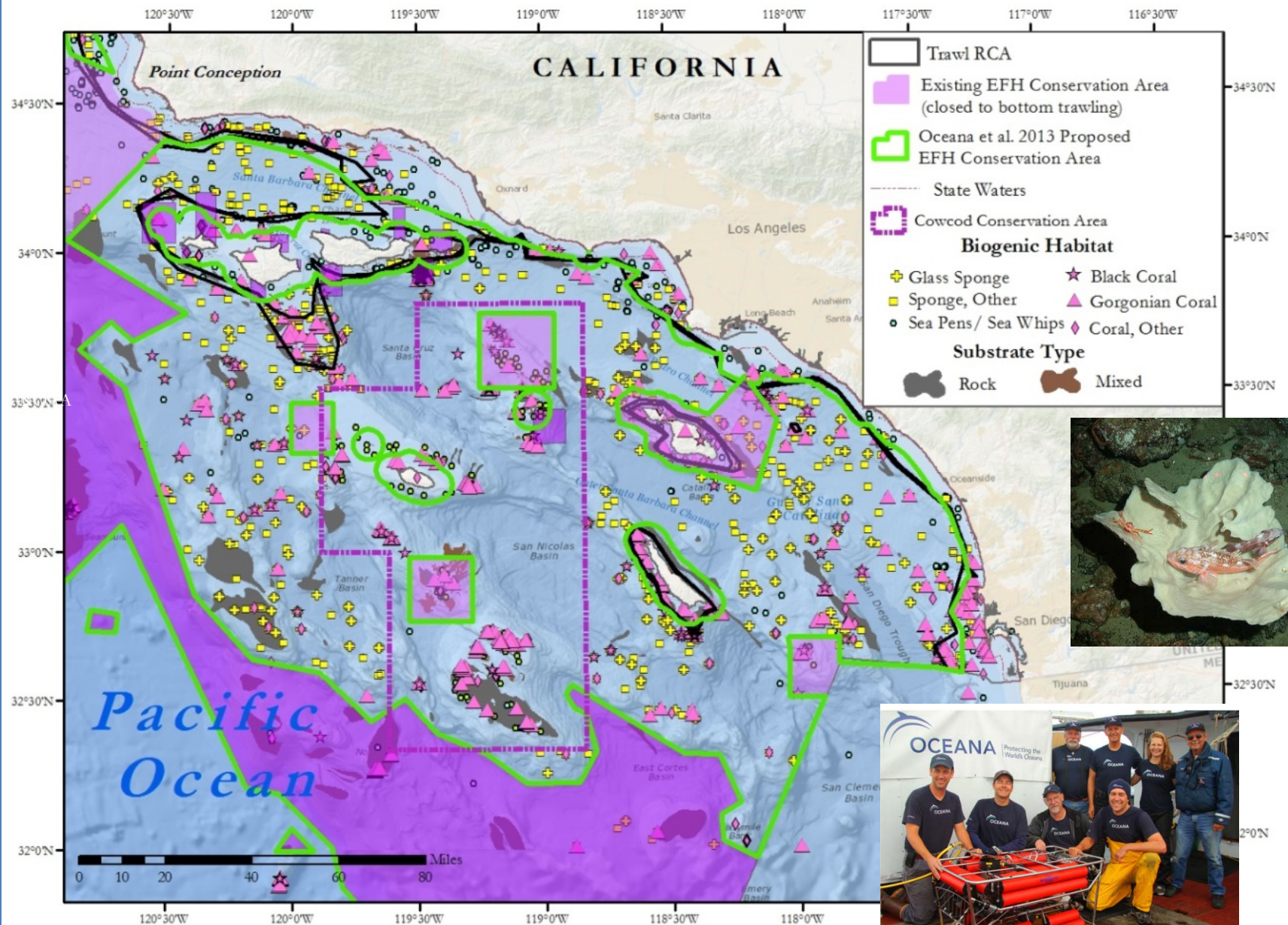
Analysis of Proposals\* (From EFH/RCA Project Team Report April 2016)

Proponent	Close (ha)	Re-open (ha)	Coast-wide Bottom Trawl Displacement	Effort Restored %	Net Change %
Collab	392,307	95,876	0.3%	0.5%	0.2%
FMA	0	786	-	0.0%	0.0%
GFNMS	18,347	0	0.0%	-	0.0%
Greenpeace	1,722,099	0	25.0%	-	-25%
MBNMS	43,476	25,686	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%
MCI	1,211,751	0	14.8%	-	-14.8%
Oceana/ NRDC/ OC	5,355,410	43,554	2.4%	0.1%*	-2.3%

This analysis is of EFH changes only; does not include RCA reopening.

With RCA reopening, Oceana/NRDC/OC proposal would **restore 13.7%** of the historic (2002-2006) bottom trawl effort that was displaced by current closures

# Southern California





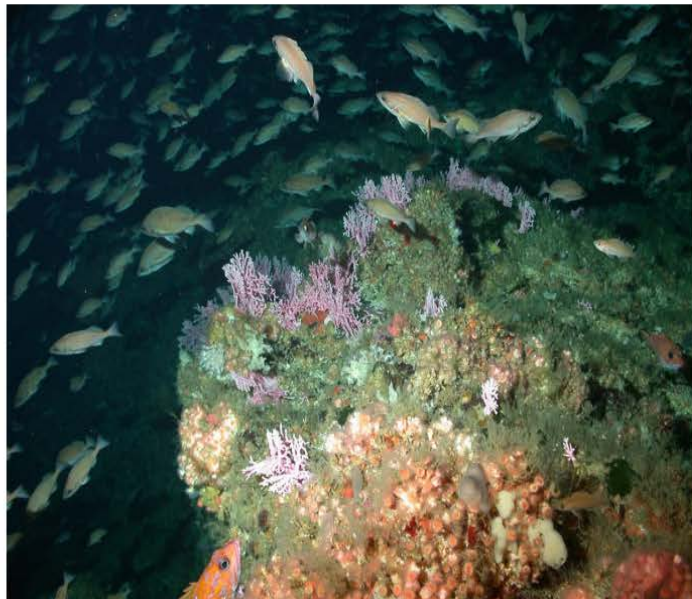
# Coming Soon: Interactive Web Tour of Oceana et al. EFH Proposal



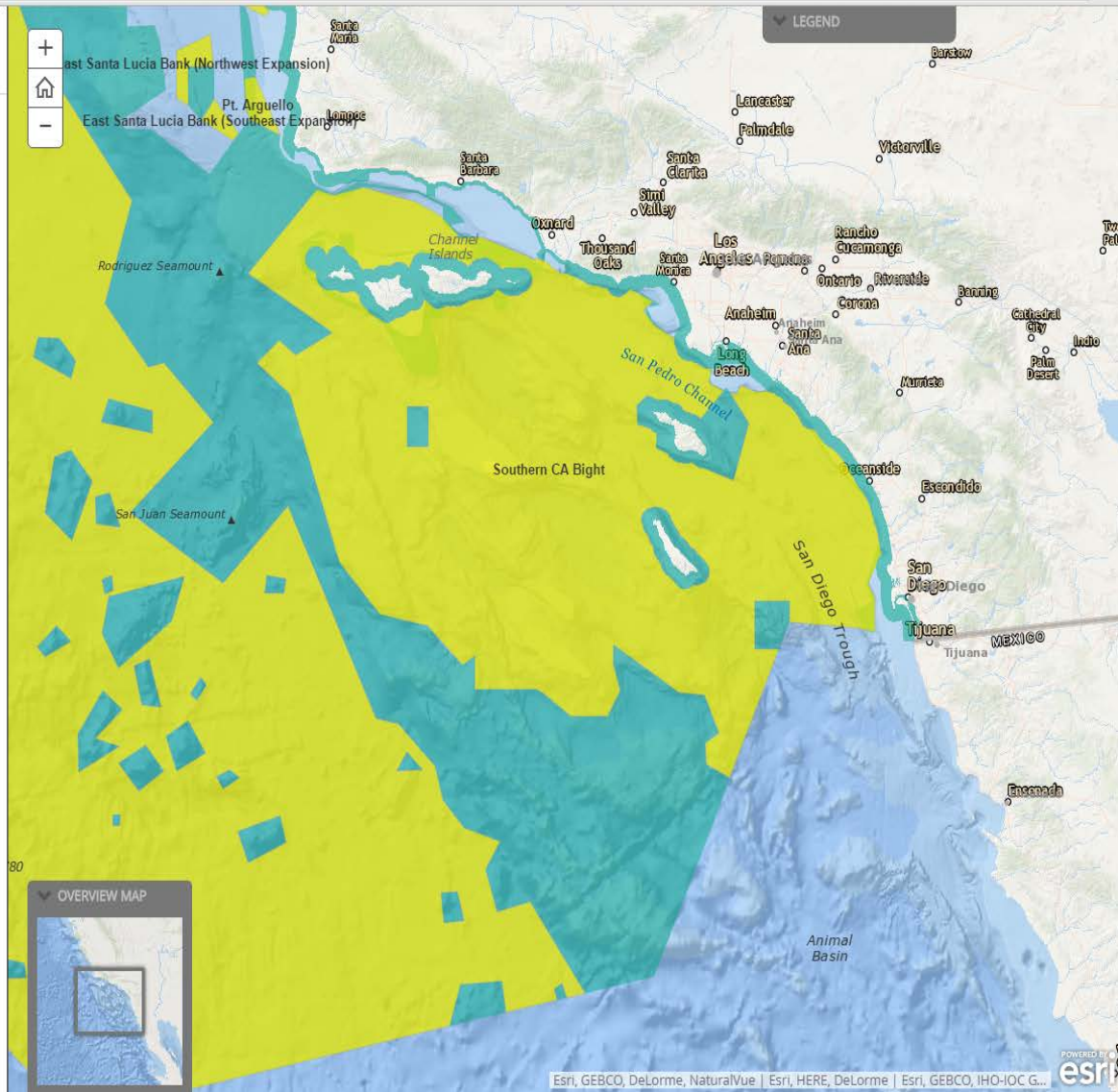
Protecting Important Seafloor Habitats

## Tanner and Cortes Banks

Located approximately 110 miles west of San Diego, Tanner and Cortes Banks compose the outermost features of California's Channel Islands. These areas are coral and sponge hotspots in the [Southern California Bight](#). A new species of black coral (*Antipathes dendrochristos*) was recently discovered. Other species that provide habitat and shelter for fish in the area include stony corals, stylasterids, gorgonian corals, sea pens, and sponges. In addition to the abundant coral gardens found in this region, the physical features of the banks and the productive waters surrounding them support a thriving marine food web. The area is part of important migration and feeding grounds for whales (gray, and endangered blue and fin whales), nursery areas for great white shark pups, and critical foraging areas for California sea lions and seabirds. These waters also contain important invertebrate species like spiny lobsters and endangered white abalone.

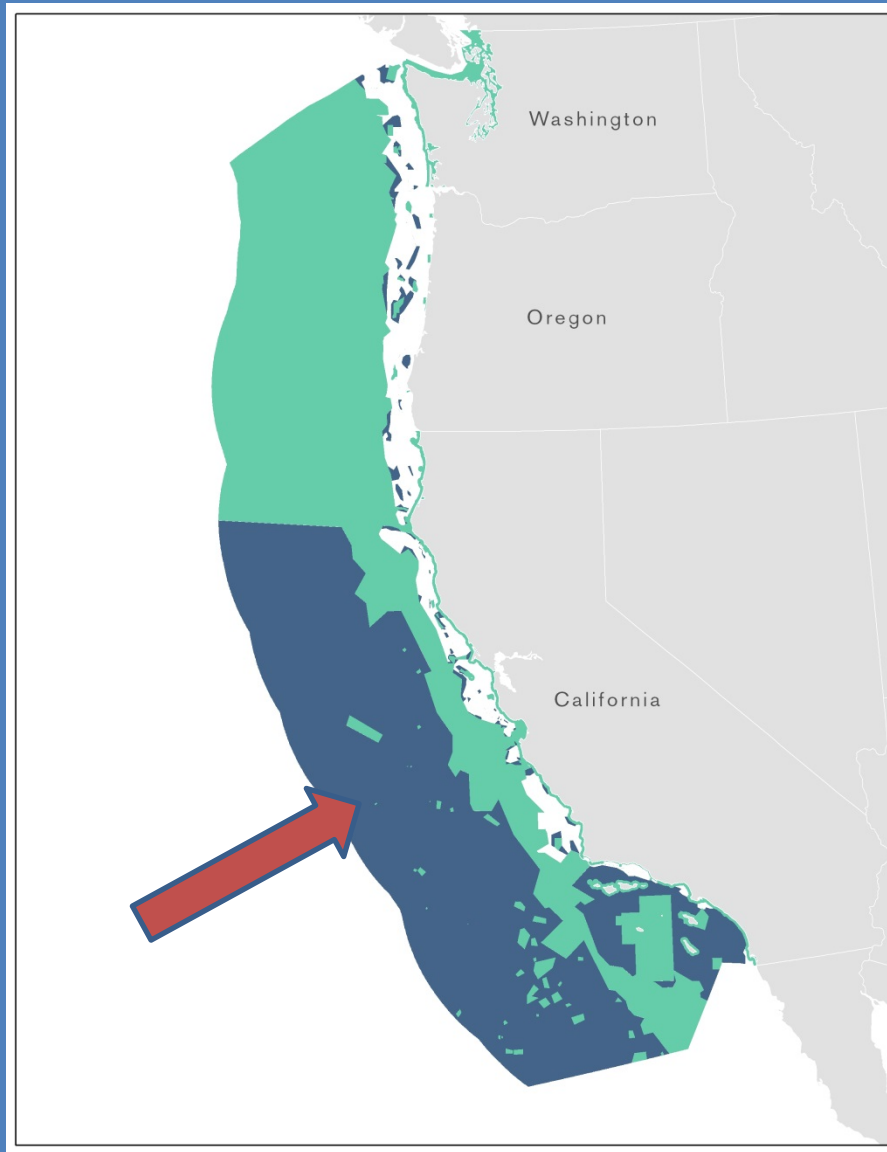


Hydrocoral (*Stylaster californicus*) with a school of square-spot rockfish (*Sebastes hopkinsi*) at 86 meters depth on Cortes Bank. Credit: NOAA Southwest Fisheries Science Center.





# Deepwater Habitat Conservation Area



**Council voted for this policy  
in 2005**

New MSA provisions (since  
2006) Several options that  
should be analyzed:

- Designation of zones where gear types are not prohibited (Section 303(b)(2)(A))
- Authority to conserve non-target species and habitats (Section(b)(12))

# Recommendations

- Ask Project Team to analyze revised Oceana/ NRDC/ Ocean Conservancy proposal as an alternative
- Achieve goal of net gains of fishing opportunity and habitat protections through analysis of EFH changes with full RCA reopening
- Adopt the deep-water closure as a PPA at this meeting
- Adopt Administrative Revisions (incl. updating major prey items) as PPAs at this meeting
- Consolidate alternatives where appropriate
- Keep Amendment 28 on schedule

