

ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT ROCKFISH CONSERVATION AREA PROJECT TEAM  
REPORT ON FUTURE COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA AND WORKLOAD PLANNING

The Essential Fish Habitat/Rockfish Conservation Area (EFH/RCA) Project Team continues developing the analysis for potential modifications to EFH conservation areas, the trawl Rockfish Conservation Area (RCA), and areas off Southern California deeper than 3,500 meters. The Team is making progress, but has encountered challenges related to a very complex analysis and suite of alternatives. The Team will not have a complete draft analysis ready for the November, 2017 Council meeting, and agrees that it would be somewhat arbitrary to set another target for March, 2018. Instead, the Team agrees that it should focus efforts with finishing the analysis and compiling a robust preliminary draft Environmental Impact Statement. The Team will provide the Council with an update and a schedule for completion of the project at the November Council meeting.

The Team is analyzing the effects of the No Action and Action alternatives in Table 1 (on the next page) of this report.

Subject Area	Action Alternatives						
<b>1. EFHCA changes (re-openings and new closures)</b>	1.a Collaborative	1.b Oceana, et al. (modified per November 2016 Agenda item F4b <a href="#">CDFW report</a> )	1.c <a href="#">MTC*</a>	1.d Garibaldi reef South (from “None” in F4a Project Team Report appendix table F4-a, November 2016)	1.e Rittenburg bank modifications in <a href="#">NMS report (In November 2016 Agenda item F4b Supplemental NMS Report)</a>	1.f Potato Bank correction	1.g New EFHCAs within RCA, based on presence of priority habitats ( <i>WA only</i> )**
<b>2. Adjustments to Trawl RCA</b>	2.a Remove the trawl RCA (PPA for OR&CA)		2.b Remove the RCA, and in WA implement discrete area closures for overfished species		2.c Remove RCA, and implement block area closures for groundfish species and protected species, particularly salmon (PPA for OR&CA)		
<b>3. Use MSA Sec. 303(b) discretionary authorities</b>	3.a Use MSA Sec. 303(b)(2)(A), 303(b)(2)(B), or 303(b)(12) to close waters deeper than 3,500 m to bottom contact gear, consistent with September 2015 Agenda Item H.8.a, <a href="#">Supplemental NMFS Report</a> . ( <i>Preliminary Preferred</i> )						

\*Nehalem bank/shale pile, Popcorn, Garibaldi reef, Stonewall bank, Daisy bank/Nelson isl (as modified by GAP), Heceta bank (as modified by GAP). These are found on page 32 of Agenda item F.4.c, Supplemental Public Comment 2, November 2016. This alternative is mutually exclusive with Alternative 1b.

\*\*The Team merged all EFHCA alternatives into a single subject area, meaning that Alt 1.g is now listed along with the other EFH-related alternatives.

PFMC  
09/14/17