

ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT (EFH) AND ROCKFISH CONSERVATION AREA (RCA)
AMENDMENT 28 - FINAL ACTION

In November 2016, the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) considered a draft analytical document (Agenda Item F.4.a, Project Team Report, November 2016) on proposed modifications to Pacific Coast groundfish essential fish habitat conservation areas (EFHCAs), trawl rockfish conservation areas (RCAs), and proposed closure of waters deeper than 3,500 meters. The Council selected partial preliminary preferred alternatives (PPAs), and provided additional guidance on continued analysis of the alternatives. For waters off Oregon and California, the partial PPA was to remove the trawl RCA and adopt block area closures (Alternative 2.c). For waters off Washington, the partial PPA was the No Action Alternative for both EFHCAs and the trawl RCA.

At this meeting, the Council will consider a Preliminary Draft Environmental Impact Statement (PDEIS) (Agenda Item F.3.a, Project Team Report 1) that describes and provides analyses of a suite of alternatives. The alternatives are grouped in three subject areas: Subject Area 1 includes EFHCA modifications, Subject Area 2 includes RCA modifications, and Subject Area 3 includes proposed closure of waters deeper than 3,500 meters to groundfish bottom contact gear.

The alternatives in each subject area are analyzed in Chapter 4 and compared to the other alternatives in the same subject area, as well as to the No Action Alternative. Chapter 5 (“Synthesis”) includes analyses of several combinations of both EFHCA and trawl RCA alternatives to assist in Council decision making.

At this meeting, the Council is scheduled to adopt a final preferred alternative (FPA) from the suite of alternatives under consideration. Upon identifying an FPA, the Project Team will work with the National Marine Fisheries Service to develop a DEIS, to be followed by deeming and rulemaking.

Council Action:

- 1. Consider and discuss the PDEIS.**
- 2. Adopt FPA for EFHCA and trawl RCA modifications, and waters deeper than 3,500 meters.**
- 3. Provide Additional Guidance as necessary.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item F.3.a, Project Team Report 1: Preliminary Draft Environmental Impact Statement.
2. Agenda Item F.3.b, National Marine Fisheries Service Report 1.
3. Agenda Item F.3.b, National Marine Sanctuaries Report 1.
4. Agenda Item F.3.c, Public Comment 1.
5. Agenda Item F.3.c, Public Comment 2 (**Full Version Electronic Only**).

Agenda Order:

- F.3 Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) and Rockfish Conservation Area (RCA) Kerry Griffin
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- a. Project Team Report Gretchen Hanshew
 - b. Reports and Comments of Management Entities and Advisory Bodies
 - c. Public Comment
 - d. **Council Action:** Adopt Final Preferred Alternatives for Modifying EFH and RCAs

PFMC
03/22/18