

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON 2019-2020 MANAGEMENT MEASURES

The Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) received an overview of the topic from Mr. John DeVore, groundfish staff officer for the Council, and the Groundfish Management Team (GMT) and offers the following comments and suggestions.

In general, the GAP supports most of the management measures. Longer comments and rationale for any items where the GAP suggests changes or different alternatives from status quo of those listed on [Agenda Item F.5, Supplemental Attachment 3](#) – the checklist – are detailed below. For easy reference, we include a copy of the checklist with easily identifiable GAP recommendations.

Overarching comments

The GAP appreciates the Council's preliminary preferred alternative (PPA) for yelloweye under Agenda Item F.2, biennial harvest specifications for 2019-2020. That is, Alternative 1, which would result in a higher annual catch limit (ACL) in both 2019 and 2020. These higher limits could afford more opportunity, as noted in the checklist, for many different sectors.

Specific management measure comments

#9. Shorebased IFQ; Allocations based on preferred ACLs

The GAP supports the allocations as listed in the tables and also recommends trip limits for big skate as listed in Table A-9 (reproduced below) of [Agenda Item F.2, Attachment 3, Appendix A](#). These same trip limits should suffice in 2019 and 2020 and can be easily modified through inseason action.

Table A-9. Big skate trip limits coastwide for shorebased IFQ fishery for 2017.

JAN-FEB	MAR-APR	MAY-JUN	JUL-AUG	SEP-OCT	NOV-DEC
5,000	25,000	30,000	35,000	10,000	5,000

#11. Commercial non-trawl; Same as 2017, except proposed routine trip limit changes for:

- Canary LE S of 34°27' N. Lat (Table A-60): **Option 1**
- Canary OA: **request analysis of 200 lbs/ 2 months, closed March-April for open access (OA) only**, as identified in [Agenda Item F.5, Supplemental Public Comment](#), with a final preferred alternative to be made in June.
- Thornyhead OA: **request analysis of 50 lbs./mo thornyhead retention for open access north of 34° 27' N. Lat.** This differs from the existing No Action and

Option 1 alternatives as it includes the area between 40° 10' N. Lat. and 34° 27' N. Lat.

Rationale: To reduce regulatory discards.

Lingcod North LE and OA (Table A-63):

north of 42° N. Lat.: Option 3, OA only; (900 lbs/month)

- **42° N. Lat. to 40°10' N. Lat.: New option, OA only; 600 lbs./month**
- **Limited Entry North of 40°10' N. Lat.: Option 1**

Lingcod South LE (Table A-68) and OA (Table A-69)

- **Option 1, OA only (300 lbs./month; closed March-April).**

Rationale: The stock assessment splits lingcod at 42° N. Lat., but the feeling is this small geographical area between the 42° N. Lat. (California/Oregon border) to 40° 10' N. Lat. is better tied to the north than to the south, which has the smaller limits and more depleted stock. The trip limit of 600 lbs/month would seem to be precautionary while still allowing some opportunity for the salmon fleet that will likely be fishing in that area this summer. Per the stock assessment, the lingcod stock is in much better shape north of 42° N. Lat. whereas it is in precautionary management south of 42° N. Lat.

Slope rockfish and Darkblotched rockfish north of 40° 10' N. Latitude. (Table A61)

Option 1, OA only

#15. California recreational:

- Sub-bag limit options; canary – increase to 2
The GAP supports [California Department of Fish and Wildlife report 1](#) under this agenda item, noting there is the option to increase the canary bag limit inseason, as limits of up to 5 canary have already been analyzed.

#16. All sectors, Salmon incidental take:

Regarding salmon incidental take in the groundfish fisheries, the GAP reiterates, by reference, the arguments put forward in our [March 2018 GAP statement 1](#) under Agenda Item H.5. NMFS has reached out to some industry representatives to discuss specific concerns, however, answers or clarifications about what NMFS intends to do to address the concerns raised by the GAP and Council have not been provided. The central question is: Is the Biological Opinion (BiOp) consistent with the direction and guidance provided by the Council, most notably the Automatic Closure Authority? The Council echoed these general concerns and this specific issue in March as well. The GAP does not believe the automatic closure authority provision in the BiOp is consistent with guidance and direction provided by the Council to NMFS.

Specifically, the GAP is very concerned about establishing a hard cap for Chinook salmon. As the Council is aware, establishing hard caps can often create more problems than they solve. Because of the automatic closure authority, the 20,000-fish threshold becomes a hard cap. A hard

cap, when shared by multiple sectors, becomes a pie. Access to that pie is either open - potentially creating a race-for-fish; or the pie is divided up, allocated to groundfish fishery sectors and individuals. Both outcomes are highly likely to destabilize the groundfish fisheries, and dilute hard-fought gains in all fishery sectors. The GAP does not believe this was the intended result of the guidance and direction provided by the Council to NMFS.

As stated by the Council in March 2018, the actions of fishery participants are the most effective first line of defense to address concerns about Chinook bycatch in Pacific Coast groundfish fisheries. As a backstop, NMFS and the Council can use management measures to address issues as they arise. The two largest segments of the fishery, whiting and non-whiting trawl, are 100 percent monitored; accurate and timely catch data is available to fishery managers. In combination, these tools should ensure the BiOp conservation objectives are achieved. A Chinook hard cap is not necessary, it is inconsistent with Council intent, and will more than likely create a significant management burden for fishery participants, fishery managers, and the Council.

In line with developing a management measure backstop to industry efforts, the GMT has developed a suite of management alternatives that could be used to ensure the conservation objectives of the BiOp are met. The GAP provides the following specific comments related to the proposed management measures. It is important to note that the GAP recommends No Action to establishment of automatic closure authority for the reasons stated above. If the Council does not think it is appropriate to select No Action (at this time), then the GAP strongly urges the Council to not select a Preliminary Preferred Alternative for Automatic Closure of the fishery at this meeting. Delay to a future meeting would facilitate receipt of further guidance from NMFS.

Referring to Appendix A and the corresponding item numbers from [Supplemental GMT Report 3](#), under Agenda Item F.5.a, the GAP recommendations are as follows:

A.1: Expansion of Routine Bycatch Reduction Areas (BRAs) for Midwater Gear

In line with the GMT recommendation, **the GAP recommends the Council select Alternative 1 as its PPA**, which would add the 200 fathom depth contour for use as a BRA.

B.1: Whiting Ocean Salmon Conservation Zone (OSCZ)

In line with the GMT recommendation, **the GAP recommends the Council select Alternative 1 as its PPA**, which would eliminate the OSCZ.

B.2: Automatic Authority for BRAs for Whiting – Aggregate Catch Trigger

Of the alternatives established under B.2 in the [GMT's Supplemental Report 3](#), **the GAP prefers Alternative 2**. However, we have several concerns. As stated above and emphasized by Council members in March, fishery participants and the whiting cooperatives are better suited to respond quickly to bycatch events. As the GAP understands this alternative, the BRAs that would kick in under automatic authority would be blunt coastwide depth contours that may not be responsive to the actual conditions of

the bycatch event. Additionally, the GAP is concerned that applying BRAs at different depth contours for different sectors would be inequitable to some fishery participants, especially in years where fishing is optimal inside 200 or 150 fathoms. If that were the case and differential depth closures were used, this alternative would essentially close the fishery to some participants.

B.3: Automatic Authority for BRAs for Whiting – Sector-Specific Catch

In line with the GMT recommendation, **the GAP recommends the Council select No Action as its PPA** for sector-specific BRAs.

C.1: Automatic Authority for Non-Whiting Trawl

In line with the GMT recommendation, **the GAP recommends the Council select No Action as its PPA** for non-whiting BRAs.

C.2: Columbia River and Klamath River Salmon Conservation Zone Prohibitions

In contrast to the GMT recommendation, **the GAP recommends the Council select No Action as its PPA** for the Columbia River and Klamath River Salmon Conservation Zone prohibitions, or amend the No Action alternative to prohibit midwater trawl gear in these zones year-round, since it would not be practical to fish with midwater gear in these areas anyway. The GAP opposes closing these zones to bottom trawl vessels, particularly the Columbia River Salmon Conservation Zone, since Figure 4 in the [GMT's Supplemental Report 3](#) shows bottom trawl activity in this area. Bottom trawlers report they do not encounter salmon bycatch in this area. However, if the Council has concerns, the GAP recommends the Council consider block area closures or automatic closures for bottom trawling in these areas only if a certain number of Chinook were encountered.

D.1: Automatic Closures of Sector(s) when Threshold and Reserve Reached

In contrast to the GMT recommendation, **the GAP recommends the Council select No Action as its PPA** for automatic closure of the groundfish fishery, for the reasons stated at the beginning of this section. To summarize, the GAP does not believe the automatic closure authority provision in the BiOp is consistent with Council direction.

D.2: Sector-Specific Reserve Limits

In contrast to the GMT recommendation, **the GAP recommends the Council select No Action as its PPA** since the action alternative includes automatic closure of the groundfish fishery.

#19 and #20. Commercial non-trawl sector and California recreational sector, modify recreational fixed gear depths inside the Western Cowcod Conservation Area:

The GAP discussed the public comments from the Sportfishing Association of California (SAC) regarding changes to the Western Cowcod Conservation Area and supports the inclusion of these in the 2019-2020 management measures with the exception of Tanner Bank. Those comments are attached for your review and members of the SAC will speak to them under this agenda item. These changes are designed to be easily enforceable and could provide both sport and commercial fishermen some increased areas to access natural resources. The GAP supports the GMT

statement to increase access to 40 fathoms.

The GAP has concerns regarding the proposed adjustment to the non-trawl Rockfish Conservation Area in California north of 40° 10' N lat. and cannot endorse these changes at this time.

ACTION ITEM CHECKLIST

2019-2020 Allocations and Harvest Guidelines (HG) Tables and analysis of items referenced below can be found in Appendix A (Agenda Item F.2, Attachment 3) and Appendix C (Agenda Item F.5, Attachment 2)				
#	GAP	Category	Sector	Measure
1	OK	Revisions	All	Updates to selected rockfish conservation area coordinates in California (Section C.2.1 in Appendix C)
2	OK	Off-the-top deductions		Confirm or modify amounts adopted in November 2017 for groundfish mortality in Tribal, exempted fishing permit (EFP), non-groundfish fisheries, and research activities (Sections A.1.1, A.2.1, A.3.1, and A.4.1 in Appendix A)
3	OK	ACT		Adopt preliminary ACTs for stocks as deemed appropriate (Table A-41)
4	OK	HG		Adopt preliminary HGs for species managed within a complex for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blackgill rockfish within the Slope Rockfish complex south of 40°10' N. lat. (159 mt; Section A.2.3.1 in Appendix A) • Nearshore Rockfish north of 40°10' N. lat. – consider state quotas
5	OK	Allocations	Trawl, Non-Trawl	Adopt preliminary 2-year trawl and non-trawl allocations; analyses in Appendix A assumed the following allocations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rebuilding species: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cowcod: trawl (40%) and non-trawl (60%) • Yelloweye: trawl (8%) and non-trawl (92%) • Bocaccio: trawl (39%) and non-trawl (61%) • Canary: trawl (72%) and non-trawl (28%) • Big skate: trawl (95%) and non-trawl (5%) • Longnose skate: trawl (90%) and non-trawl (10%) • Shelf Rockfish north 40°10' N. lat.: trawl (60.2%) and non-trawl (39.8%) • Shelf Rockfish south 40°10' N. lat.: trawl (12.2%) and non-trawl (87.8%)
6	OK	Allocations	Within Trawl	Adopt preliminary canary allocations for the shorebased IFQ, CP, and MS sectors (Tables A-47 and A-49 in Appendix A)
7	OK	Set-Aside	Within Trawl, At-Sea	Adopt preliminary set-asides for Pacific whiting at-sea sectors (Table A-49)

2019-2020 Allocations and Harvest Guidelines (HG)

Tables and analysis of items referenced below can be found in Appendix A (Agenda Item F.2, Attachment 3) and Appendix C (Agenda Item F.5, Attachment 2)

#	GAP	Category	Sector	Measure
8	OK	HG or Shares	Within Non-Trawl	<p>Adopt preliminary 2-year within non-trawl HGs or shares for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rebuilding species: cowcod and yelloweye • Bocaccio south of 40°10' N lat. • Canary rockfish • Sablefish south of 36° N lat.: 70% limited entry and 30% open access fixed gears • Nearshore Rockfish North of 40°10' N. latitude - consider state-specific HGs (Table A-46)

2019-2020 Season Structures

#	GAP	Category	Sector	Measure
9	<i>OK; add big skate trip limit</i>		Shorebased IFQ	Allocations based on preferred ACLs (Table A-47 and Table A-48)
10	OK		At-Sea Sectors	Amendment 21 allocations for widow rockfish based on preferred ACLs (Table A-49)
11	<i>Modifications to canary, thornyheads, lingcod north and lingcod south open access</i>		Commercial Non-Trawl	<p>Same as 2017, except proposed routine trip limit changes for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sablefish N LE and OA (Table A-58) • Sablefish S LE and OA (Table A-59) • Canary LE and OA (Table A-60) • Darkblotched rockfish and Slope Rockfish North (Table A-61) • Thornyheads North OA (Table A-62) • Lingcod North LE and OA (Table A-63) • Lingcod South LE (Table A-68) and OA (Table A-69)
12	OK		Treaty Fisheries	Same as 2018, except petrale sole set-aside increases from 220 mt to 290 mt

2019-2020 Season Structures				
#	GAP	Category	Sector	Measure
13	OK		WA Recreational	<p>Same as 2018, except</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progressively reduce or remove the 20 and 30 fm depth restrictions depending on Yelloweye ACL Sub-Bag Limit Options <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Canary Rockfish: no sub-bag limit in all marine areas Cabezon: sub-bag limit of 1 in all marine areas Allow lingcod and rockfish retention with halibut on board north of the Washington- Oregon border MA 1 during the halibut fishery
14	OK		OR Recreational	<p>Same as 2018, except</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Season open year round, except June-Aug when fishing is allowed shoreward of 40 fm Higher Yelloweye ACLs than under No Action: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Could allow fewer months with depth restrictions Possibly allow additional lingcod opportunities Possibly reduce bottomfish retention restrictions with halibut on board Bag limits will be adjusted through state regulations
15	<i>Support CDFW report re: canary; potential increase has been analyzed</i>		CA Recreational	<p>Same as 2018, except</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year round fishing for CA scorpionfish Option to fish deeper than 75 fm in Southern Management Area Higher Yelloweye ACLs than under No Action could allow year round fishing at all depths statewide Sub-bag limit options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lingcod South: decrease to 1 Cabezon: removal of sub-bag limit; up to 10 Canary: increase to 2

New Management Measures for Implementation in 2019-2020
Analysis of items referenced below can be found in Appendix C (Agenda Item F.5, Attachment 2)

#	GAP	Category	Sector	Measure
16	<i>Modified salmon incidental take</i>		All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salmon Incidental Take (Section C.1) • Stock complex restructuring (Section C.3.1)
17	OK		Trawl, Shorebased IFQ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminate daily vessel limits for rebuilt or all species (Section C.3.7) • Implement survival credits for discarded lingcod and sablefish (Section C.3.3) • Continue the Adaptive Management Program pass-through
18	OK		Trawl, At-Sea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal of automatic authority established in conjunction with Amendment 21-3 for darkblotched rockfish and POP (Section C.3.2)
19	<i>Modified CCA boundaries per public comment, excluding Tanner Bank</i>		Commercial Non-Trawl	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjustment to the non-trawl Rockfish Conservation Area in California north of 40° 10' N. lat. (Section C.3.4) • Modify commercial fixed gear depths inside the Western Cowcod Conservation Area (Section C.3.5)
20			CA Rec	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modify recreational fixed gear depths inside the Western Cowcod Conservation Area (Section C.3.5)
21	OK		Salmon Troll	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incidental lingcod retention ratio in the salmon troll fishery (Agenda Item F.5.a, Supplemental WDFW Report 2)

**RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
REGARDING F5 ATT 2 APPENDIX C NEW MANAGEMENT MEASURES
Modify recreational fixed gear depths inside the Western Cowcod
Conservation Area (Section C.3.5)**

SANTA BARBARA ISLAND RECOMMENDATIONS

30-Fathom Recommended RCA Line Waypoints

The briefing book provides the following waypoints for the RCA lines around Santa Barbara Island:

Table C-53. Proposed 30 fathom coordinates for Santa Barbara Island.

Order	Action	LatDeg_New	LatMin_New	LongDeg_New	LongMin_New
1	Add	33	30.38	119	3.15
2	Add	33	29.64	119	0.58
3	Add	33	27.24	119	1.73
4	Add	33	27.76	119	3.48
5	Add	33	30.38	119	3.15

We recommend that a fifth Waypoint be added to define the 30 fathom recreational fishing boundary. This will result in substantial increase in fishing opportunity while decreasing pressure on the overall area. This will reflect an increase of approximately 25% of recreational fishing area. The waypoint was identified using a high-resolution navigational chart at a scale of 1:20,000. These changes encompass important recreational fishing opportunity while as closely as possible adhering to a 30-fathom maximum bathymetry profile of hard bottom.

Order	Action	LatDeg New	LatMinNew	LonDegNew	LonMinNew
1	Add	33	30.38	119	03.15
2	Add	33	29.64	119	00.58
3	Add	33	27.24	119	01.73
4	Add	33	27.76	119	03.48
5	NEW	33	29.50	119	04.20
6	Add	33	30.38	119	03.15

40-Fathom Recommended RCA Line Waypoints

The briefing book provides the following waypoints for the 40 fathom RCA lines around Santa Barbara Island:

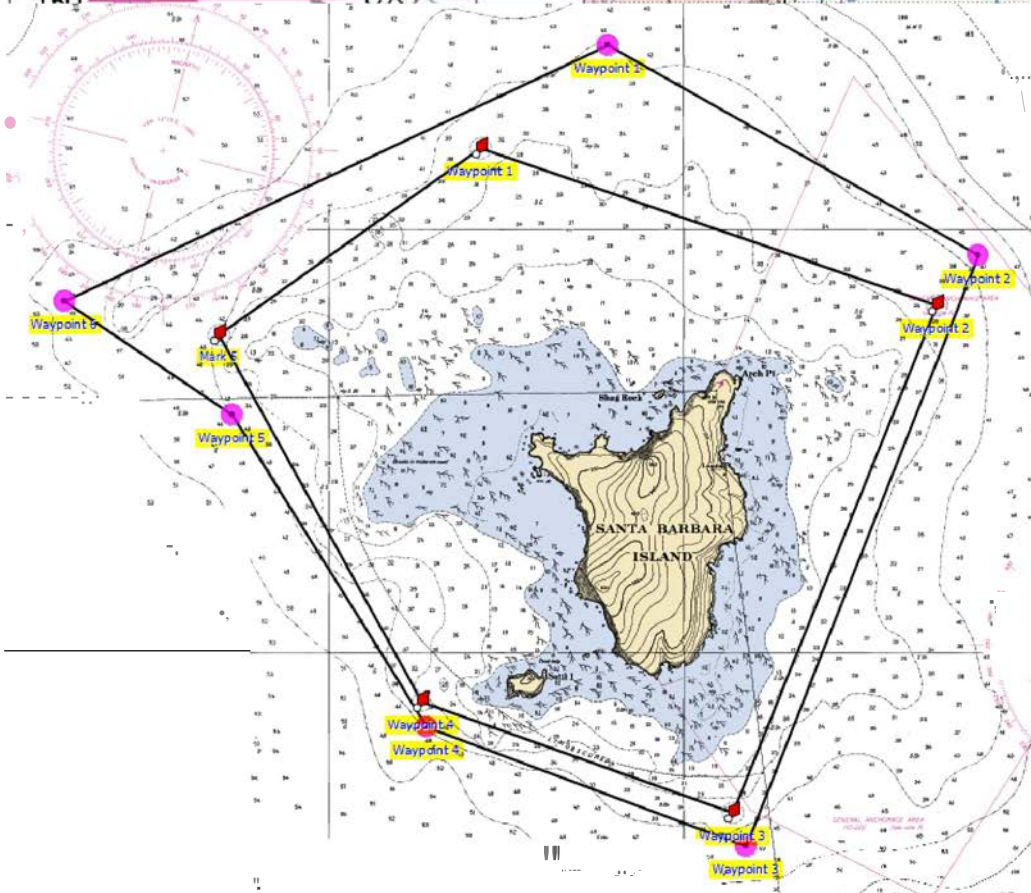
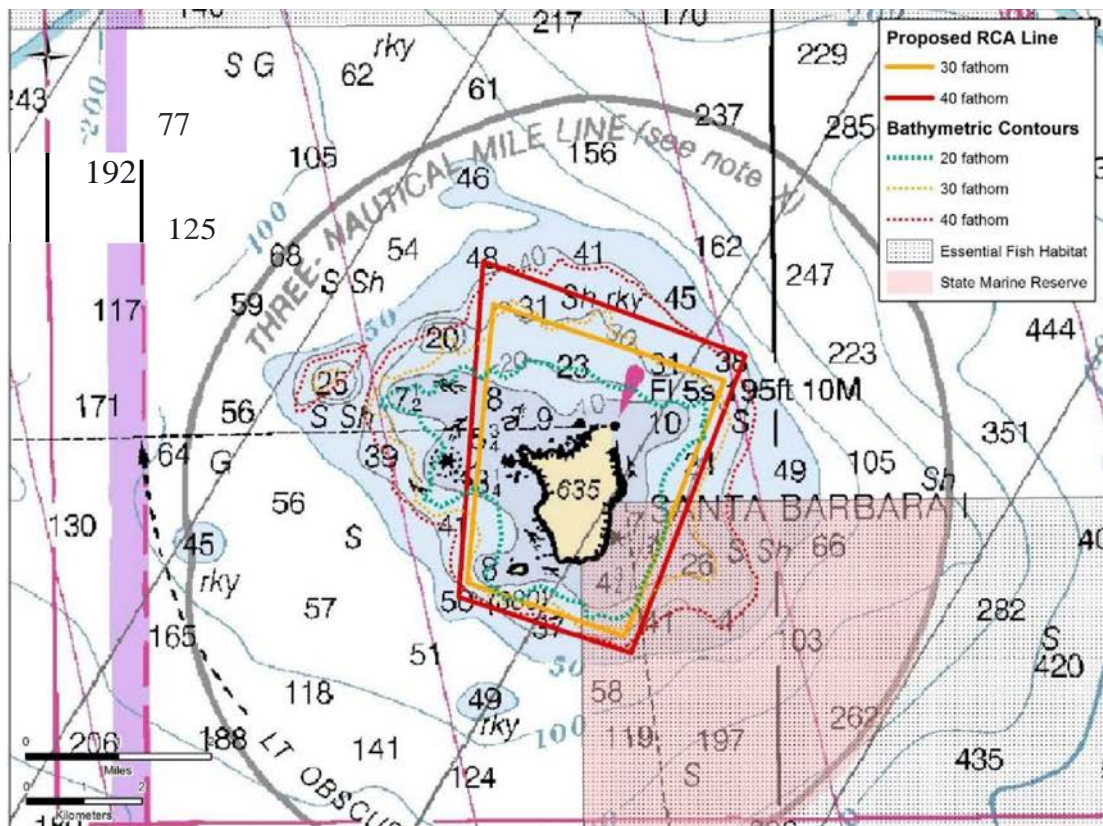
Table C-56. Proposed 40 fathom coordinates for Santa Barbara Island.

Order	Action	LatDeg_New	LatMin_New	LongDeg_New	LongMin_New
1	Add	33	30.78	119	3.27
2	Add	33	29.87	119	0.34
3	Add	33	27.08	119	1.65
4	Add	33	27.62	119	3.58
5	Add	33	30.78	119	3.27

We recommend that the following waypoints be used to define the 40 fathom recreational fishing boundaries. The waypoints were identified using a high-resolution navigational chart at a scale of 1:20,000. These changes encompass important recreational fishing opportunity while as closely as possible adhering to a 40-fathom maximum bathymetry profile of hard bottom. This adds approximately 30% to engage in recreational fishing while also decreasing pressure on the overall area.

Order	Action	LatDeg_New	LatMinNew	LonDegNew	LonMinNew
1	New	33	30.87	119	02.43
2	Add	33	29.87	119	00.34
3	Add	33	27.08	119	01.65
4	New	33	27.64	119	03.45
5	New	33	29.12	119	04.55
6	New	33	29.66	119	05.49
7	New	33	30.87	119	02.43

The following comparison is intended to provide a graphic depiction of the recommendation. The first chart is from the briefing book. The second chart is from the high resolution chart with the recommended changes.



TANNER BANK RECOMMENDATIONS

The briefing book provides the following waypoints for the 30 and 40 Fathom lines.

Table C-55. Proposed 30 fathom coordinates for Tanner Bank.

Order	Action	LatDeg New	LatMin New	LongDeg New	LongMin New
1	Add	32	43.02	119	8.52
2	Add	32	41.81	119	6.20
3	Add	32	40.67	119	6.82
4	Add	32	41.62	119	9.46
5	Add	32	43.02	119	8.52

Table C-58. Proposed 40 fathom coordinates for Tanner Bank.

Order	Action	LatDeg New	LatMin New	LongDeg New	LongMin New
1	Add	32	43.40	119	8.56
2	Add	32	41.36	119	5.02
3	Add	32	40.07	119	5.59
4	Add	32	41.51	119	9.76
5	Add	32	43.40	119	8.56

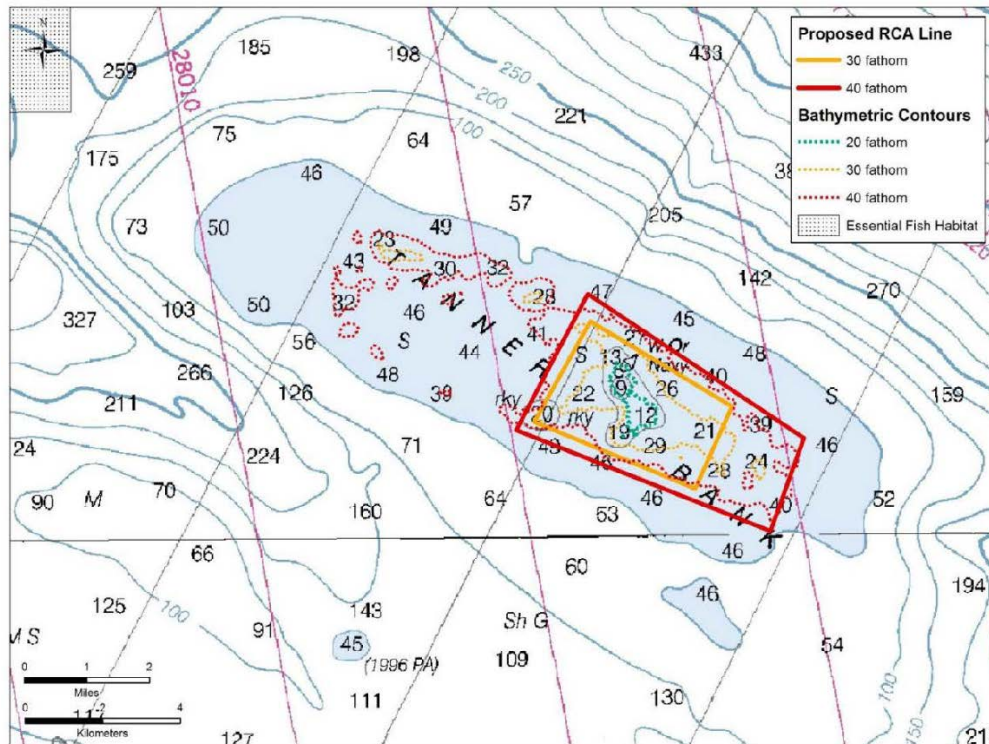


Figure C-31. Proposed 30 fm and 40 fm RCA lines around Tanner Bank.

SAN NICHOLAS ISLAND RECOMMENDATIONS

30-Fathom Recommended RCA Line Waypoints

The briefing book provides the following waypoints for the 30 fathom RCA lines around SAN NICHOLAS ISLAND:

Table C-54. Proposed 30 fathom coordinates for San Nicolas Island.

Order	Action	LatDeg New	LatMin New	LongDeg New	LongMin New
1	Add	33	18.39	119	38.87
2	Add	33	18.63	119	27.52
3	Add	33	15.24	119	20.10
4	Add	33	13.27	119	20.10
5	Add	33	12.16	119	26.82
6	Add	33	13.20	119	31.87
7	Add	33	15.70	119	38.87
8	Add	33	18.39	119	38.87

We recommend that one waypoint be added to redefine the recreational fishing boundary on the west end of the island. This was based on again plotting with a high-resolution navigational chart.

Order	Action	LatDeg New	LatMinNew	LonDegNew	LonMinNew
1	Add	33	18.39	119	38.87
2	Add	33	18.63	119	27.52
3	Add	33	15.24	119	20.10
4	Add	33	13.27	119	20.10
5	Add	33	12.16	119	26.82
6	Add	33	13.20	119	31.87
7	Add	33	15.70	119	38.87
8	NEW	33	17.52	119	40.15
9	Add	33	18.39	119	38.87

The following comparison is intended to provide a graphic depiction of the recommendation. The first chart is from the briefing book. The second chart reflects the recommended change.

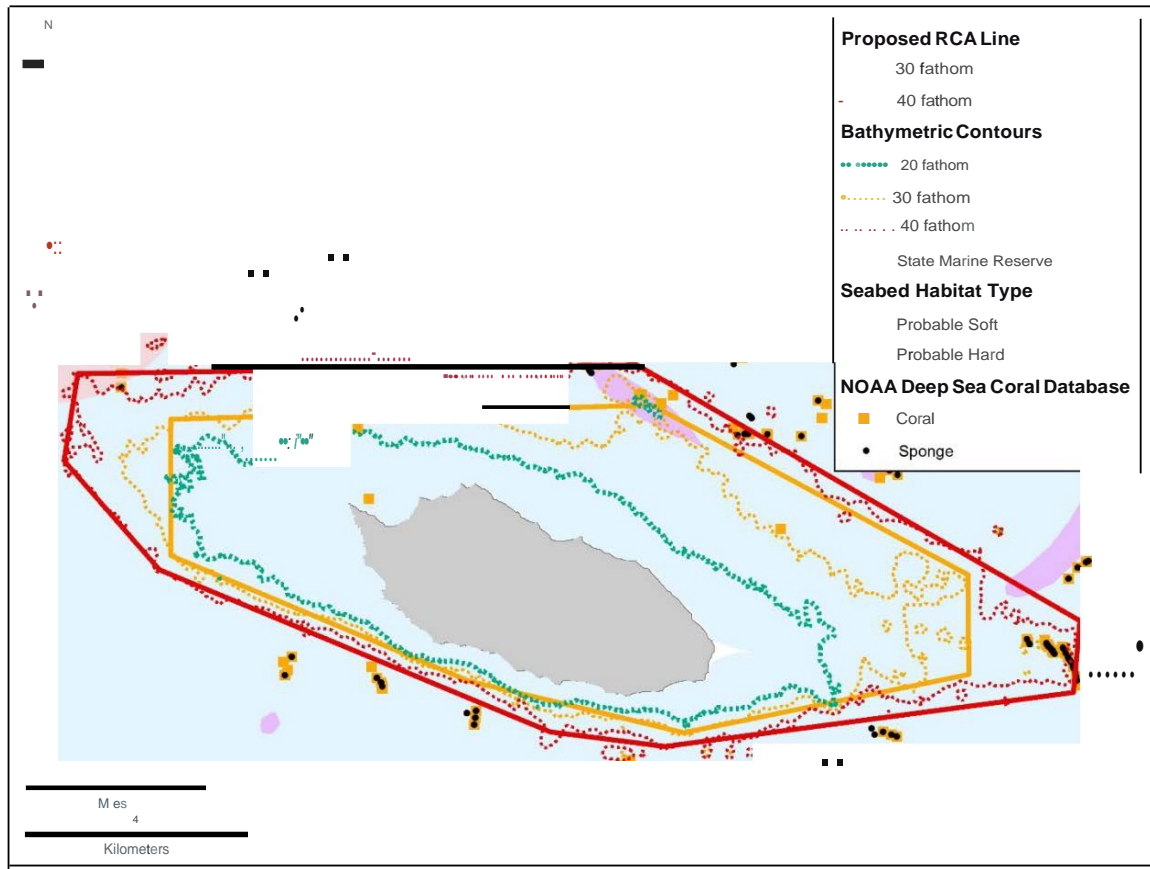
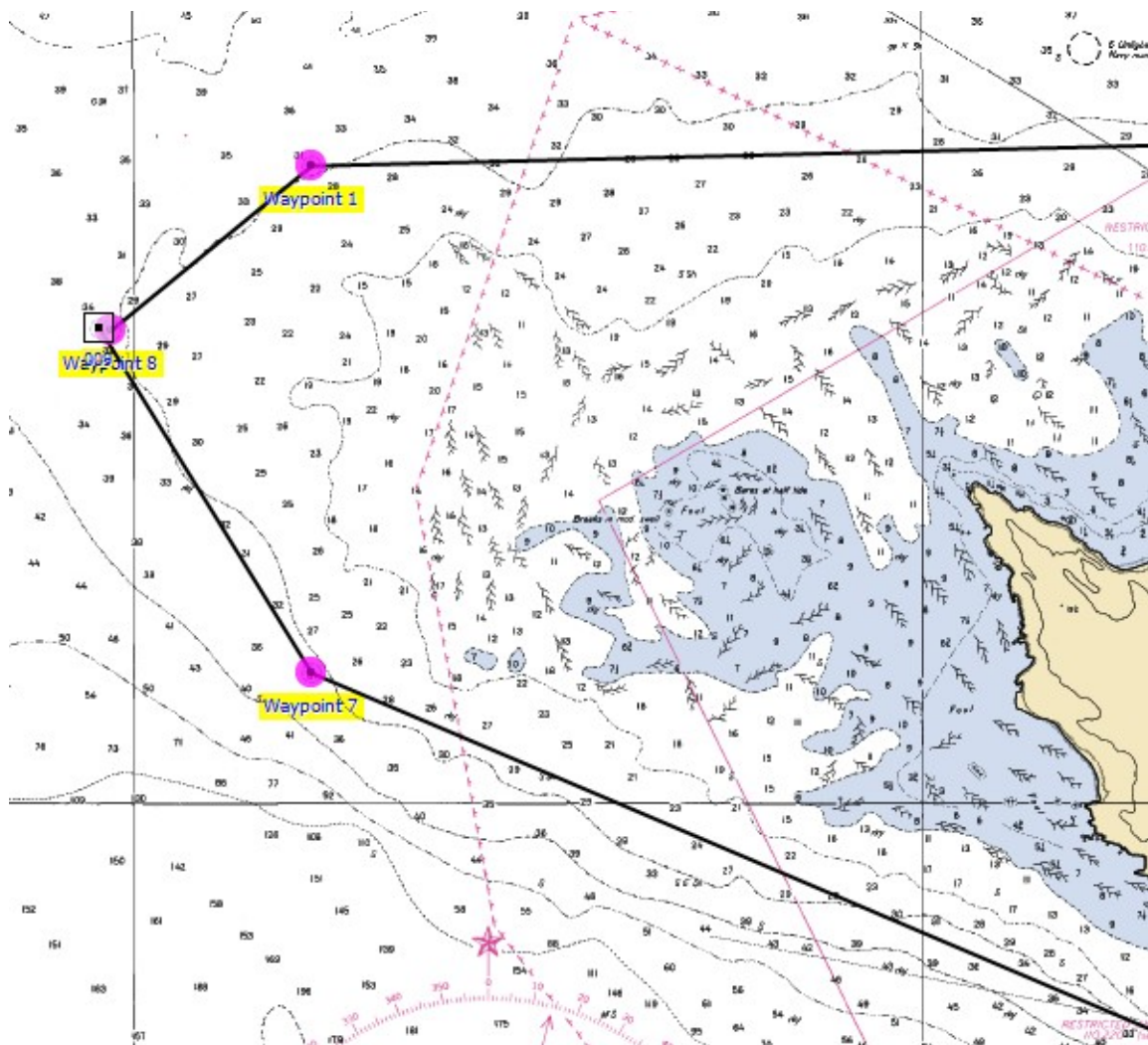


Figure C-30. Proposed RCA changes around San Nicolas island including habitat type and sponge/coral observations (source: Pacific Groundfish EFH 5-Year Review and NOAA Deep Sea Coral Database).



West end of San Nicholas 30 fathom line with proposed WP 8 added

We recommend the 40 Fathom line for Santa Nicholas Island remain the same as in the briefing book

Table C-57. Proposed 40 fathom coordinates for San Nicholas Island.

Order	Action	LatDeg New	LatMin New	LongDeg New	LongMin New
1	Add	33	19.30	119	41.05
2	Add	33	19.42	119	27.88
3	Add	33	14.31	119	17.48
4	Add	33	12.90	119	17.64
5	Add	33	11.89	119	27.26
6	Add	33	12.19	119	29.96
7	Add	33	15.42	119	39.14
8	Add	33	17.58	119	41.38
9	Add	33	19.30	119	41.05

CORTEZ BANK RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend that the 30-Fathom Coordinates remain the same as in the briefing book

Table B- 15. Proposed 30 fathom coordinates for Cortez Bank.

Order	Action	LatDeg_New	LatMin_New	LongDeg_New	LongMin_New
1	Add	32	29.73	119	12.95
2	Add	32	28.17	119	7.04
3	Add	32	26.27	119	4.14
4	Add	32	25.22	119	4.77
5	Add	32	28.6	119	14.15
6	Add	32	29.73	119	12.95

However, we recommend that certain 40-Fathom RCA Line waypoints be changed

The briefing book provides the following waypoints for the 40 fathom RCA lines around Cortez Bank:

Table C-59. Proposed 40 fathom coordinates for Cortez Bank.

Order	Action	LatDeg_New	LatMin_New	LongDeg_New	LongMin_New
1	Add	32	30	119	12.98
2	Add	32	28.33	119	6.81
3	Add	32	26.29	119	3.8
4	Add	32	24.91	119	4.7
5	Add	32	28.48	119	14.66
6	Add	32	30	119	12.98

We recommend that two waypoints be adjusted southeast to redefine the recreational fishing boundary to encompass additional 40 fathom habitat.

Order	Action	LatDeg New	LatMinNew	LonDegNew	LonMinNew
1	Add	32	30	119	38.87
2	Add	32	28.33	119	27.52
3	NEW	32	25.69	119	03.21
4	NEW	32	24.66	119	03.83
5	Add	32	28.48	119	14.66
6	Add	32	30	119	38.87

The following comparison is intended to provide a graphic depiction of the recommendation. The first chart is from the briefing book. The second chart reflects the recommended change.

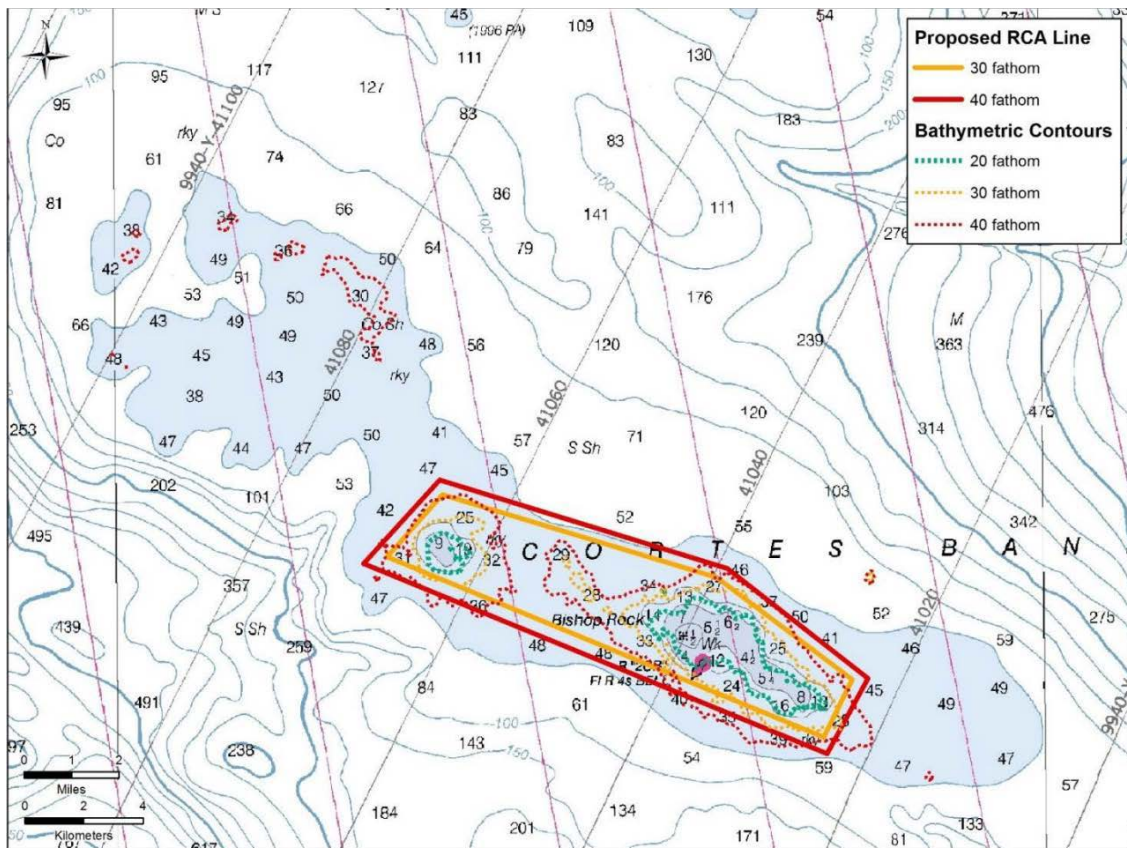
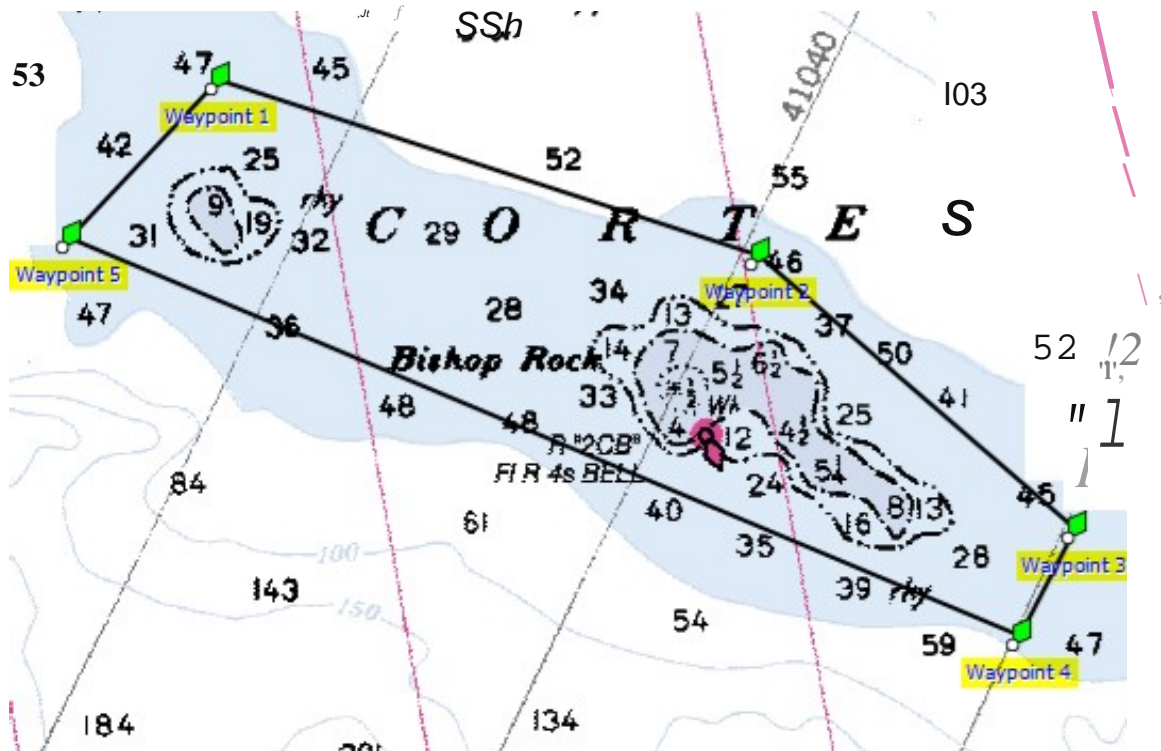


Figure C-33. Proposed 30 fm and 40 fm RCA lines around Cortes Bank.



PFMC
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