

## GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON AMENDMENT 28 – ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT AND ROCKFISH CONSERVATION AREA IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE

The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) reviewed the briefing book materials on the Groundfish Amendment 28 Regulation Development Update and were briefed by Kerry Griffin, Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) staff and Gretchen Hanshew, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) West Coast Region (WCR) staff. We offer the following comments.

### Draft Proposed Fishery Management Plan Language

The GMT reviewed the draft proposed fishery management plan (FMP) language in [Agenda Item I.2, Attachment 1, September 2018](#) and will provide suggested edits to Council staff, including removal of unnecessary details. When the revised Council Operating Procedure 22 (COP-22) is available in November 2018 for review, the GMT will provide comments to ensure that the essential fish habitat (EFH) review process, including Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (HAPC's), remains clearly defined.

### Spatial Boundaries and Naming Convention

In the development of new EFH Closed Areas, we support the proposed use of boundaries already defined, as described in [Agenda Item I.2, NMFS Report 1, September 2018](#), for clarity and to avoid including numerous coordinates within the groundfish regulations.

### Block area closures in regulation

Block area closures (BACs) that the Council elected to develop for use off Oregon and California are similar to the current trawl Rockfish Conservation Area (RCA), in that they prohibit the use of bottom trawl gear within an area defined by depth contours and latitudes that exist in regulation. Defining BACs in regulation is challenging, because numerous alternative depth and latitudinal combinations could be adopted pre-season or inseason depending on need. At the same time, clarity in conveying these boundaries is essential for industry and enforcement. **The GMT recommends that if BACs are implemented, then the seaward and shoreward depth contours and the northern and southern latitudes be defined in the same location as RCAs in the trip limit tables.**