

SCOPING OF PRIORITIZED NON-TRAWL SECTOR AREA MANAGEMENT MEASURES

Under this Agenda Item, the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) is scheduled to scope non-trawl groundfish sector area management modifications. The non-trawl rockfish conservation area (NT-RCA) is a contiguous area closure specific to the groundfish non-trawl sector that extends the length of the West Coast and is bounded by specific latitude and longitude coordinates that approximate depth contours.¹ The origins of the NT-RCA can be traced back to 2002 and when first implemented, area closures were part of a suite of conservation measures intended to minimize mortality of overfished stocks to achieve rebuilding goals. Now that all but one groundfish species has rebuilt, the Council has the opportunity to consider modifying the NT-RCA to reflect the current status of groundfish populations and industry needs.

In the past, the Council has addressed narrow aspects of non-trawl sector area management, for example the most recent NT-RCA modifications occurred under the [2021-2022 groundfish harvest specification and management measures](#); however, recent public comments, advisory body reports, and Council discussion suggest broader action is desired in order to modernize area management and achieve Groundfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP) goals. Additionally, the Council has recommended multiple exempted fishing permits (EFP), e.g., 2013 Emley-Platt EFP, to National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to test different fishing strategies and gear types in the NT-RCA that could potentially avoid yelloweye rockfish and other benthic groundfish catch.

Modernizing non-trawl area management measures is a broad subject and could include a myriad of measures to achieve overall management objectives. As such, the Council charged the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) with initial scoping of non-trawl management measures in November 2019. The GAP completed this task and presented their findings to the Council at the June 2020 meeting in [Informational Report 4](#) (F.3, Attachment 1). The GAP developed three NT-RCA management measure proposals for the Council to consider: 1) boundary changes to the NT-RCA and the Cowcod Conservation Area (CCA), 2) retention of incidental rockfish caught by salmon trollers, and 3) moving the Emley-Platt EFP into regulation. At the [March 2021](#) Council meeting, CCA was removed from this action as Council wished to address CCA modifications as a stand-alone item; therefore, the CCAs are not included as part of this scoping.

Council staff developed a document which explores the GAP proposals for the Council to consider during this scoping process (F.3, Attachment 2). As part of this agenda item, the Council should consider adopting the purpose and need statement(s) described in Informational Report 4 for public review, continue to scope the issues as necessary, and provide guidance on development of management measure alternatives.

¹ Coordinates specified at CFR 50 §§ 660.71-660.74.

Council Action:

1. **Scope issues regarding implementing gear and methods tested under the Emley/Platt exempted fishing permit in regulations and modifying Rockfish Conservation Areas for non-trawl sectors.**
2. **Consider purpose and need statements.**
3. **Provide guidance for development of alternative management measures as needed.**

Reference Materials:

1. F.3, Attachment 1, Informational Report 4: Non-Trawl Scoping Section Excerpt (June 2020).
2. F.3, Attachment 2, Non-Trawl Sector Groundfish Area Management Modifications: Scoping Discussion Document.
3. If Received, Public Comments are Electronic Only ([see e-portal](#)).

Agenda Order:

- F.3 Scoping of Prioritized Non-trawl Sector Area Management Measures Todd Phillips/Brett Wiedoff
- a. Reports and Comments of Management Entities and Advisory Bodies
 - b. Public Comment
 - c. **Council Action:** Scope Issues Regarding Implementing Gear and Methods Tested Under the Emley/Platt Exempted Fishing Permit in Regulations and Modifying Rockfish Conservation Areas for Non-Trawl Sectors; Consider Purpose and Need Statements; and Provide Guidance on Further Development of Issues and Alternatives

PFMC
03/22/21