

NON-TRAWL SECTOR AREA MANAGEMENT MEASURES

The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) is scheduled to review proposed modifications to non-trawl Rockfish Conservation Area (NT_RCA) management measures under this agenda item. The Council scoped this action in April 2021 and directed staff to analyze modifications to current NT_RCA management. The analysis (Agenda Item C.6, Attachment 1, November 1) examines two overarching themes: 1) allowing the non-trawl open access (OA) and limited entry fixed gear (LEFG) sectors to operate in the NT_RCA and 2) modifying boundaries of the NT_RCA. Additionally, as part of allowing LEFG to operate within the NT_RCA, the Council directed staff to investigate how LEFG could fish to their trip limits.

At present, the non-trawl sector is prohibited from operating in the NT_RCA unless transiting or if fishing for the other-flatfish complex. Under this action the Council will consider if OA and LEFG vessels can access the NT_RCA using approved hook-and-line gear. Hook-and-line gear, as listed in regulation, can take several forms, including longline, troll, and vertical hook-and-line. The Council and Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) have noted the applicability of the hook-and-line gear being used in three exempted fishing permit (EFP) currently in operation as a means to access the NT_RCA as well as address yelloweye rockfish bycatch. The EFP gear types are designed to fish in the water column and primarily target midwater rockfish, which may reduce benthic habitat impact and incidental yelloweye rockfish catch.

The Council will also consider if the LEFG sector can attain LEFG groundfish trip limits when fishing in the NT_RCA. The LEFG sector is gear endorsed, but may use other fixed gear, i.e., OA gear, to fish for groundfish. When fishing with its endorsed gear, LEFG vessels can fish to LEFG trip limits; however, an LEFG vessel uses OA gear, it can only fish to OA trip limits. Therefore, if the Council is considering allowing the LEFG sector to access their higher trip limits as part of this action, regulations related to LEFG trip limits when operating with OA gear provisions will need to be considered by the Council.

In addition to allowing these sectors to operate in the NT_RCA, the Council will examine modifying the current structure of the NT_RCA through changing boundaries. The present NT_RCA configuration does not have uniform boundaries along the coast. The GAP recommended potential NT_RCA boundary modifications, by management area, in their April report ([Agenda Item F.3.a, Supplemental GAP Report 1, April 2021](#)) to the Council. This report recommends reducing the area of the NT_RCA from the Oregon/Washington border to Point Conception. The Council also requested an examination of discrete changes to the NT_RCA off of Washington. The NT_RCA off Washington has consistently been a shoreline to 100 fathom closure since the closure of this area in 2003.

Attachment 1 provides analysis of these items and preliminary analyses of biological, socio-economic, and habitat impacts. The analysis also examines specific concerns brought forward by the , the Enforcement Consultants in their April 2021 report ([Agenda Item F.3.a, Supplemental EC Report, April 2021](#)), such as fishing inside and outside the NT_RCA on the same trip and gear on-board during fishing. The Council may wish to consider these and other regulatory issues noted in Attachment 1 as it moves forward with this action.

Further, the Habitat Committee noted habitat concerns related to narrowing the NT_RCA. As described in [F.3.a, Supplemental HC Report 1, April 2021](#), the concerns regarding narrowing the NT_RCA are related to the areas exposed by changing boundaries. If the Council narrows the NT_RCA, depths reopened to fishing could be accessed by all fixed-gear types, including bottom contact gear unless otherwise specified by the Council. These gear types (e.g., bottom longline, pot/trap, etc.) may have relatively higher impacts on habitat forming invertebrates and other sensitive habitats.

As part of this agenda item, the Council is scheduled to consider and potentially adopt a range of alternatives and a suite of Preliminary Preferred Alternatives for public review. However, if it is determined that this action would benefit from further development and/or analyses, the Council could continue to refine the scope of the action and request additional analyses.

Council Action:

1. **Review priority issues, including regulations and NT_RCA boundary modifications, as appropriate.**
2. **Consider adopting a range of alternatives.**
3. **Consider adopting a Preliminary Preferred Alternatives.**
4. **Provide guidance for development of alternative management measures as needed.**

Reference Materials:

1. E.6, Attachment 1 (***Electronic Only***): Non-Trawl Sector Management Measures: Analysis To Support The Development Of A Range Of Alternatives
2. If Received, Public Comments are Electronic Only ([see e-portal](#)).

Agenda Order:

- E.6 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:** Review Proposed Priority Issues, Regulations, and Modifications to Rockfish Conservation Areas for Non-Trawl Sectors; Adopt a Range of Alternatives and Preliminary Preferred Alternatives, as Appropriate

PFMC
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