

NON-TRAWL AREA MANAGEMENT- FINAL PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

In [September 2022](#), the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) adopted a revised purpose and need statement and preliminary preferred alternatives (PPA) related to non-trawl area management. Specifically, the Council selected alternatives that would provide additional opportunity for limited entry sectors fishing in the non-trawl Rockfish Conservation Area (NT_RCA), allow for gear modifications for vessels using stationary vertical jig gear in the NT_RCA, modify the existing boundaries of the NT_RCA for non-trawl groundfish and non-tribal directed halibut sectors, repeal the Cowcod Conservation Areas (CCAs) for the non-trawl sectors, and develop a block area closures (BAC) tool for commercial non-trawl gears. The Council also elected to include protections for sensitive habitats and yelloweye rockfish in areas that would be exposed to non-trawl fishing under the PPA.

Attachment 1 provides a draft Environmental Assessment/Regulatory Impact Review/Initial Regulatory Flexibility Act (EA/RIR/IRFA) for the Council to consider when adopting their final preferred alternative (FPA), as appropriate. As was provided in September, the analysis includes detailed maps of the current area management measures, proposed areas that would be opened under the alternatives, available mitigation tools (e.g., yelloweye Rockfish Conservation Areas, essential fish habitat conservation areas or EFHCAs) and a new tool that could be developed by the Council (i.e., BACs). In addition, the public mapping portal developed to help Council members, industry, managers, and other stakeholders understand the potential implications of the proposed area modifications was updated with the PPA. The portal can be found at <https://arcg.is/4GP19>. Key updates in the document since September 2022 include:

- Revisions to Alternative 1 language to clarify elements being proposed beyond those implemented in the 2023-2024 harvest specifications (See item 12e).
- Additional analysis regarding impacts of allowancing use of natural bait and changing depth restriction from 50 ft to 30 ft off the bottom for stationary vertical jig gear.
- Description of new suboptions 1d and 1e for Alternative 2, which describe the PPA EFHCAs off Oregon.
- Change in nomenclature for “proposed groundfish closures” to “Groundfish Exclusion Areas” in the former CCA boundary.

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) also submitted a proposal (CDFW Report 1) to modify four waypoints of the 75-fathom NT_RCA boundary to be used under Alternative 2, near Cordell Bank. This modification would better align the boundary with the depth contour and would create fewer enforcement complexities in that area.

Under this agenda item, the Council is scheduled to review the draft EA/RIR/IRFA and select FPAs.

Council Action:

1. Adopt Final Preferred Alternatives, As Appropriate.

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item F.4, Attachment 1 (***Electronic Only***): Proposed Amendment to the Pacific Groundfish Fishery Management Plan for Non-Trawl Sector Area Management Measures.
2. Agenda Item F.4.a, CDFW Report 1: California Department of Fish and Wildlife Report on Non-Trawl Area Management-Final Preferred Alternative.
3. If Received, Public Comments are electronic only ([see e-portal](#)).

Agenda Order:

- F.4. Non-Trawl Area Management Brett Wiedoff/Jessi Doerpinghaus
(Part 1 - *F.4.a and F.4.b on Monday, then continue Wednesday with F.4.c*)
- a. Reports and Comments of Management Entities and Advisory Bodies
 - b. Public Comment
 - c. **Council Action:** Adopt Final Preferred Alternatives, As Appropriate

PFMC
02/10/23