

GROUND FISH MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT ON NON-TRAWL AREA MANAGEMENT

The Groundfish Management Team (GMT) received an overview of this agenda item from Ms. Jessi Doerpinghaus and Mr. Brett Wiedoff of Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) staff, reviewed the materials in the briefing book, listened to the discussion in the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP), and held a discussion with Ms. Lynn Massey (National Marine Fisheries Service West Coast Region) to receive further clarity.

The GMT recommends selecting Alternatives 1, 2, 3, and 4, along with the additional recommendations discussed below, as the Final Preferred Alternative.

Alternative 2 Modifications

The GMT discussed the proposed non-bottom contact groundfish and directed halibut Essential Fish Habitat Conservation Area (EFHCA) at Arago Reef under the Preliminary Preferred Alternative (Alternative 2, Suboption 1e) and noted the unintentional closure of areas of the EFHCA shoreward of the 30 fathom (fm) regulatory line (i.e., Non-Trawl Rockfish Conservation Area boundary). Closing this space between the 30 fm line and the EFHCA shoreward boundary will cause unintentional closure of areas that are currently open to all non-trawl fishing activities. Given that the original intent of the motion is not to close areas that are currently open to fishing, **the GMT recommends adding a suboption to the range of alternatives (ROA) that would include groundfish and directed halibut bottom contact EFHCA protections on the area seaward of the 30 fm line at Arago reef.** In other words, the additional EFHCA layer that prohibits groundfish and directed halibut bottom contact gear (e.g. pot/longline) would not exist over the entire Arago Reef bottom trawl EFHCA, but only the portion that exists seaward of the 30 fm regulatory line so as not to close existing fishing grounds (i.e. the yellow polygon in Figure 1). Although this is a slight variation of Alternative 2 suboption 1c, the GMT was briefed by Council staff that this suboption would still be within the ROA, and therefore, it seems appropriate to add this suboption to the ROA at this time.

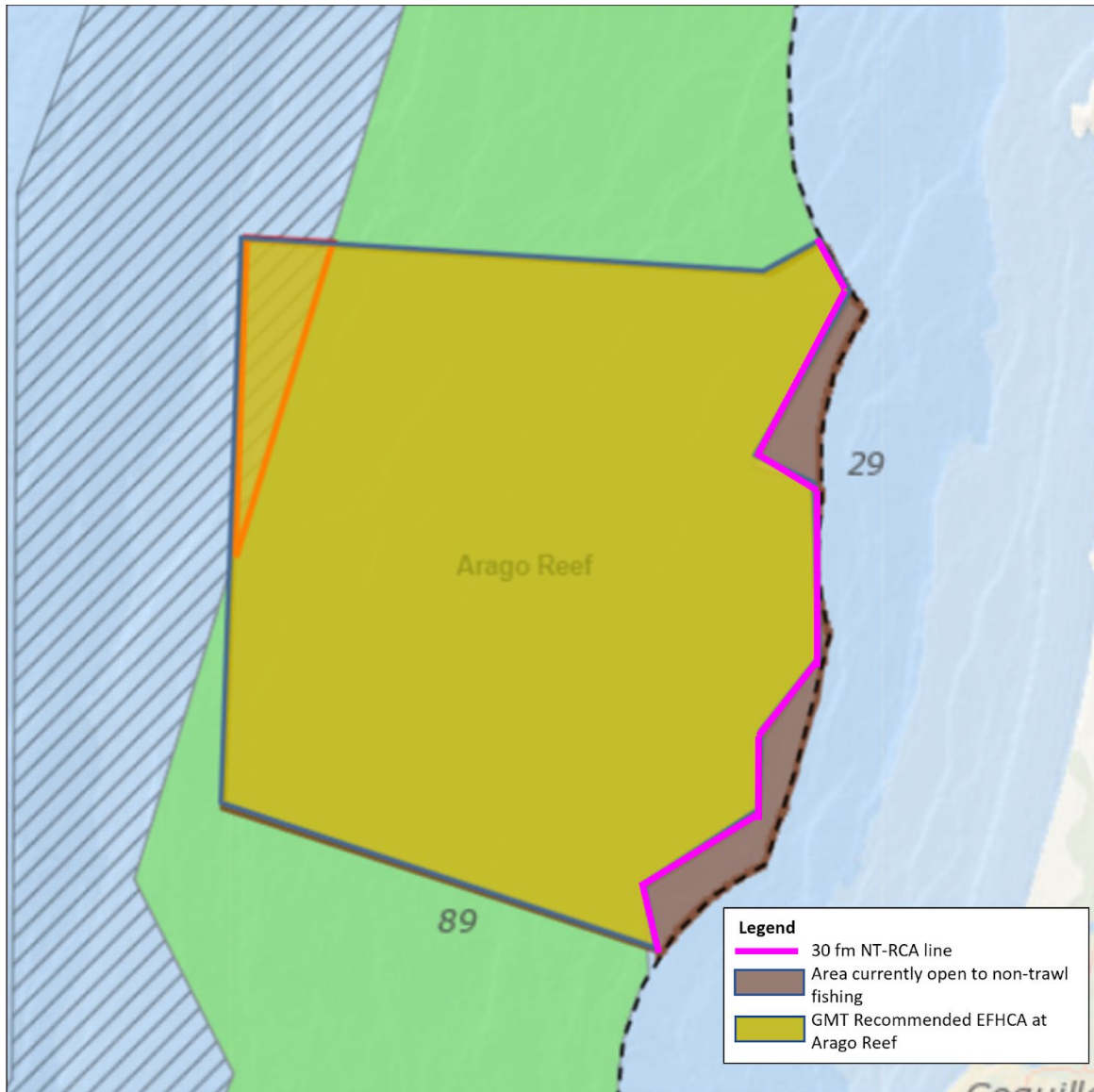


Figure 1 Arago Reef EFHCA with areas shoreward of the 30 fm depth range (i.e. Non-trawl Rockfish Conservation Area; seen in pink) which are currently open to non-trawl fishing to the right of the EFHCA in yellow. Yellow area is the GMT recommended groundfish and directed halibut bottom contact EFHCA. Data Source: Screen Capture from [Map Viewer](#)

The GMT received an overview from Katie Pierson on a supplemental report from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW). **The GMT supports ODFW’s recommendations in [Agenda Item F.4.a, Supplemental REVISED ODFW Report 1](#) to modify certain coordinates of three proposed yelloweye rockfish conservation areas (YRCAs) off Oregon.**

The GMT also received an overview of two supplemental reports from Melissa Mandrup and James Phillips of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). **The GMT supports CDFW’s recommendation in [Agenda Item F.4.a, CDFW Report 1](#) to modify certain coordinates on the 75 fm depth contour to address enforcement concerns in the area near**

Cordell Bank. The GMT also supports the additional 75 fm modification to address a crossover presented in [Agenda Item F.4.a, Supplemental CDFW Report 2](#).

Bycatch Uncertainty

The GMT acknowledges there are uncertainties surrounding catch or bycatch of species such as yelloweye rockfish, cowcod, canary rockfish, bronzespotted rockfish, and lingcod that may occur with the alternatives we are recommending, which would open areas that have been closed since the early 2000s. There are several tools used inseason to monitor the non-trawl fishery that are currently available and under development in this agenda item that could be utilized to minimize bycatch (i.e. new Yelloweye RCAs and block area closures for non-trawl fisheries). [Agenda Item F.4.a, GMT Report 1 April 2022](#) provides some additional management measures to address bycatch of cowcod. With the Federal non-trawl logbook in effect as of January 1, 2023, more data will come available on discards and fishing location, and may be informative for any need to adjust observer coverage rates in the future. With all three states using electronic fish tickets, there is more real-time landings data available to make more informative inseason decisions.

Summary of GMT recommendations for Final Preferred Alternative:

- **Alternative 1 (including suboptions 1, 2, and 3)**
- **Alternative 2 (including suboptions 1d and 1e) with the following modifications:**
 - **Add a suboption that would include groundfish and directed halibut bottom contact EFHCA protections on the area seaward of the 30 fm line at Arago reef (see Figure 1)**
 - **ODFW recommendations from [Agenda Item F.4.a, Supplemental REVISED ODFW Report 1](#)**
 - **CDFW recommendations from [Agenda Item F.4.a, CDFW Report 1](#)**
 - **CDFW recommendation from [Agenda Item F.4.a, Supplemental CDFW Report 2](#)**
- **Alternative 3**
- **Alternative 4**

PFMC
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