

# Non-Trawl Area Management: Protect Habitat And Restore Groundfish Fishing Opportunities



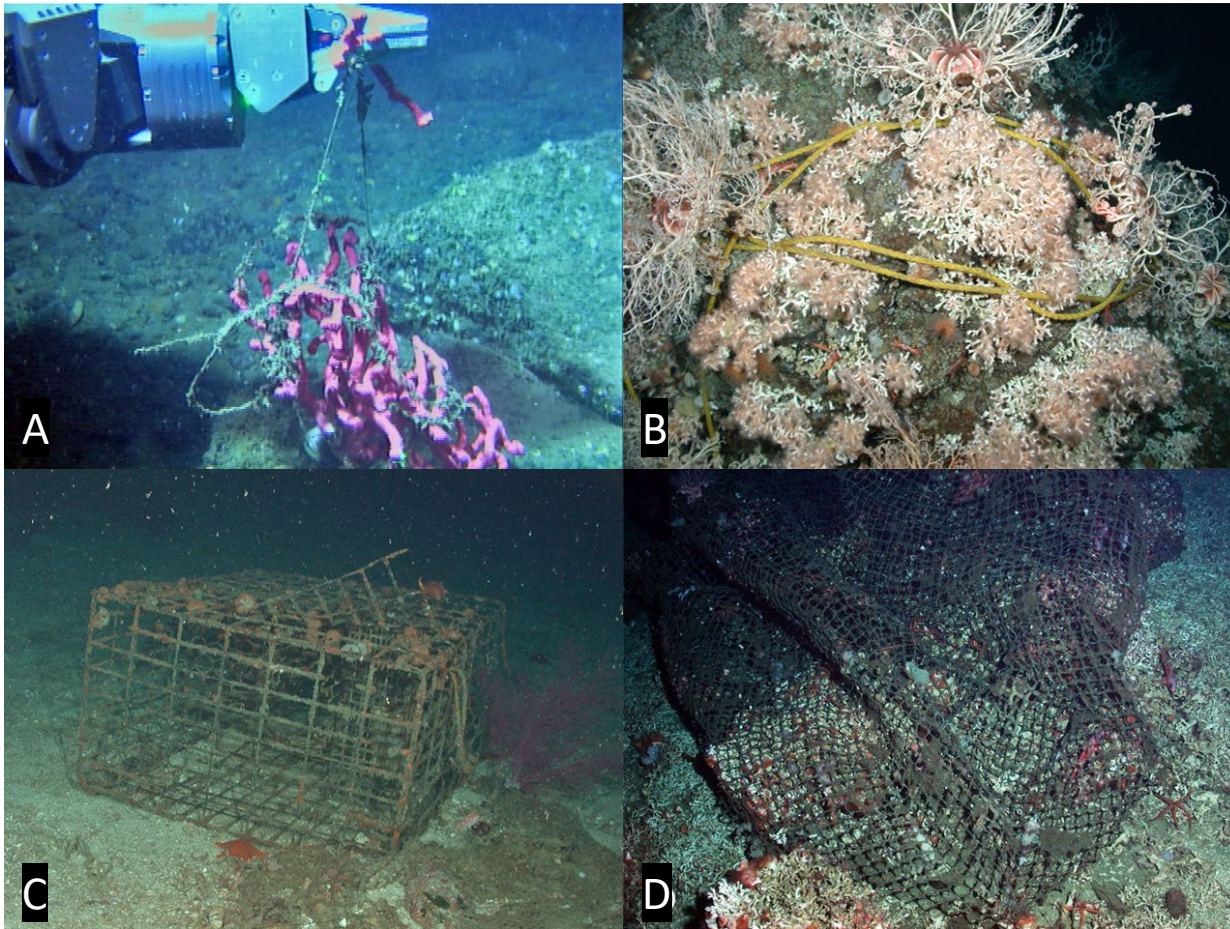
Gold gorgonian coral (*Acanthogorgia sp.*) west of Santa Barbara Island



Gorgonian corals (*Swiftia pacifica*) at Arago Reef, Southern Oregon

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Agenda Item F.4 March 6, 2023

# Effects of Fishing Gear on Deep Sea Coral and Sponge Ecosystems

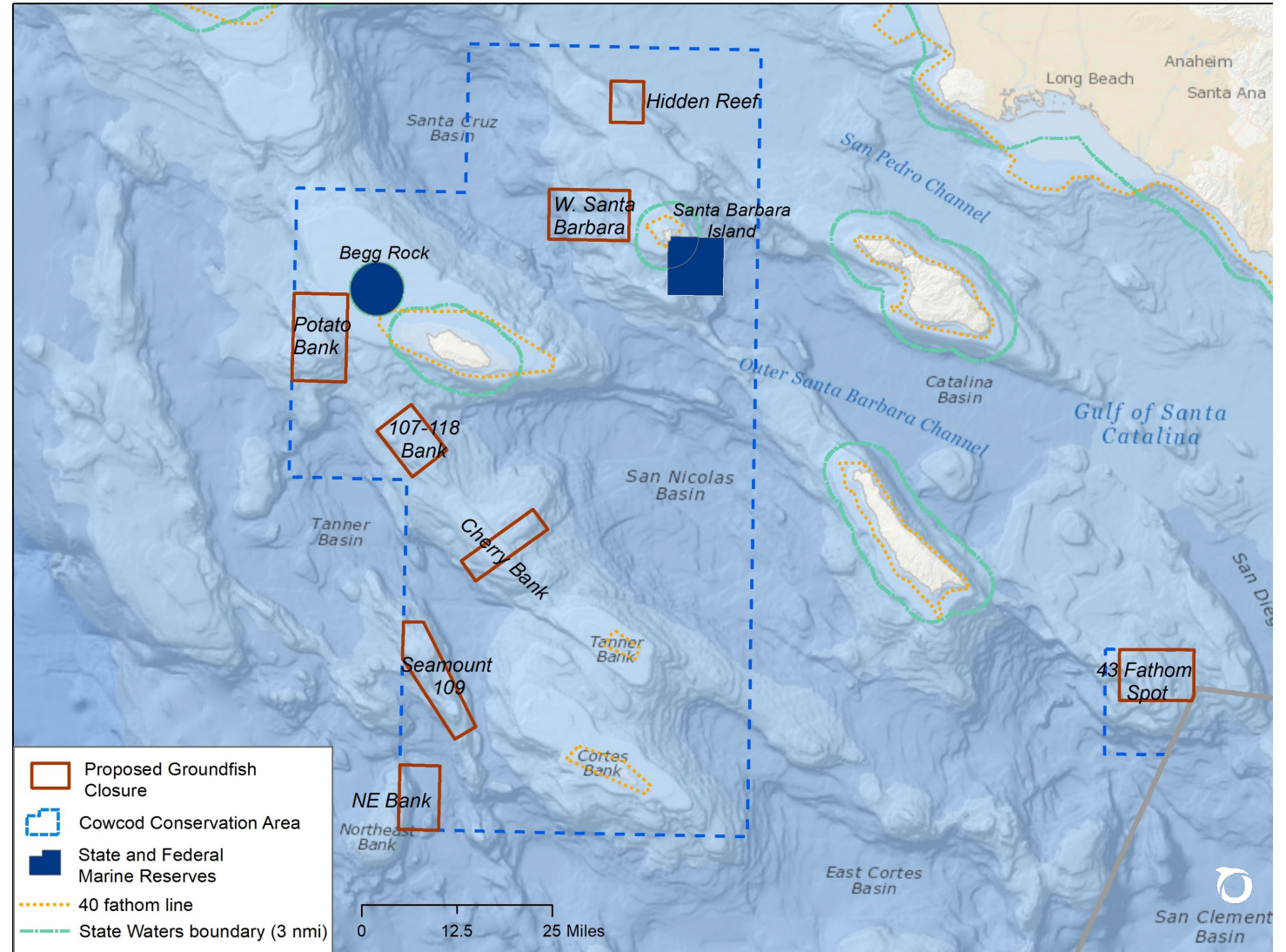
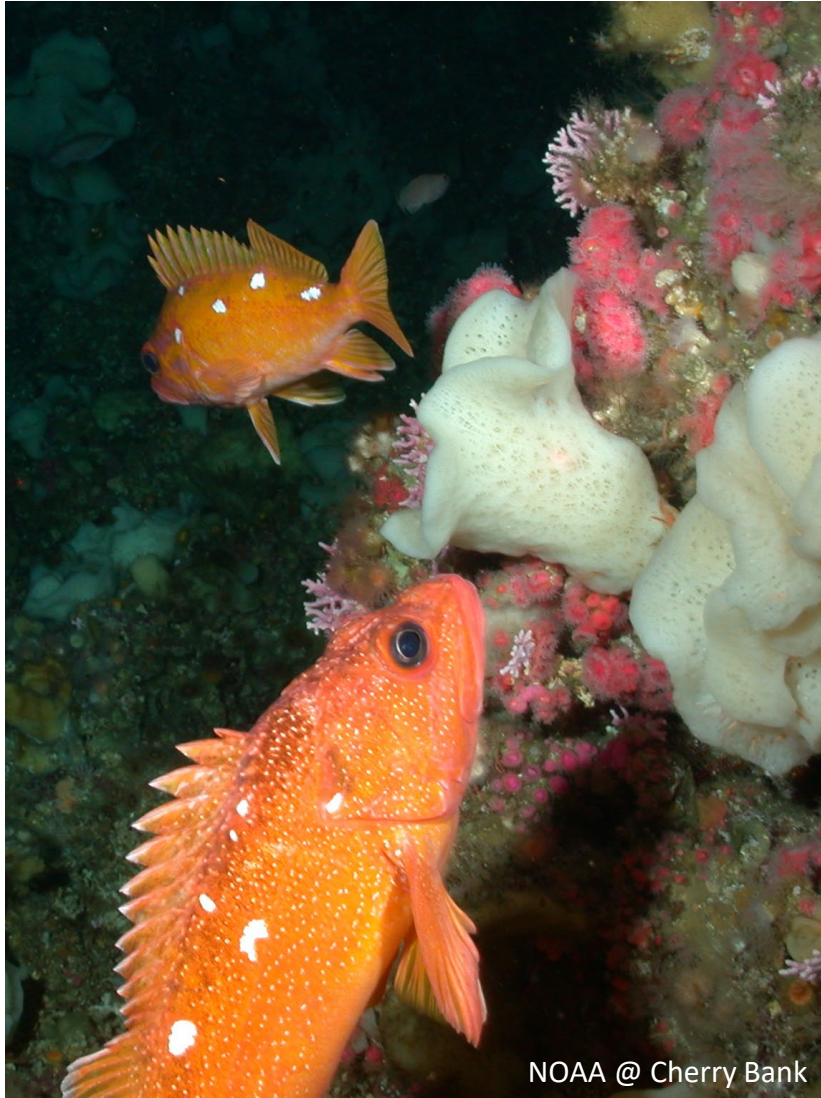


## Images of fishing gear from U.S. West Coast ROV surveys:

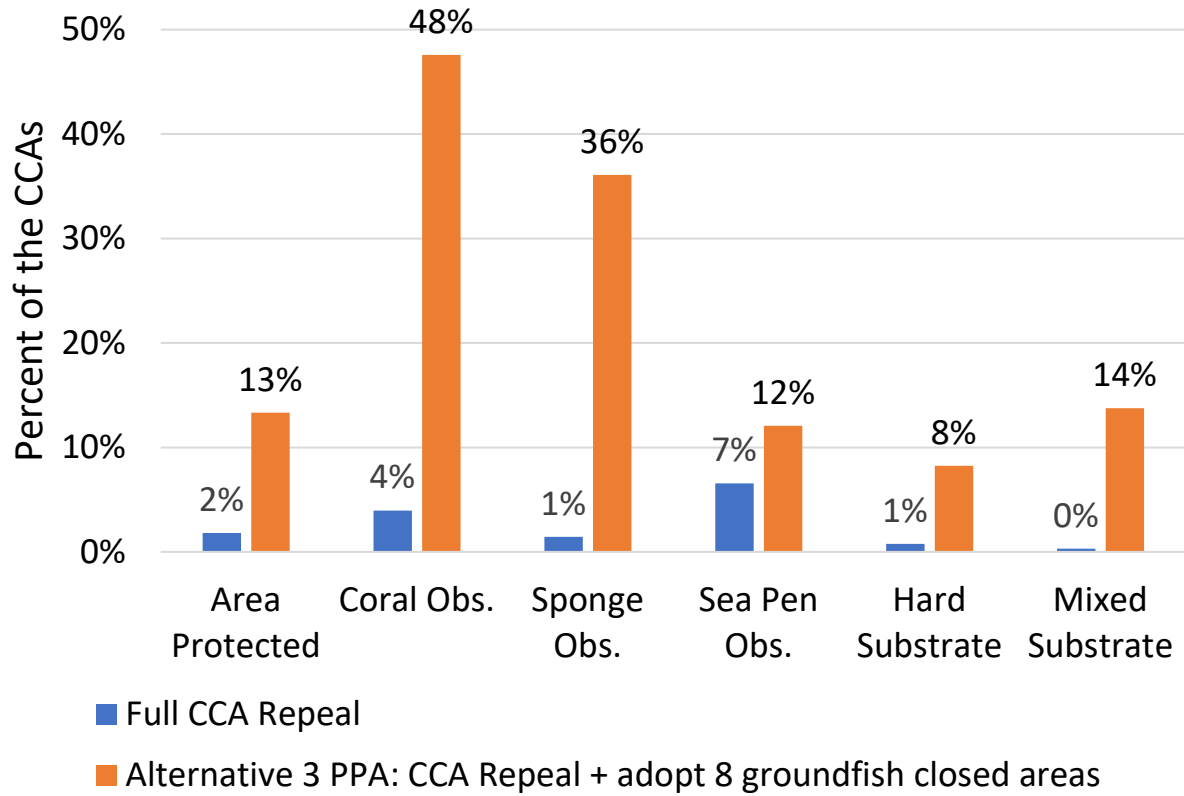
- A. Bubblegum coral entangled in longline gear
- B. Scleractinian coral (*Lophelia pertusa*) with yellow polypropylene line, possibly from an anchor line or a buoy line on fixed gear;
- C. Trap gear and netting (adjacent to a purple sea fan); and
- D. A section of a trawl net wrapped around coral rubble.

Source: Rooper *et al.* (2017) *Effects of Fishing Gear on Deep-Sea Corals and Sponges in U.S. Waters*. Available online: <http://deepseacoraldata.noaa.gov/library>.

# Alternative 3 PPA: support Cowcod Conservation Area repeal with adoption of 8 proposed groundfish closed areas



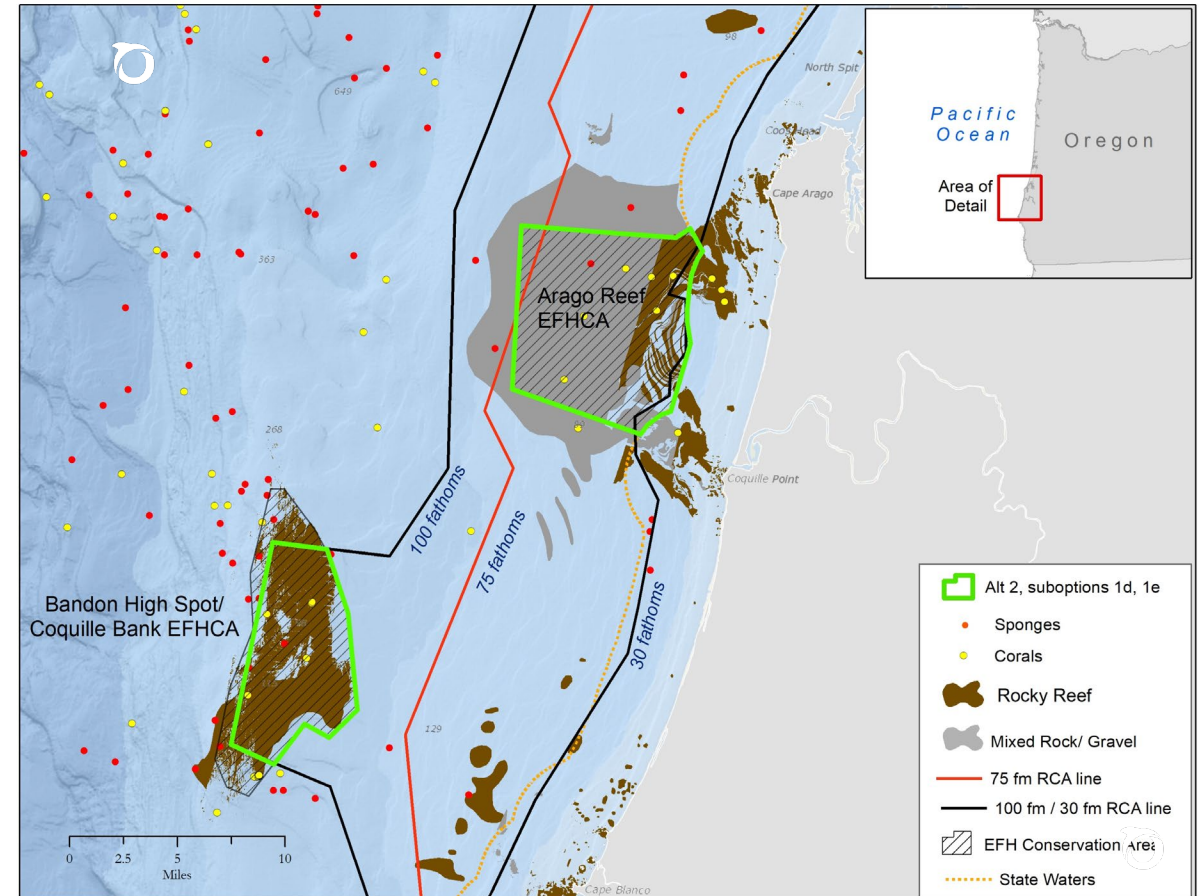
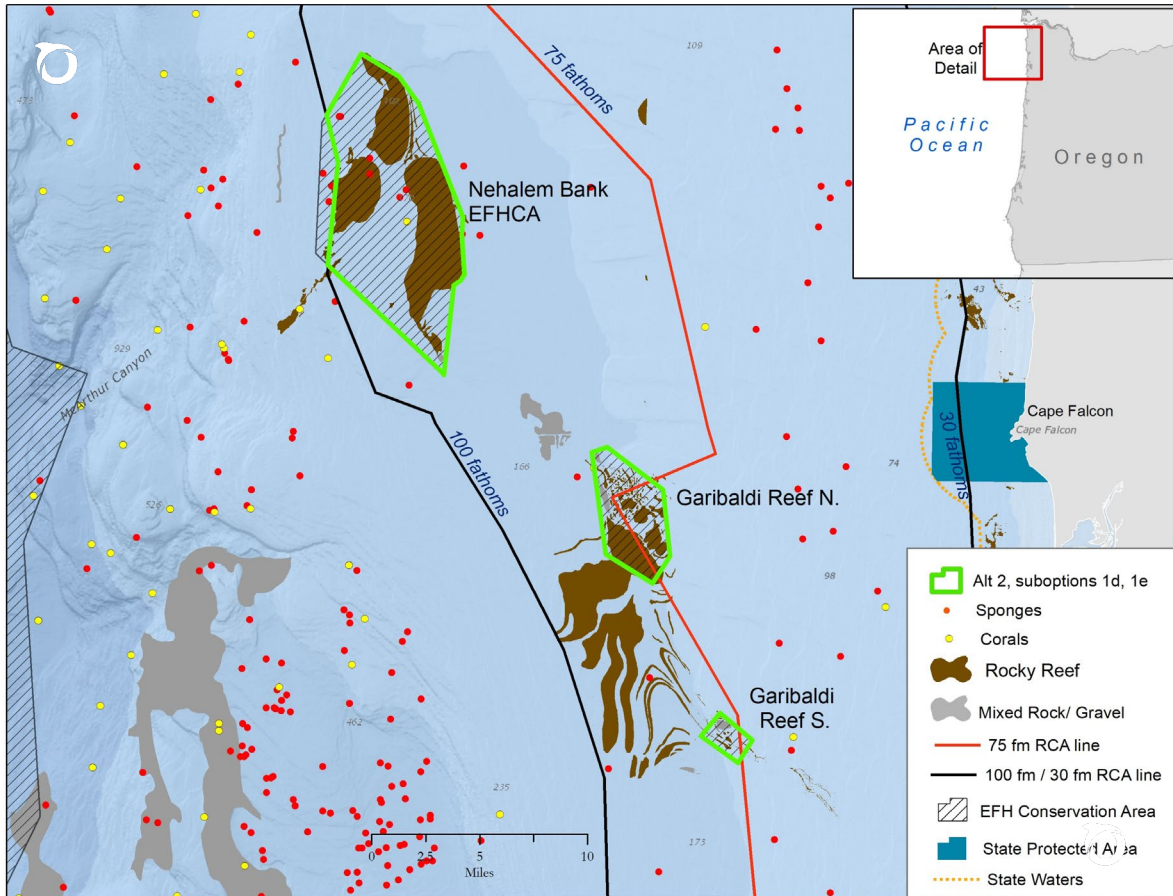
**Oceana Analysis:** Percent of the CCAs, coral and sponge observations, and physical substrates that remain protected



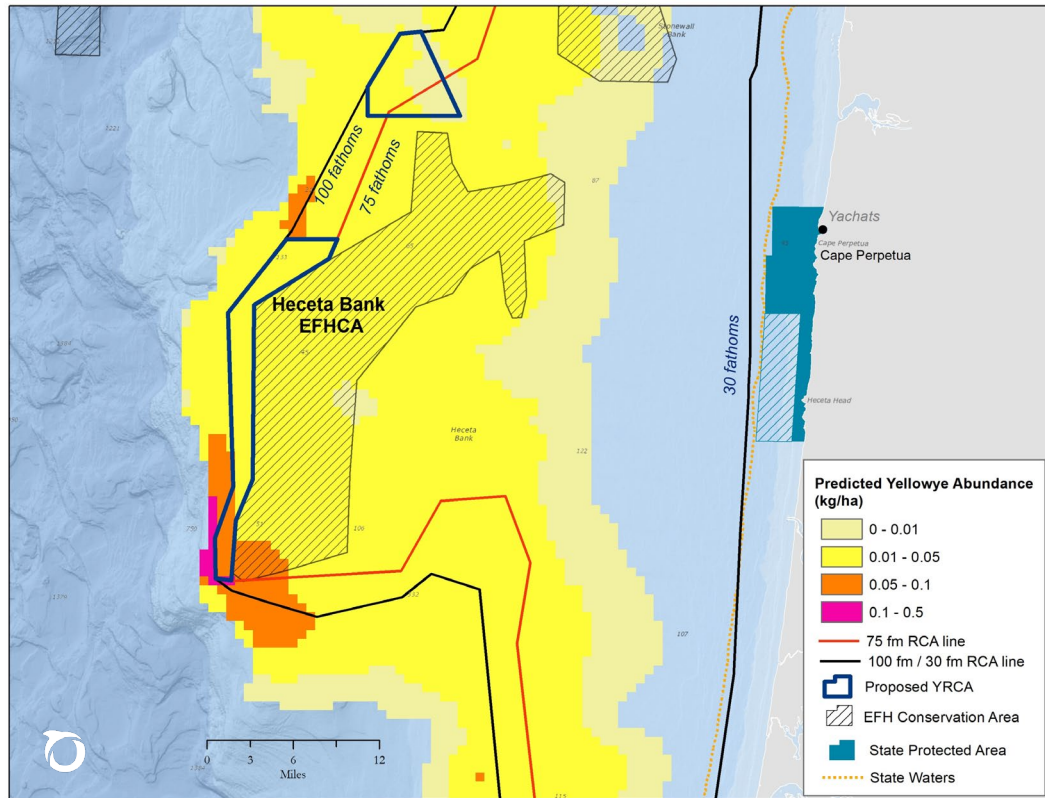
Alt 3 will reopen 4,582 sq mi to non-trawl groundfish fishing and protect 609 sq mi as groundfish conservation areas



# Alternative 2 PPAs off Oregon: Sub-options 1d and 1e: create non-trawl bottom contact EFHCAs in current trawl EFHCAs



# Alternative 2 Sub-options 2 (PPA) and 3 (as modified in ODFW Report 1): New Yelloweye Rockfish Conservation Areas

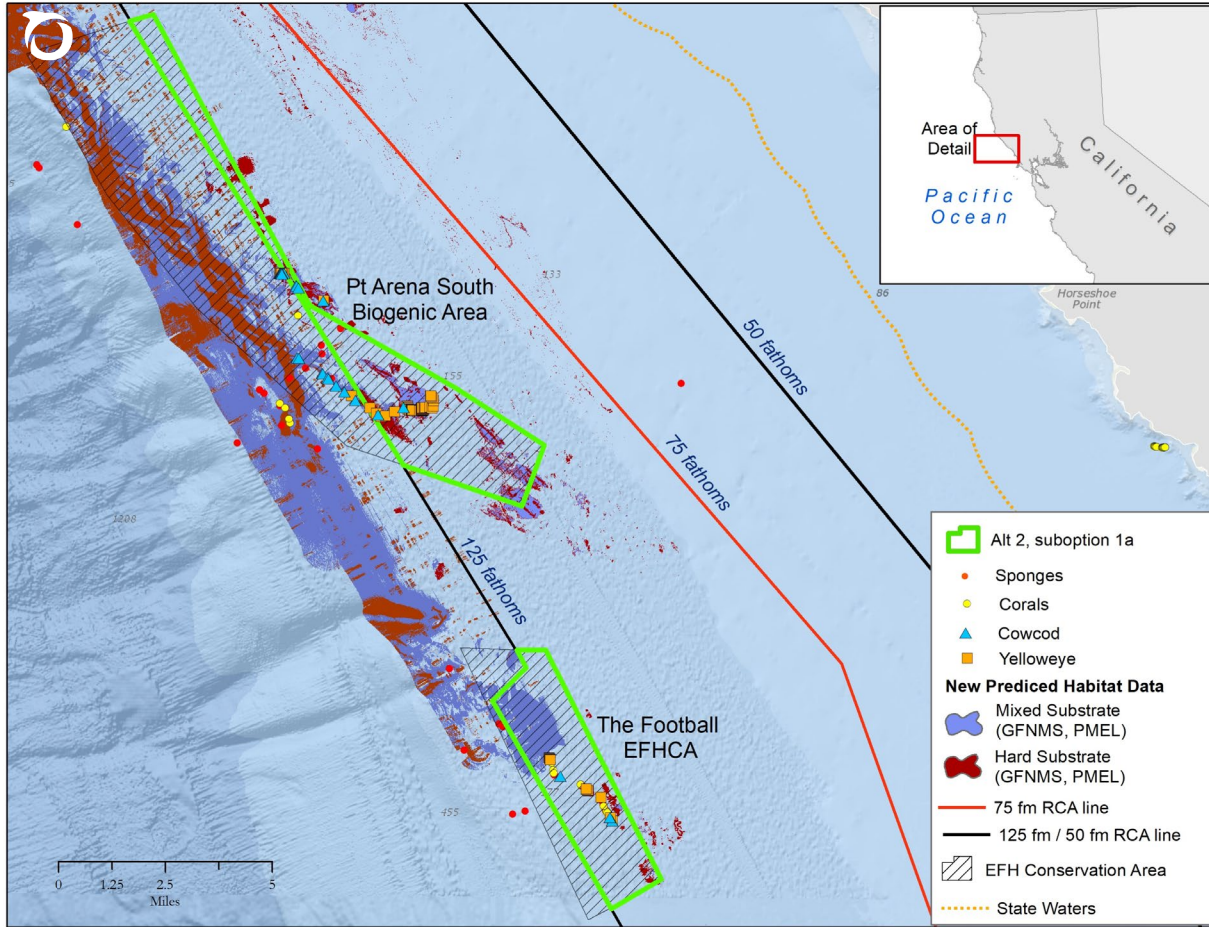


Yelloweye rockfish predicted mean abundance at Heceta Bank.  
NCCOS model projection. PFMC Agenda Item D.6.b NMFS Synthesis.  
April 2013

Yelloweye rockfish

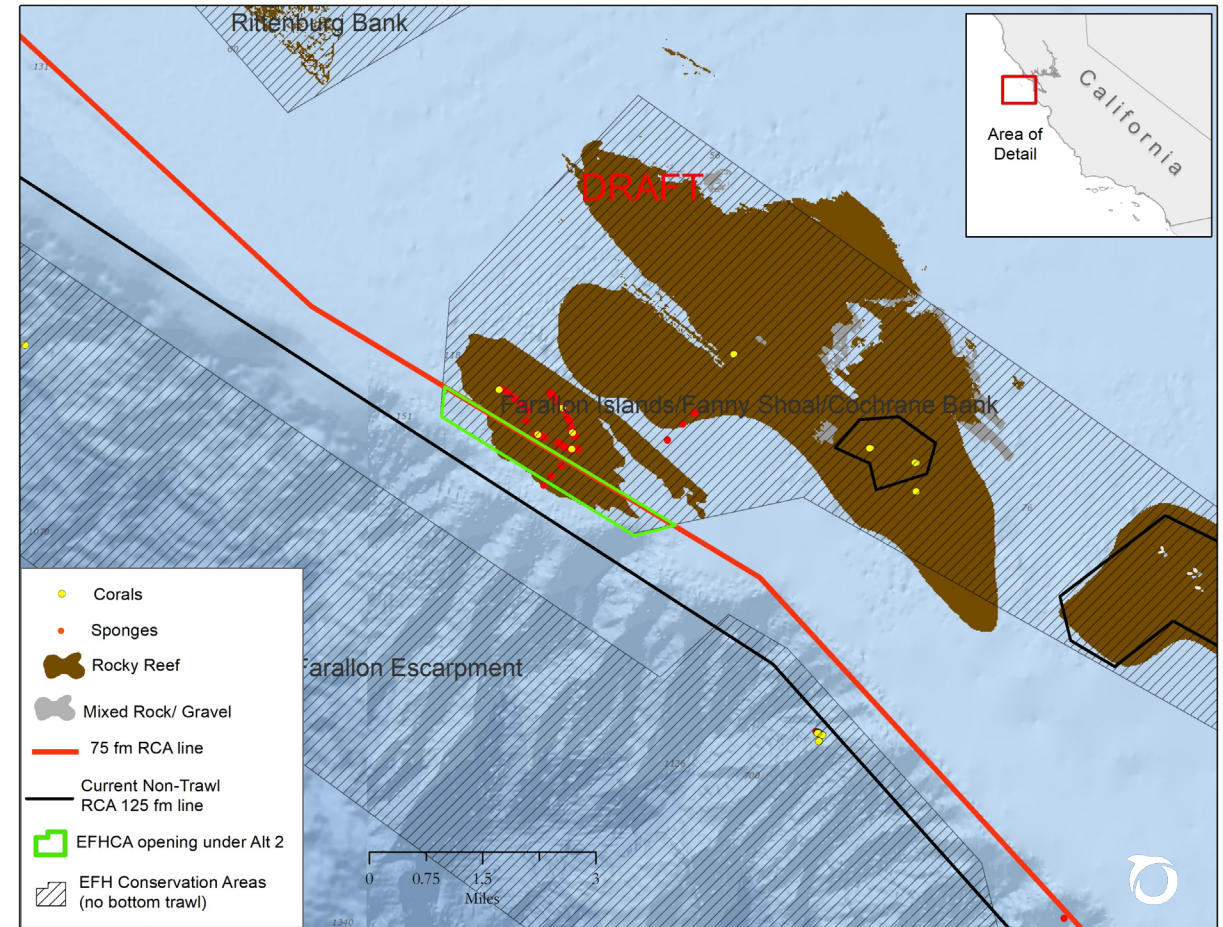
# Alternative 2 off California

## Add 6 no-bottom contact EFHCAs

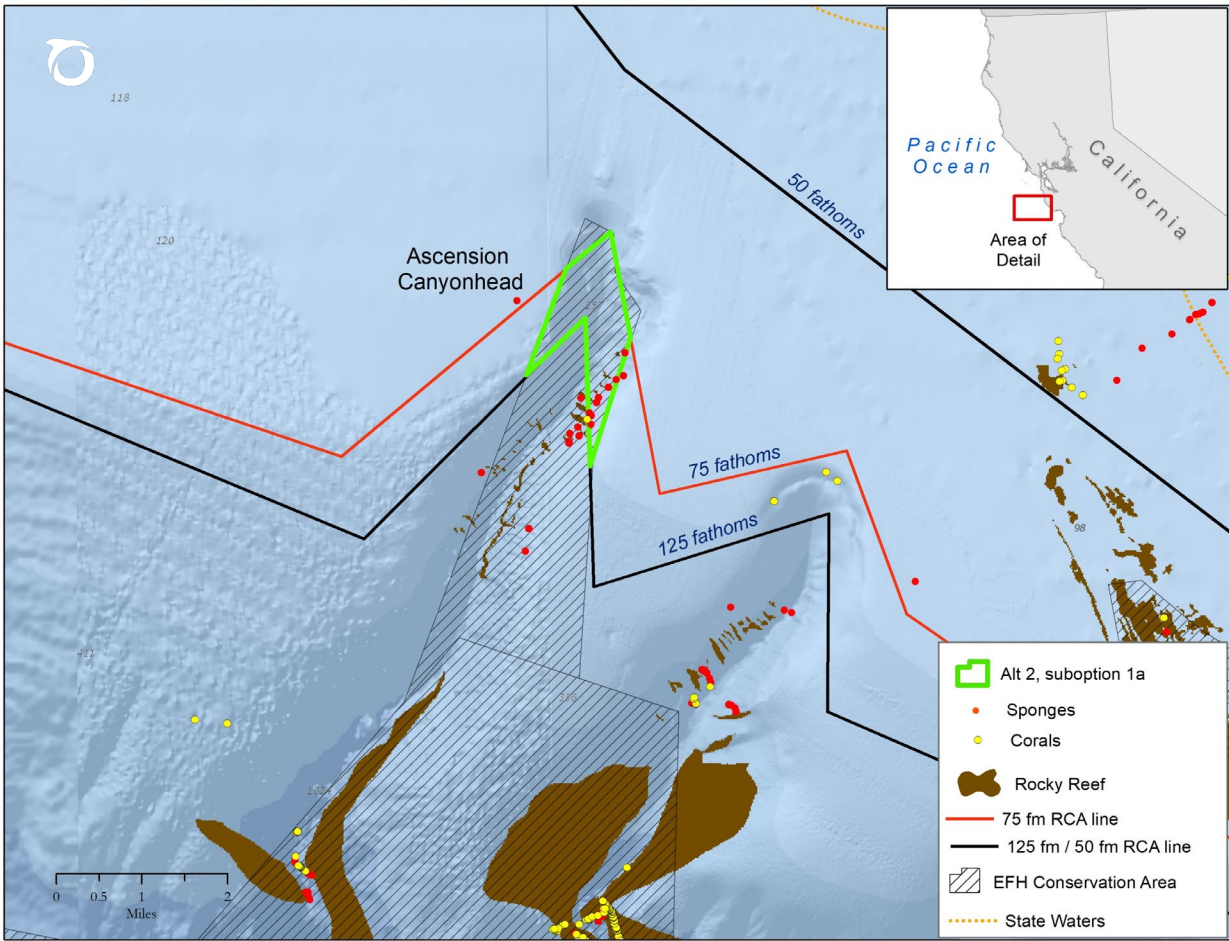


### 1. Pt. Arena South and 2. The Football EFHCA

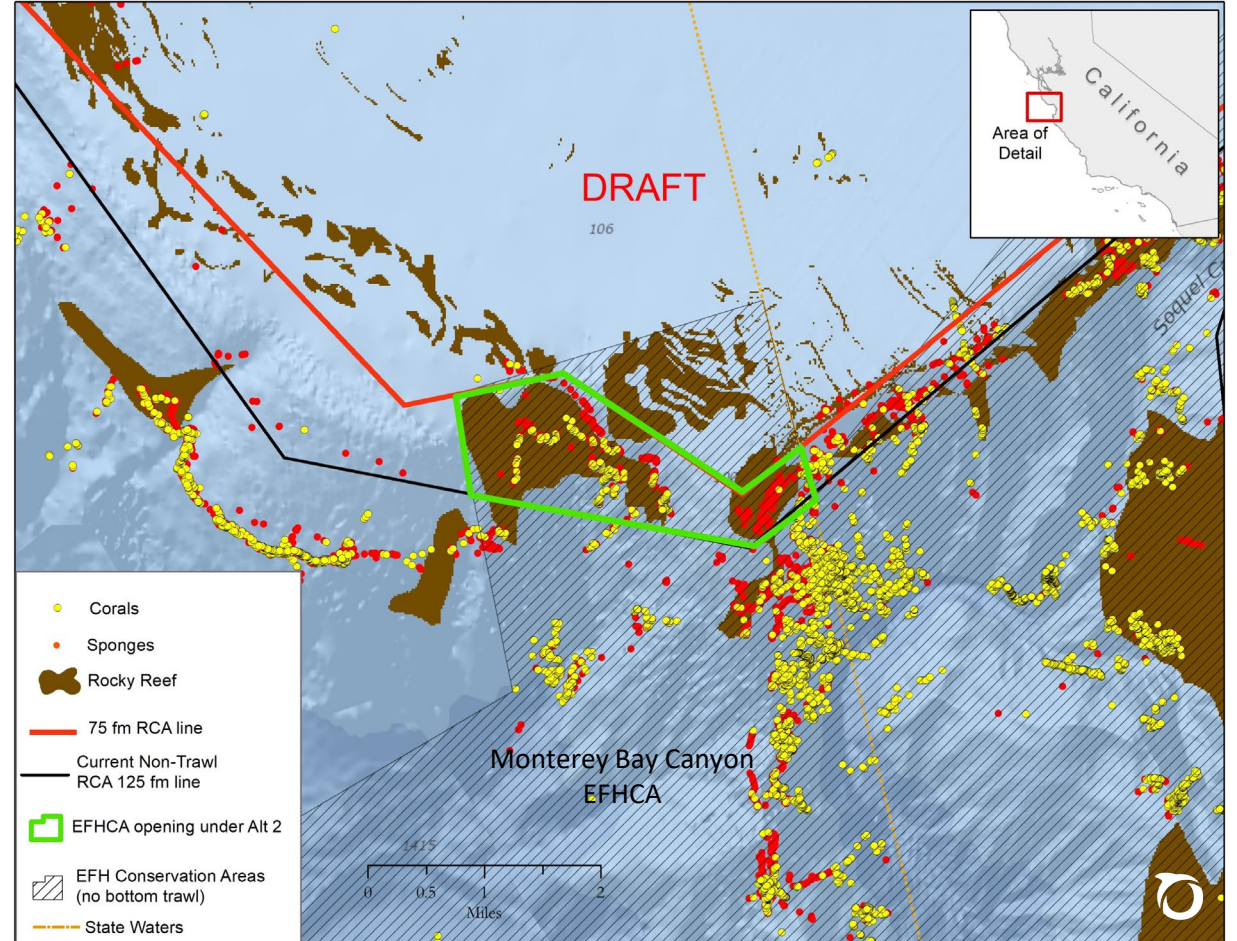
[New preliminary data from GFNMS on hard substrate, cowcod, & yelloweye rockfish]



### 3. Cochrane Bank (Farallon Islands/ Fanny Shoal)

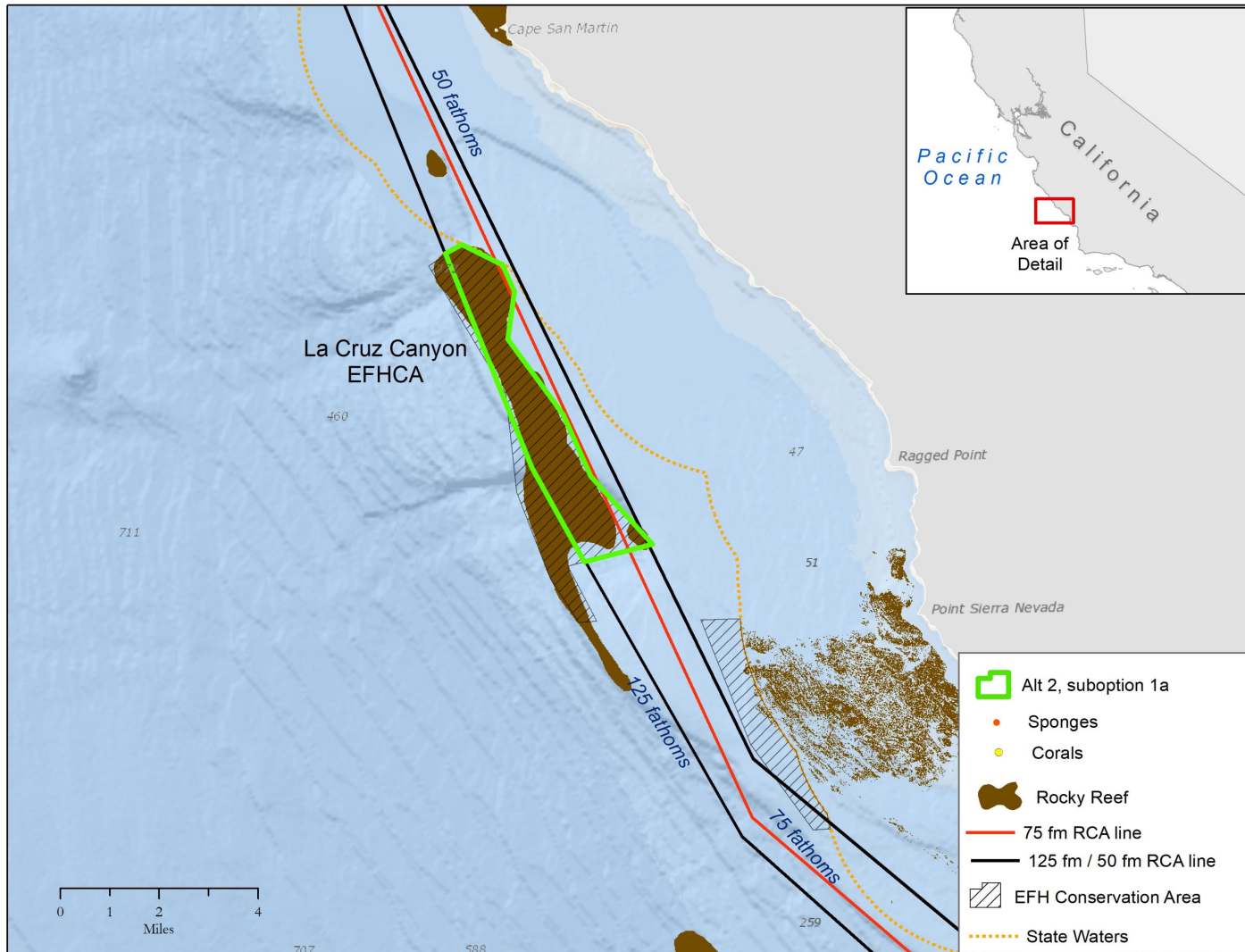


4. Ascension Canyon EFHCA



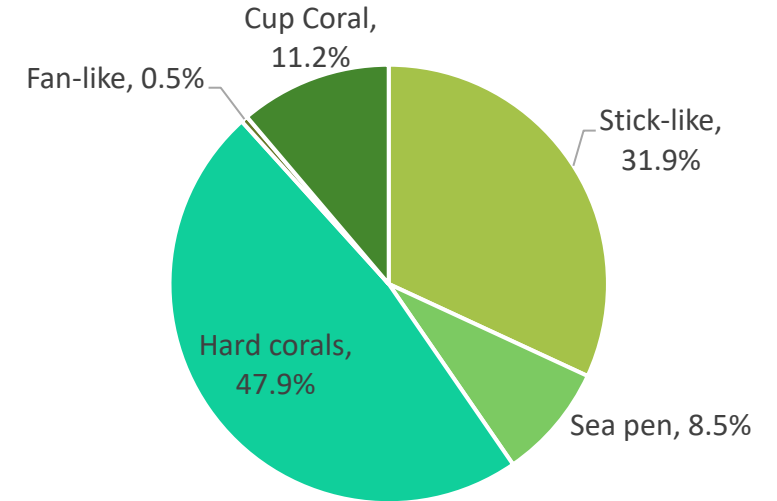
5. Monterey Bay Canyon EFHCA (West of Soquel Canyon)





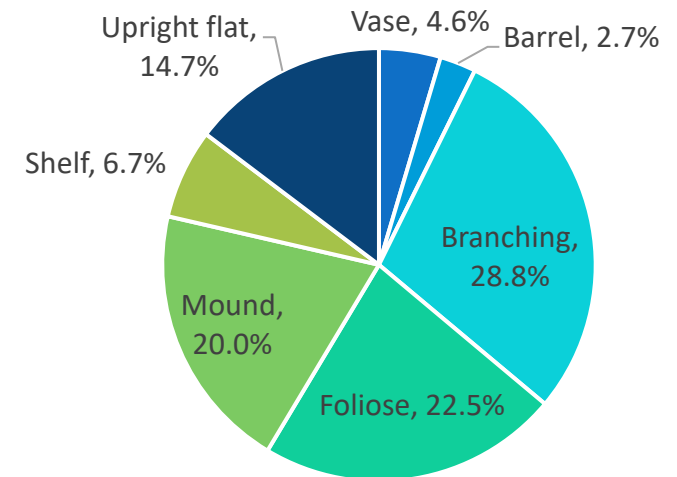
### Density of Corals at La Cruz Canyon

(1.9/ 100 m<sup>2</sup>, n = 244)



### Density of Sponges at La Cruz Canyon

(12.0/ 100m<sup>2</sup>, n = 1,161)



## 6. La Cruz Canyon EFHCA

Coal and Sponge data: Laidig, T. et al 2021. A characterization of deep-sea coral and sponge communities along the California and Oregon coast using a remotely operated vehicle on the EXPRESS 2018 expedition. NOAA Technical Memorandum NMFS-SWFSC-657.

<https://doi.org/10.25923/sd6f-j739>



# Recommendations

- Support Alternative 1 (PPA); open the existing non-trawl RCA to groundfish fishing gears that do not contact the seafloor;
- Alternative 2: Support PPA sub-options 1d, 1e and YRCAs off Oregon; plus
- Designate 6 new no-bottom contact EFHCAs under sub-option 1a off California at: Pt Arena South, The Football, Cochrane Bank, Ascension Canyon, Monterey Canyon, and La Cruz Canyon EFHCAs
- Support Alternative 3 (PPA): Repeal the Cowcod Conservation Areas off Southern California while implementing 8 proposed groundfish closed areas