

HABITAT COMMITTEE REPORT ON CORDELL BANK CONSERVATION AREAS
REVISIONS – SCOPING

The Habitat Committee (HC) received a presentation by Andre Klein from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife on the proposal to alter the overlapping conservation areas around Cordell Bank. Currently, three conservation areas overlap, the Cordell Bank Biogenic Essential Fish Habitat Conservation Area (EFHCA), the Cordell Bank Groundfish Conservation Area (Cordell GCA), and the Cordell Bank (50-fm) Isobath Essential Fish Habitat Conservation Area (bottom contact EFHCA), with differing regulations and boundary edges that do not align.

The HC is supportive of the proposed simplifications in boundaries and regulations, noting that the reductions in regulatory complexities and enforcement may lead to increased benefits to habitat. The HC also notes that through these simplifications, protections are being expanded. As this proposal moves forward, the HC recommends analyses of this action investigate changes in potential fishing pressure and habitat impacts in the areas that will now be exposed to both non-trawl and trawl gear.

PFMC
09/09/23