

HABITAT COMMITTEE REPORT ON PROPOSED HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES  
ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT (EFH) AMENDMENT - PRELIMINARY

Kerry Griffin and Eric Chavez briefed the Habitat Committee (HC) on the Highly Migratory Species (HMS) essential fish habitat (EFH) review proposed modifications, and reviewed the Briefing Book materials. The HC appreciates the efforts of the HMS EFH review team to update the Fishery Management Plan with current life history and distribution information to reflect the best available science.

The HC has the following comments and recommendations for modifying the HMS FMP:

- In *Mitigation Considerations for Fishing Effects (7.4.2)*, include a statement acknowledging the potential impacts of HMS fishing gear on EFH of other Council managed species.
- Clarify if the entire list of non-fishing impacts listed in Table 1 are to be included in the FMP or included by reference to Kiffney et al. (2022).
- To the *Research and Information Needs* section, consider adding the need for research to quantify derelict gear in the fishery and assess its impact on the marine environment and other species, and incorporate more current information on derelict gear impacts (e.g., the effects of derelict gear on EFH for groundfish).
- The HC supports the recommendation to better understand the migratory corridors and habitat dependency of HMS fishes in the Research and Information Needs section. The HC recommends further research on the role of benthic habitat in the migratory behavior of HMS.