

OFFICE OF NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARIES: CORAL RESTORATION AND
RESEARCH PLAN - RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES AND PRELIMINARY PREFERRED
ALTERNATIVE

During the March 2023 Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) meeting, the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS) submitted a report under the Non-Trawl Area Management Measures/Amendment 32 agenda item regarding the Draft Restoration Plan to restore resources, habitat and biota resulting from the sinking of the drydock YFD-70 at Pioneer Canyon in the Monterey Bay NMS (MBNMS) ([Agenda Item F.4.a, Supplemental ONMS Report 1, March 2023](#)). The timing did not allow for the Council and ONMS to include consideration of any area closures for coral restoration under the Amendment 32 action, but the Council did commit to considering the matter at a future meeting.

In September 2023, the ONMS brought forward a proposal that included five locations and ten areas identified as suitable to meet their coral restoration and research initiative goals ([Agenda Item H.2.a, ONMS Report 1, September 2023](#)). The ONMS proposed these areas, or a subset, being closed to all bottom contact groundfish gear, in both commercial and recreational sectors. The Council proposed moving forward two locations and three areas (Ascension Canyon, Año Nuevo Canyon, and Sur Ridge) for analysis that would be closed to all bottom contact gear. In addition, the Council asked the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to bring back information on the ability to use their discretionary authority for state fisheries.

Attachment 1 is the initial draft regulatory impact review (RIR)/ regulatory flexibility act (RFA)/Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA) analytical document. The proposed action analyzed by staff was specific to commercial groundfish bottom contact gears based on the fisheries that operate in those areas, the likelihood of other fishery management plan gears interacting with the bottom given the depths of the sites, and the ability to enforce these closures. Because this action will require a Fishery Management Plan amendment, Attachment 2 includes the proposed FMP language for the action as described by staff in Attachment 1. NMFS Report 1 speaks to the Council request for more information about discretionary authority.

At this meeting, the Council and its advisory bodies should consider Attachment 1, the fisheries proposed to be included under the proposed action, and select a range of alternatives and a preliminary preferred alternative, if possible.

Council Action:

- 1. Adopt a range of alternatives**
- 2. Adopt a preliminary preferred alternative, if possible.**
- 3. Provide any guidance on FMP proposed language.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item E.2, Attachment 1: Draft RIR/RFA/MSA Analytical Document.
2. Agenda Item E.2, Attachment 2: Draft FMP Amendment Language.
3. Agenda Item E.2.a, NMFS Report 1.
4. If received, Public Comments are electronic only ([see e-portal](#)).

Agenda Order:

- E.2 Office of National Marine Sanctuaries Coral Restoration and
Research Plan- Range of Alternatives Kerry Griffin/Jessi Doerpinghaus
- a. Reports and Comments of Management Entities and Advisory Bodies
 - b. Public Comment
 - c. **Council Action:** Adopt a Range of Alternatives, including a Preliminary Preferred Alternative(s), if Possible

PFMC
02/06/24