

GROUND FISH ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON OFFICE OF NATIONAL  
MARINE SANCTUARIES: CORAL RESTORATION AND RESEARCH PLAN - RANGE OF  
ALTERNATIVES AND PRELIMINARY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

In general, the Groundfish Advisory Subpanel (GAP) does not support reducing spatial access for fishing, especially given the restrictions already in place and the need for flexibility in the face of climate change and its unknown impacts. Yet we recognize the fisheries conservation consideration for spatial closures on a case-by-case basis, where it provides positive fisheries impacts.

We recognize Alternative 2-Sur Ridge as a commercial bottom contact Groundfish Exclusion Area could provide a larger benefit for deep water coral research, already having a time-series of scientific observations logged. We note the expected negative impacts on commercial fisheries appear to be less than they might be elsewhere. Therefore, we can accept Alternative 2, the Sur Ridge proposal, as the Preliminary Preferred Alternative (PPA).

Given additional input provided, for example the public comment of [Christian Zajac](#) under this agenda item, we do not support the Alternative 1- Año Nuevo (option a) and Ascension Canyon (option b) being included in the PPA. These areas are known sablefish fishing grounds and given the other constraints on the fleet (such as nearshore restrictions, lack of salmon opportunities), the loss of these areas would be significant to vessels in the region. However, we would be amenable to including a modified version of Alternative 1 within the range of alternatives that was no larger than 4 sq. mi. and would be in an area deeper than 400 fm.

We do recognize the potential for comparative control - impact studies with the Alternative 1 locations serving as fished control sites and Alternative 2-Sur Ridge as the impact (commercial bottom contact) site. This might provide insight as to the value of closing areas to bottom contact gear types.

PFMC  
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