

MONTEREY BAY NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY CORAL RESEARCH AND  
RESTORATION CLOSURES – FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN (FMP) AMENDMENT  
FINAL ACTION

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, to be 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 March 2024, the Council adopted a range of alternatives that included the three areas- with some modifications to Ascension and Año Nuevo Canyons to address concerns raised by industry about closing off key sablefish grounds. The Council also confirmed that these areas would only be closed to commercial groundfish bottom contact gears.

Attachment 1 is the initial draft regulatory impact review (RIR)/ regulatory flexibility act (RFA)/Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA) analytical document. Attachment 2 includes the proposed FMP language for the groundfish FMP.

At this meeting, the Council and its advisory bodies should recommend a final preferred alternative.

**Council Action:**

- 1. Adopt a final preferred alternative.**
- 2. Adopt FMP amendment language.**

**Reference Materials:**

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

Agenda Order:

- F.2 Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Coral Restoration and  
Research Closure- FMP Amendment Final Action Jessi Doerpinghaus
- a. Reports and Comments of Management Entities and Advisory Bodies
  - b. Public Comment
  - c. **Council Action:** Adopt a Final Preferred Alternative and FMP Language

PFMC  
05/14/24