

## HABITAT COMMITTEE REPORT ON RESEARCH AND DATA NEEDS DOCUMENT – FINAL ADOPTION

The Habitat Committee (HC) provided research priorities related to habitat for fishery management plans (FMPs) during initial rounds of updating the Research and Data Needs documents. Many of these have been incorporated into the current document draft. Unlike other FMPs, research and data needs for the groundfish FMP section are not prioritized. Should the Council wish to have items prioritized, the HC reiterates the following as high-priority needs:

### *Groundfish EFH*

- 4.13.1 (bullet 2) Assess species distribution and habitat utilization during nursery and pre-reproductive life stages in nearshore waters.
- 4.1.3.1 (bullet 3) Evaluate the role of deep-sea coral and sponges and other habitat-forming invertebrates, as habitat for managed groundfish species.
- 4.13.2. (bullet 1) Fishing Impact analysis: Conduct studies in the core Rockfish Conservation Area before trawling is re-initiated to establish a modern baseline for fish, mega-macroinvertebrates, and habitat conditions.
- 4.13.2 (bullet 3) Examine the relationship between an individual trawl pass and the level of disturbance and recovery of benthic macroinvertebrates. Develop new models for estimating fishing impacts on biogenic and physical habitats and recovery times, such as the model used in the Alaska 2006 EFH process.
- 4.13.4 (bullet 3) Research in Essential Fish Habitat Conservation Areas (EFHCAs): Monitor effects of new bottom trawling in EFHCAs identified for reopening under Amendment 28.
- 4.13.4 (bullet 4) Conduct studies in EFHCAs to determine the effects of benthic habitat protection for promoting groundfish productivity.

### *Salmon EFH*

- 5.3.2 Improve fine-scale mapping of salmon distributions in freshwater. These will improve designation of EFH for Pacific Coast salmon.
- 5.4 Determination of potential effects of ocean acidification on salmon prey species (e.g., crab larvae, copepods), and upon sensory functions of salmon.

In light of discussion of the Fishery Ecosystem Plan and the Climate and Communities reviews, we note that one set of research priorities for the salmon FMP include development of environmental indicators relevant for forecasting adults (p. 63-64).