

HABITAT COMMITTEE REPORT ON FUTURE COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA AND WORKLOAD PLANNING

The Habitat Committee (HC) recommends that the Council hear a presentation on the recently completed National Habitat Assessment Improvement Plan (HAIP) in September, as is proposed in the draft schedule (presently scheduled for Sunday, September 12).

The HC heard a brief presentation at its June meeting about this topic and thinks a more in-depth presentation would be valuable and of interest to the Council. Copies of the HAIP report were distributed to the HC, and will be mailed to a large distribution list including all Council members and staff.

The HC notes that this HAIP is the first nationally coordinated plan to focus on the marine fisheries aspects of habitat science. It addresses the lack of knowledge regarding the association of marine species and their habitats, which impedes effective fisheries and habitat management, protection, restoration, and stock assessment. The HAIP establishes the framework for the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to coordinate habitat research, monitoring, and assessments; and to increase support for habitat science.

The HC notes that this presentation could lead to actions by the Council, including endorsement of the HAIP, integration of the Council's research priorities with HAIP, and application to the upcoming groundfish Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) five-year review. This report is also relevant to the Council's Ecosystem Plan Development Team and Ecosystem Advisory Subpanel.

The scheduled September presentation would include information about a ground-breaking joint workshop that was held in St. Petersburg, Florida in May, between NMFS stock assessment and habitat assessment scientists as well as fisheries managers and fishery Council staff from around the country. Ms. Mary Yoklavich of the NMFS Southwest Fisheries Science Center, Santa Cruz Lab and Chair of the NMFS HAIP Team would be the presenter.

Council advisory bodies could consider requesting a briefing on the HAIP at the September meeting.

PFMC
06/12/10