

## COASTAL PELAGIC SPECIES (CPS) REPORT ON CPS ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT FIVE-YEAR REVIEW

The Coastal Pelagic Species Management Team (CPSMT) initiated a review of Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) for CPS in January, 2010, and concluded its review at the November 2010 Council meeting. The CPSMT Report on EFH (Agenda Item I.4.a, Attachment 1) contains information on the process, including opportunities for public comment.

The EFH for CPS was initially described in Appendix D of Amendment 8 to the CPS Fishery Management Plan (FMP) in 1998, and was last reviewed in 2005. Krill EFH was established in 2008, and was not part of this review.

The CPSMT notes there are areas for improvement in the identification and description of CPS EFH contained in Appendix D of Amendment 8, particularly regarding emerging threats, the identification of benthic habitats where squid spawn, and non-fishing gear effects.

Regarding squid spawning areas, the CPSMT notes that a new publication is pending that will likely provide information on squid spawning behavior and benthic habitat associations. However, this manuscript has not been published. The CPSMT also notes that significant squid spawning areas are in protected marine reserves established under the California Marine Life Protection Act as well as in the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary.

Recent information will help inform EFH consultations and provide additional background on CPS habitat, but does not warrant changes to the existing description of CPS EFH at this time.

The CPSMT recommends the following:

- Amend the EFH review report to include:
  - A section documenting that fishing effects have not changed significantly since gear effects were documented in Appendix D of Amendment 8;
  - A clearer explanation of why Habitat Areas of Particular Concern were not recommended;
  - New reference on squid spawning habitat (Zeidberg et al., unpublished report);
- Incorporate the CPSMT's CPS EFH Report (Agenda Item I.4.a, Attachment 1), including the recommended additions above, into the 2011 CPS Stock Assessment Fishery Evaluation document. This will add to the body of information, available for National Marine Fisheries Service biologists when conducting EFH consultations, and will provide information for use in future CPS EFH reviews;
- Adding more description of how new information compares with Appendix D of Amendment 8;
- Synchronize the next CPS EFH review with the pending five-year review of krill EFH by 2013.