

**NOAA
FISHERIES**

West Coast
Region

Groundfish EFH Review

OCNMS Advisory Council

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Essential Fish Habitat (EFH)

- What is it, where did it come from, and what does it mean?
- Ongoing review of EFH for Pacific Coast groundfishes



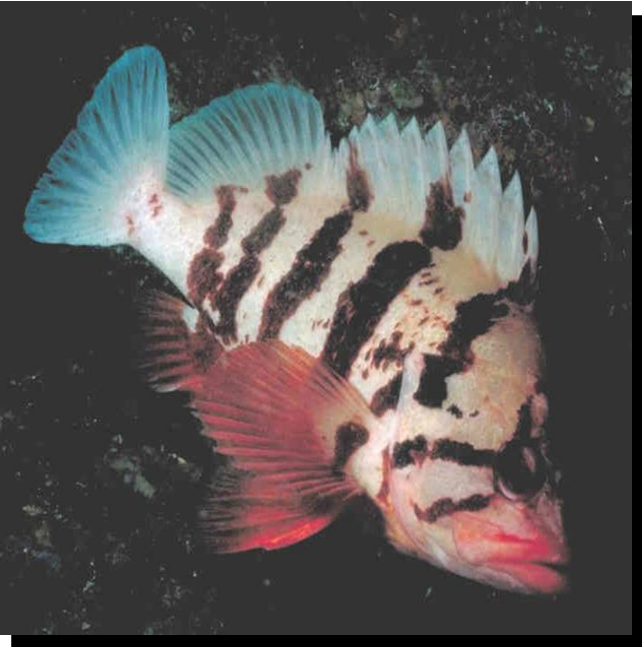
Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA)

- *Loss of habitat* = decline in many important fisheries
- Amended in 1996 to include EFH
- Requires that:
 - Fishery Management Councils (FMCs) designate EFH for all managed species
 - Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC)
 - FMCs minimize adverse effects on EFH from fishing
 - Federal Action Agencies consult with NMFS
 - Only for actions that “may adversely affect” EFH
- Final Implementing Rule: 50 CFR part 600

What is EFH?

Definition (MSA §3(10))

“Essential fish habitat means those waters and substrate necessary to fish for spawning, breeding, feeding, or growth to maturity.”



What does this mean?

“those waters and substrate necessary to fish for spawning, breeding, feeding, or growth to maturity.” (50 CFR 600.10)

waters = “include aquatic areas and their associated physical, chemical, and biological properties that are used by fish and may include aquatic areas historically used by fish where appropriate”



substrate = “includes sediment, hard bottom, structures underlying the waters, and associated biological communities”

What does this mean?

“those *waters and substrate necessary to fish for spawning, breeding, feeding, or growth to maturity.*”

necessary = “the habitat required to support a sustainable fishery and the managed species’ contribution to a healthy ecosystem”

spawning, breeding, feeding, or growth to maturity: covers the entire life history



Who Has EFH?

Species Managed under Fishery Management Plans



Pacific Coast Groundfish
83 species of sharks, cods,
rockfishes, flatfishes, etc.



Coastal Pelagic Species
krill, squid, anchovies, sardines,
mackerels



Pacific Coast Salmon
Chinook salmon
coho salmon,
Puget Sound pink salmon



Highly Migratory Species
Tunas, sharks, billfish, etc.



Periodic Review of EFH Designations

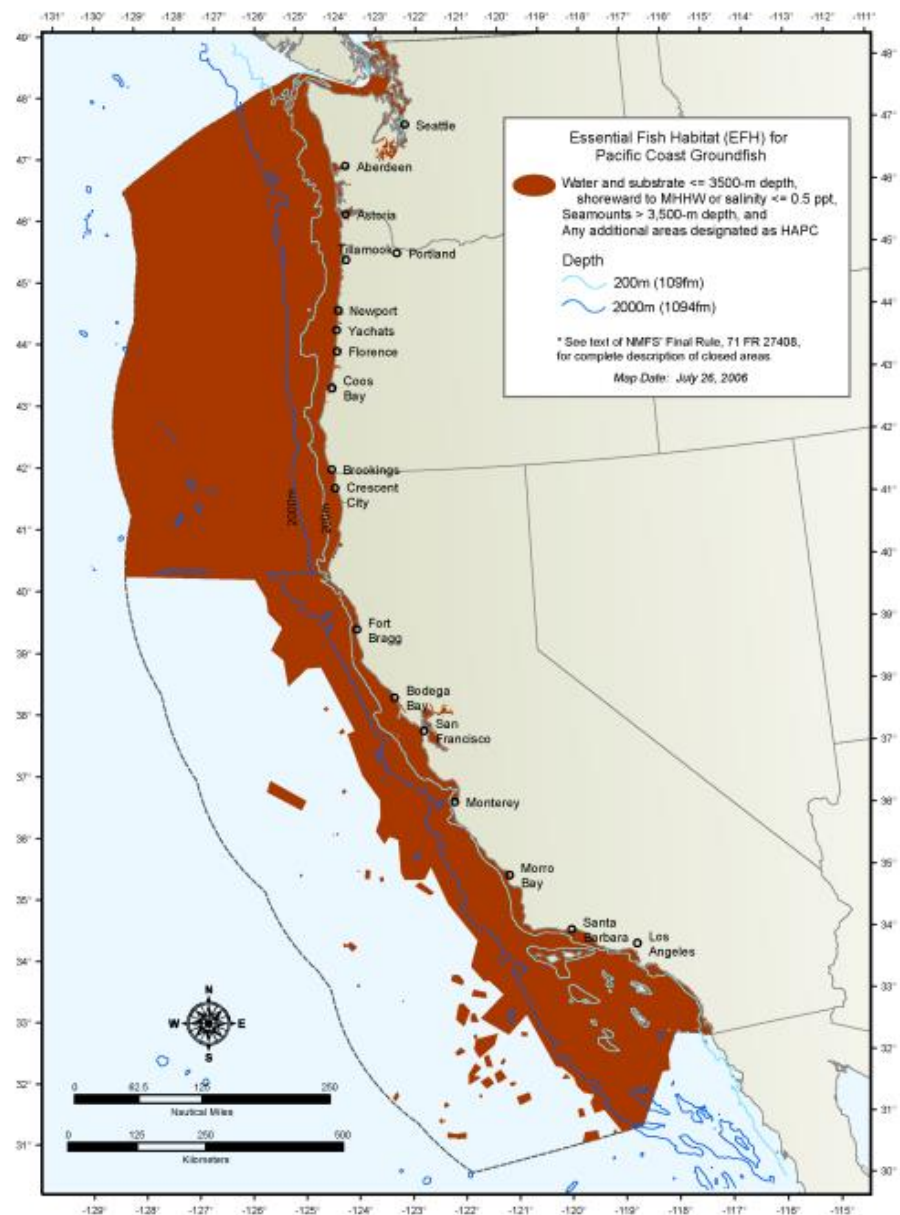
50 CFR 600.815(a)(10)

Review the EFH provisions of FMPs and revise or amend as warranted based on available information.

EFH provisions include:

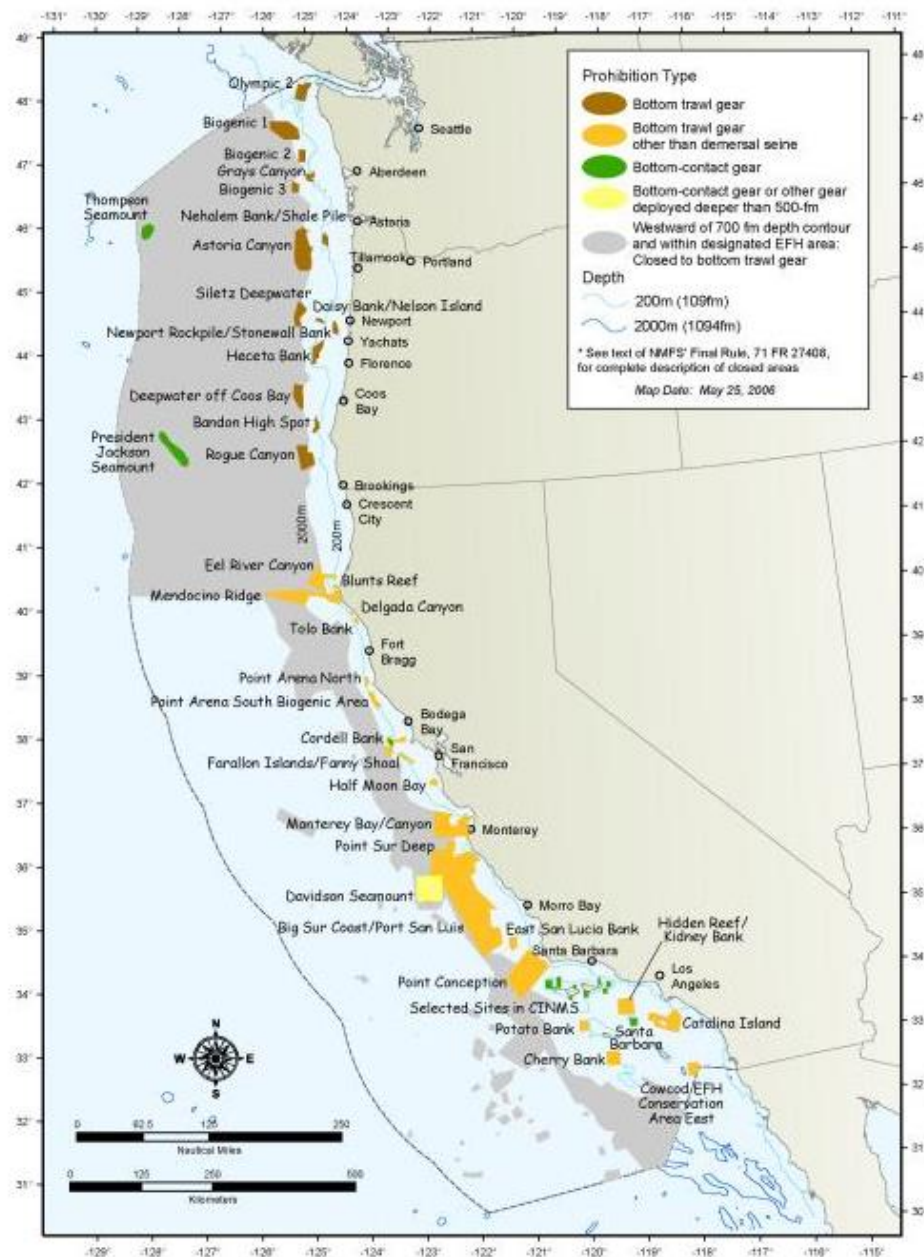
- Description and Identification of EFH
- MSA and non-MSA fishing activities that adversely affect EFH
- Non-fishing related activities that adversely affect EFH
- Cumulative impacts
- Conservation and enhancement measures
- Identifying major prey species
- Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (Optional)
- Research and information needs

Amendment 19 to Groundfish FMP 2005 (approved 2006) EFH for 82 species of Pacific Coast groundfish



Amendment 19

EFH Conservation Areas Bottom Contact Gear Limitations



3-Phase Approach

➤ **Phase 1: Information Gathering and Synthesis**

- Sept 2012: Phase 1 report submitted to the Council
- April 2013: NWFSC presented synthesis of Phase 1 data to Council

➤ **Phase 2**

- April 2013: Council issued 90-day RFP
- July – Sept 2013: EFHRC reviews proposals
- Nov 2013: Phase II Report submitted to Council. Council determines whether or not to revise EFH

➤ **Phase 3 (if warranted)**

FMP amendment process begins

Phase 2

- April 2013 Council issued 90-day RFP for changes to EFH
- 8 proposals received
 - Environmental Defense Fund - withdrawn
 - Fisherman's Marketing Association
 - GreenPeace
 - Marine Conservation Institute
 - Oceana/NRDC/Ocean Conservancy
 - Monterey Bay NMS
 - Gulf of the Farallones NMS
 - Olympic Coast NMS/WDFW
- Most deal with EFH closed areas
 - Expansion or contraction
 - Mostly protection of deep-sea corals

Phase 2 (continued)

- July-Sept 2013: EFHRC reviewed proposals
- Nov 2013: Phase 2 with recommendations scheduled for Council discussion
 - Government furlough prevented Federal employees from reviewing the report.
 - Council staff report presented to Council
 - Lacked recommendations for how to proceed
 - Created a lot of confusion
- Council decided to move into Phase 3
 - Plan amendment process
 - NEPA

Phase 3

- March 2014
 - Finalize Phase 2 report
 - Questions regarding “effectiveness” of EFH closed areas
 - Are the goals and objectives of Amendment 19 being met?
 - How much habitat do we need to protect for a sustainable fishery?
 - Is habitat recovering?
 - What is the economic costs of closing these areas?
 - NW and SW Fisheries Science Centers
 - What questions can be answered and what cannot?
 - Will be used to:
 - conduct an evaluation of existing EFH closed areas
 - set a schedule to formally scope issues for a fishery management plan amendment.

Next Steps

- No schedule yet
- EFH evaluation will be completed
- Plan amendment process begins

Questions?

