

Goals and objectives

Evaluation of groundfish
alternatives in Omnibus Habitat
Amendment

Methodology

- Survey of CATT and PDT members to rank importance of closed area functions
- Post-survey evaluation led to goals and objectives

Goals

- Enhance groundfish fishery productivity
- Maximize societal net benefits from the groundfish stocks while addressing current management needs

Objectives

1. Improved spawning protection; including protection of localized spawning contingents or sub-populations of stocks
 - Spawning fidelity
 - Conservation of sub-stocks and spawning components
 - Prevent extirpation

Objectives

2. Improved protection of critical groundfish habitats

- Different objective than more general habitat management areas

3. Improved refuge for critical life history stages

Objectives

4. Improved access to both the use and non-use benefits arising from closed area management across gear types, fisheries, and groups. These benefits may arise from areas designed to address other three groundfish closed area objectives.
 - Not a primary reason for closed areas, but are a consideration for spatial management
 - May produce benefits to specific fisheries or ocean users

Closed Area Technical Team Framework 48 Progress Report

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Alternatives

- Comparative analysis of Framework 48 exemption area options
 - **Sector Exemption Areas**
 - **EFH Closure Areas**
(to remain closed to bottom tending mobile gears and all groundfish gears when overlapping with year round groundfish closed areas)
 - **Open fishing areas**
(10 nm boundaries excluded due to the effects of intensified fishing areas)

Factors analyzed

- **Biological characteristics**
 - Trawl survey data (spring, fall, winter)
 - Length, age, individual weight, maturity, stomach weight
 - Average CPUE (stratified mean biomass) by species
 - Proportion of swept area biomass exposed to fishing
 - Literature and research on closed area effects
 - Meristics
 - Biomass and abundance per tow BACI
 - Stock rebuilding

Factors analyzed

- **Fishery analysis**
 - Comparative analysis of observed catches
 - Standard trawl
 - Separator trawl
 - Gillnets
 - Hook gears
 - Permitting, regulations, and fishing activity by sector enrolled vessels

Factors analyzed

Qualitative analyses

- **Comparative habitat**
 - EFH
 - Vulnerable benthic habitat
- **Protected species**
- **Economic and social impacts**
 - Groundfish revenue
 - Non-groundfish target species
 - Incidental catch
 - Fishing costs (high CPUE, less fishing time)

Sector Exemption Areas (Option 2)

- Fishing in exemption areas would reduce biological differences between (presently) fished and non-fished areas
- Increases opportunity to fish (higher revenue) for under-harvested species if catch of choke species will be lower in the sector exemption areas than in currently open areas
- Reduces cost if catch rates for target species are higher in the sector exemption areas than in currently open areas

No Action/status quo (Option 1)

- No Action would retain or build on biological differences between fished and non-fished areas
- No Action could limit opportunity to fish for under-harvested species if catches of low ACL species becomes the limiting factor while fishing in currently open areas
- Costs of fishing could be higher if the catch rates are lower in currently open areas than in the sector exemption areas