

Deep-Sea Coral Amendment

Preferred Alternatives

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Habitat Plan Development Team Chair

NEFMC Meeting
April 18, 2017



Purpose of today's meeting

- Consider Committee recommendations regarding revised alternatives for analysis
- Select preferred alternatives for deep-sea coral zones (§4.2), including fishing restrictions within the zones (§4.3)
- Select preferred alternatives for special fishery programs (§4.4) and framework adjustment provisions (§4.5)

Problem statement:

The Council is utilizing its discretionary authority under Section 303(b) in MSA to identify and implement measures that reduce, to the extent practicable, impacts of fishing gear on deep sea corals in New England. This amendment contains alternatives that aim to identify and protect concentrations of corals in select areas and restrict the expansion of fishing effort into areas where corals are likely to be present.

Deep sea corals are fragile, slow-growing organisms that play an important role in the marine ecosystem and are vulnerable to various types of disturbance of the seafloor. At the same time, the importance and value of commercial fisheries that operate in or near areas of deep sea coral habitat is recognized by the Council. As such, measures in this amendment will be considered in light of their benefit to corals as well as their costs to commercial fisheries.

Deep-sea coral zone alternatives

§4.2.1 Broad zones

1. 300 meters
2. 400 meters
3. 500 meters
4. 600 meters
5. 900 meters

§4.2.2 Discrete zones

§4.2.2.1 Canyons

§4.2.2.2 Seamounts

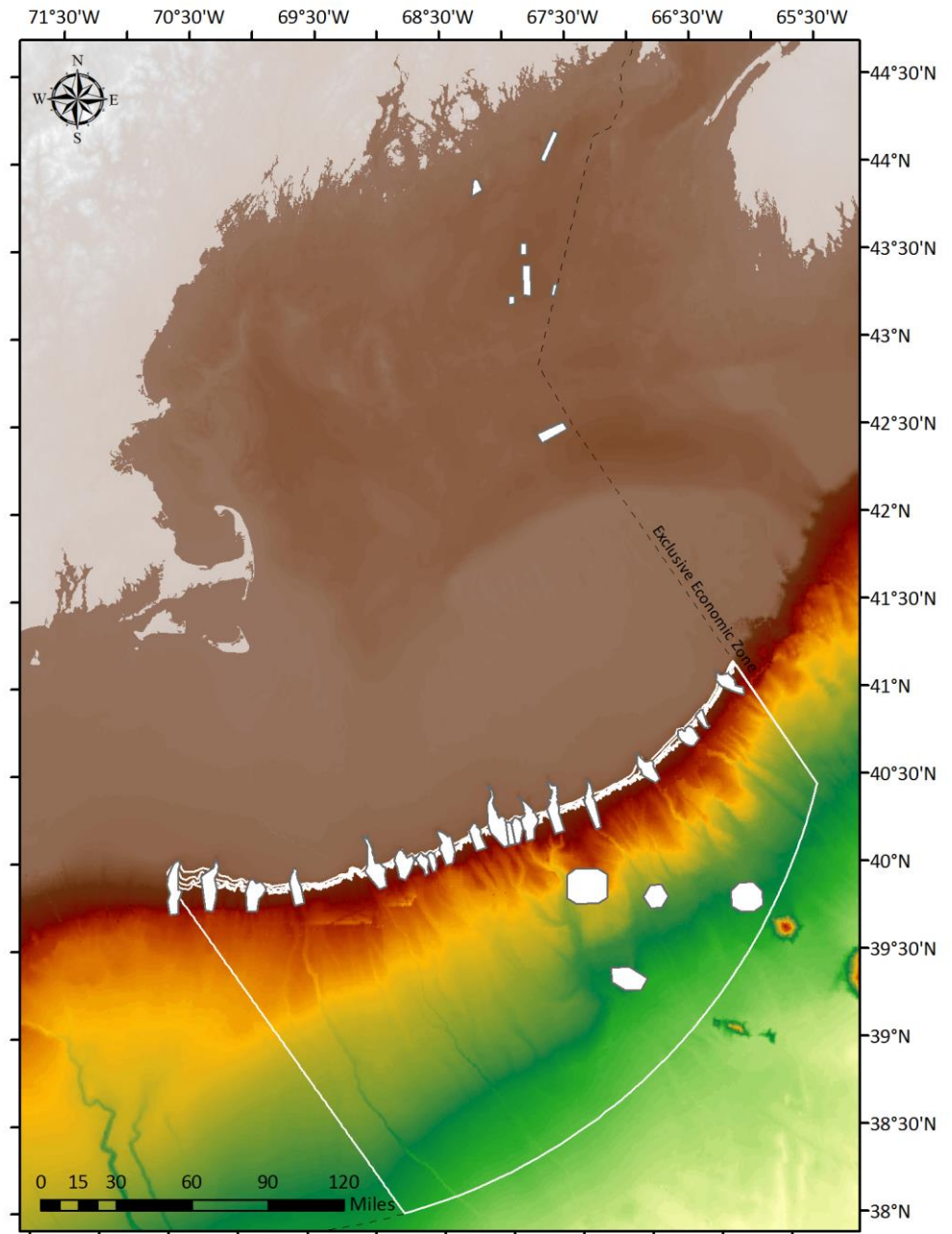
§4.2.2.3 GOM

§4.2.2.3.1 Mt. Desert Rock

§4.2.2.3.2 Outer Schoodic Ridge

§4.2.2.3.3 Jordan Basin

§4.2.2.3.4 Lindenköhl Knoll



Gear restrictions being considered (§4.3)

- **§ 4.3.1 Prohibit fixed and mobile bottom-tending gears.**

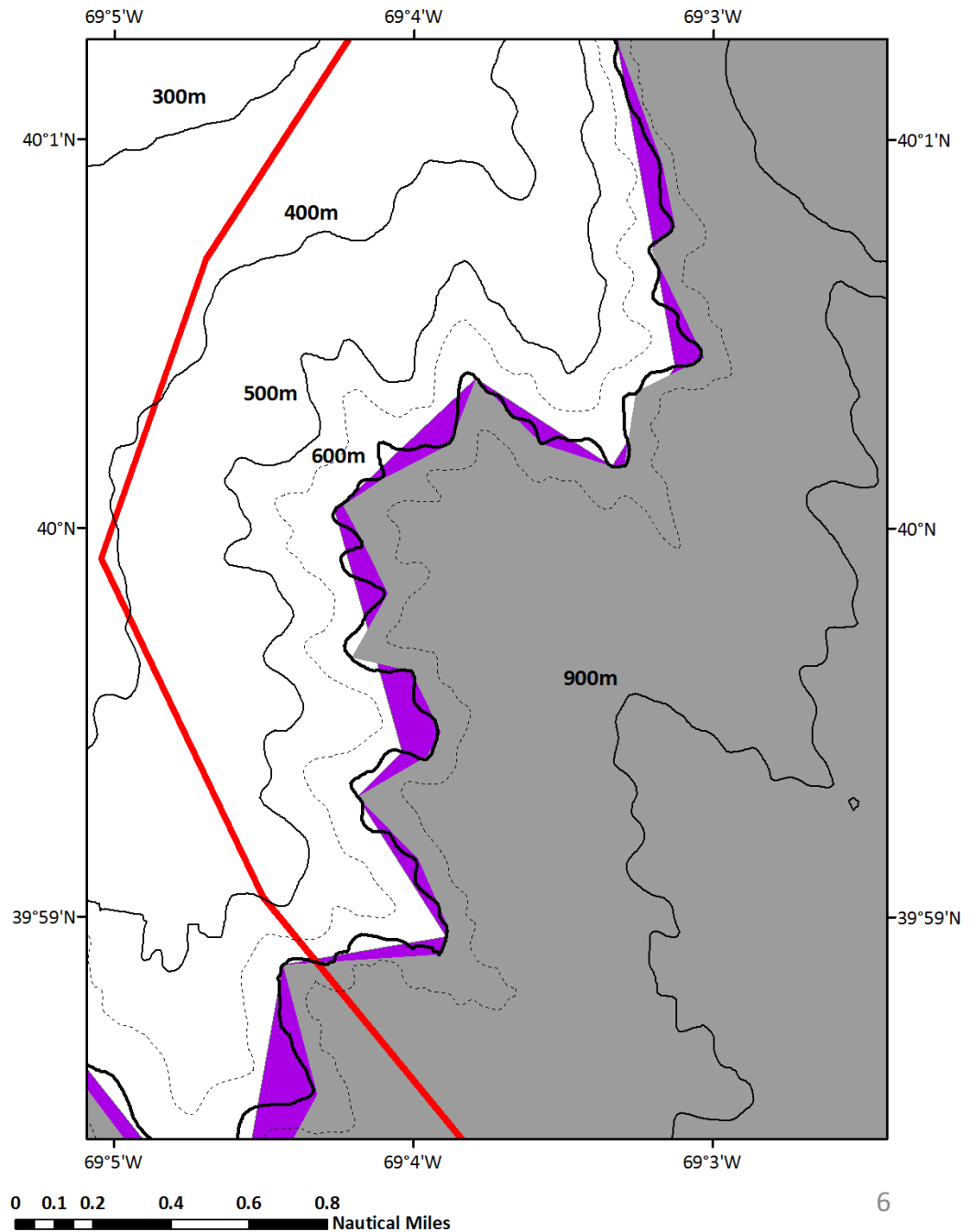
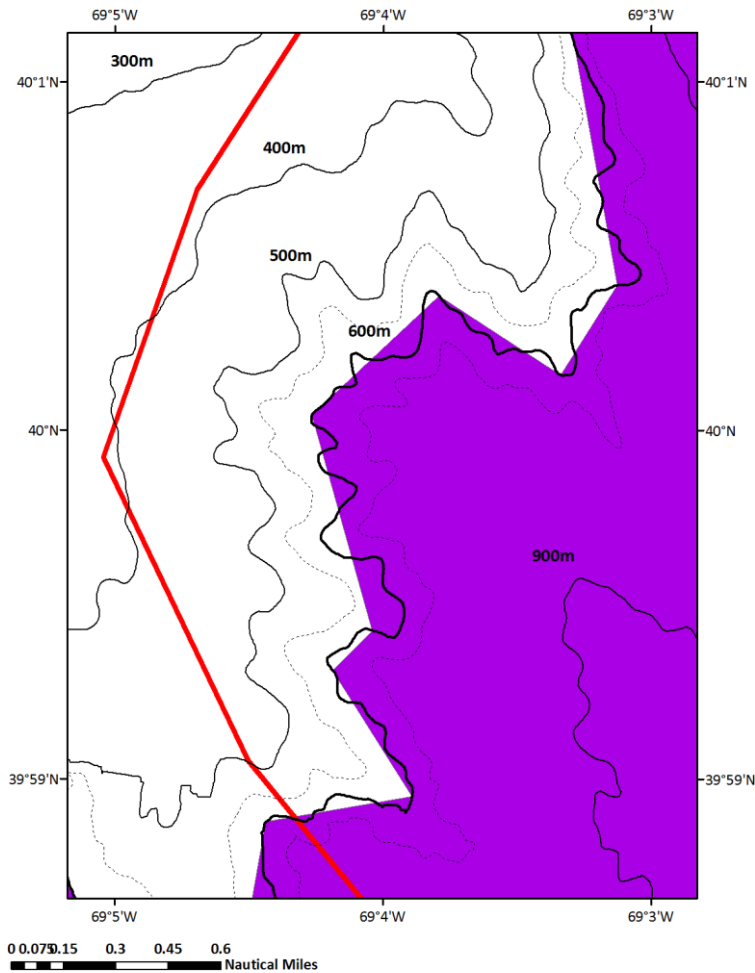
Gears that do not contact the seabed would be allowed.

- § 4.3.1.1 Sub-option A: exempt the red crab fishery from bottom-tending gear restrictions
- § 4.3.1.2 Sub-option B: exempt other trap fisheries from bottom-tending gear restrictions

- **§ 4.3.2 Prohibit mobile bottom-tending gears only.** This approach would prohibit the use of mobile bottom-tending fishing gears in deep-sea coral zones, but would allow the use of fixed gears and any gears that do not contact the seabed.

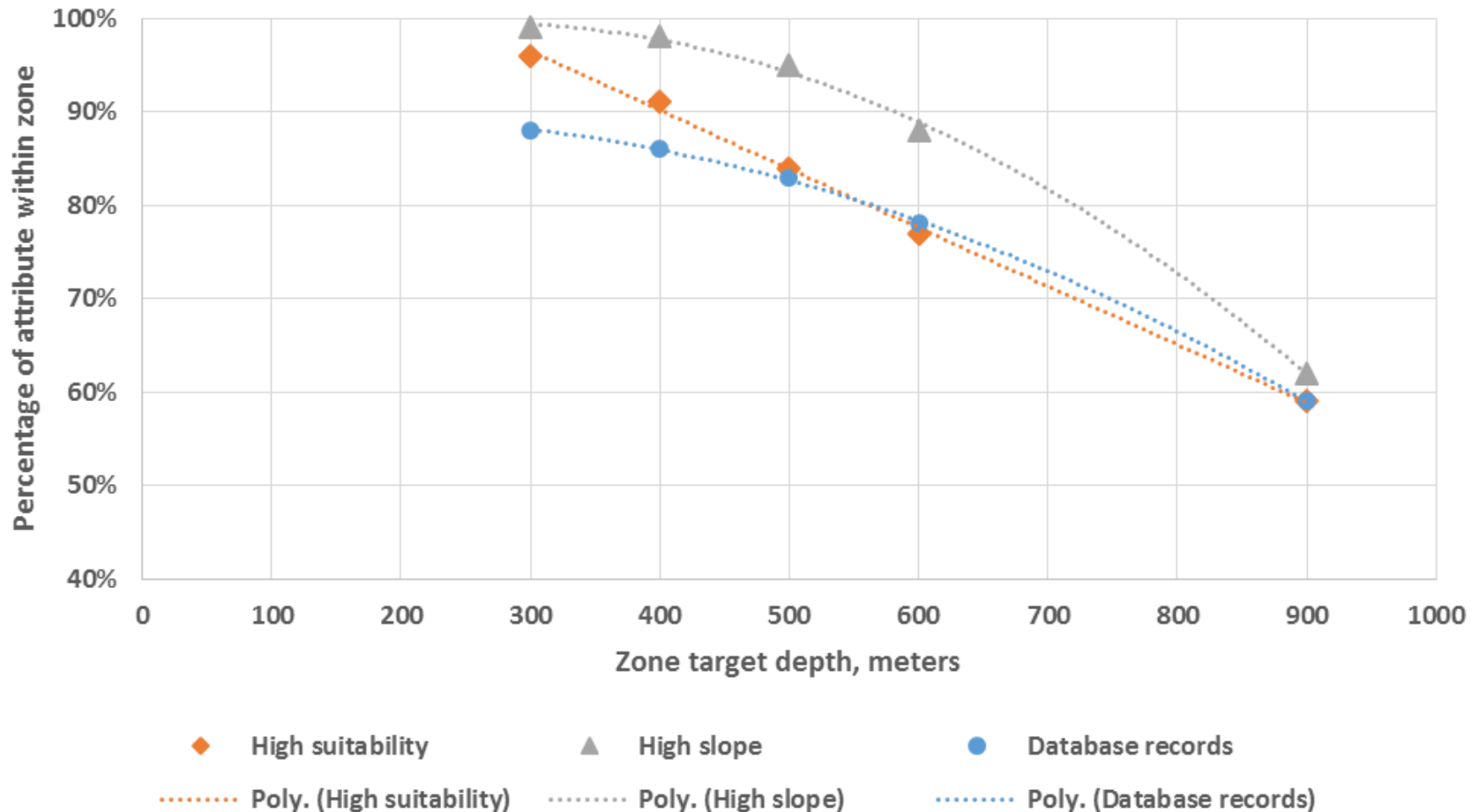
Transiting across coral zones would be allowed. Vessels may transit the coral zones provided bottom-tending trawl nets are out of the water and stowed on the reel and any other fishing gear that is prohibited in these areas is onboard, out of the water, and not deployed. Fishing gear would not be required to meet the definition of “not available for immediate use” in 50 CFR § 648.2.

Additional boundary option Broad zone



Coral metrics for broad zones

Coral metrics by depth

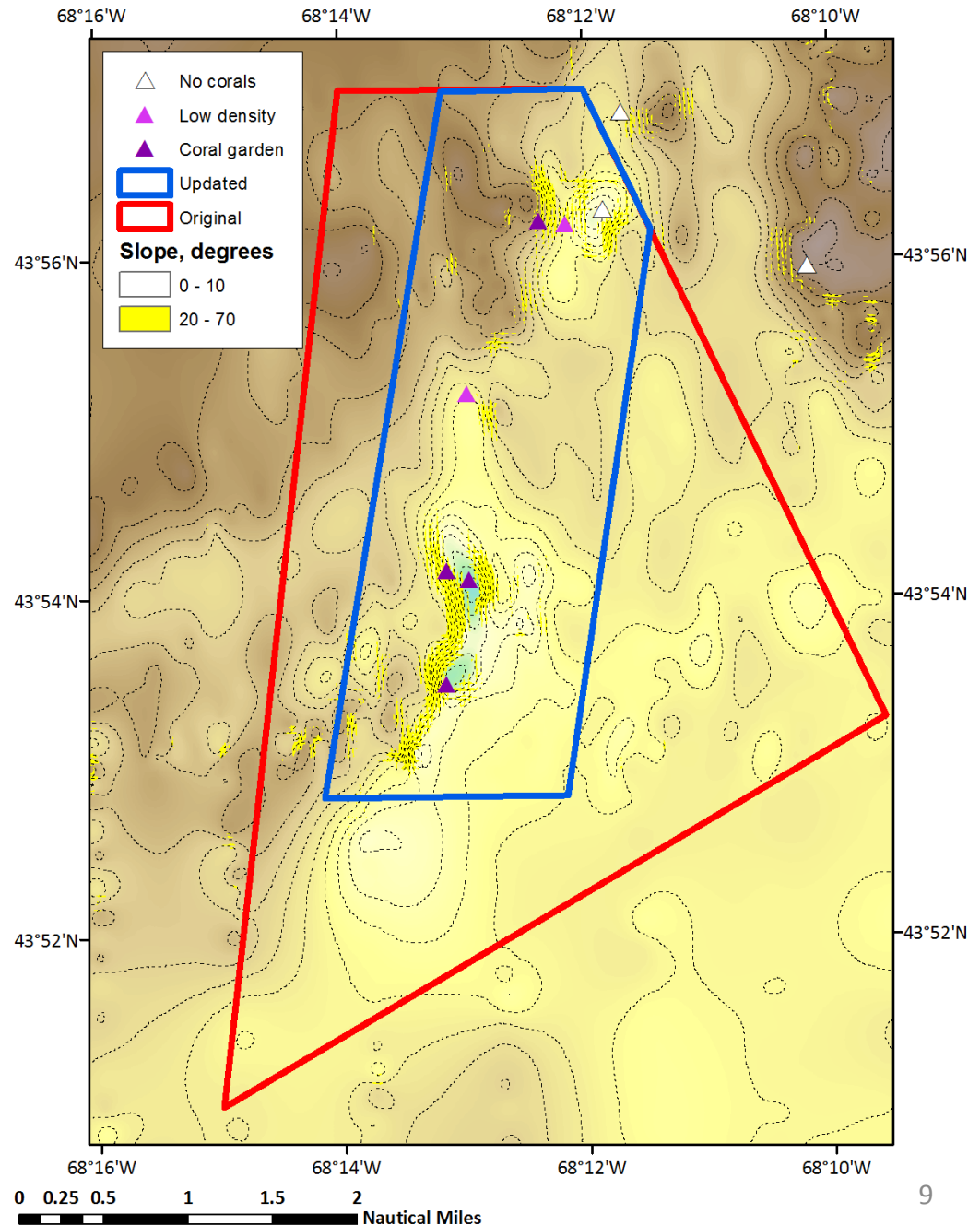


Hours fished by zone (Table 44)

		300m			400 m			500 m			600 m			900 m			Discrete Canyons		
Gear	Year	Hours Fished	Trips	Permits	Hours Fished	Trips	Permits	Hours Fished	Trips	Permits	Hours Fished	Trips	Permits	Hours Fished	Trips	Permits	Hours Fished	Trips	Permits
Bottom Trawl	2005	218.63	54	27	26.23	32	22	7.74	18	16	1.85	12	10	0.17	4	4	42.63	48	26
Bottom Trawl	2006	184.01	66	32	33.60	44	24	6.75	35	21	0.75	18	15	0.00	5	4	39.98	67	35
Bottom Trawl	2007	258.02	128	54	24.94	61	35	12.86	36	23	9.13	20	14	5.37	11	9	91.23	135	60
Bottom Trawl	2008	1442.01	143	52	249.90	101	40	22.89	61	30	4.43	30	19	0.80	12	8	334.46	136	51
Bottom Trawl	2009	489.07	118	37	222.19	90	35	26.19	56	26	12.89	32	18	6.07	14	9	119.03	124	37
Bottom Trawl	2010	391.78	137	43	180.78	95	34	32.04	64	27	21.98	52	23	12.86	17	7	121.07	138	45
Bottom Trawl	2011	379.99	91	33	70.28	66	28	20.40	43	20	12.70	32	15	7.49	11	6	91.90	85	32
Bottom Trawl	2012	114.18	85	38	24.12	61	34	7.31	46	27	5.44	35	22	2.10	15	11	34.19	74	34
Squid Trawl	2005	11.50	59	30	4.44	40	22	3.01	33	19	1.44	24	17	0.26	7	9	10.15	59	29
Squid Trawl	2006	40.33	96	42	5.90	73	35	2.89	52	28	1.71	37	23	0.56	11	18	15.60	87	39
Squid Trawl	2007	40.61	123	43	21.16	94	38	11.14	68	31	6.34	51	26	3.27	16	28	38.63	121	43
Squid Trawl	2008	8.27	16	11	2.18	14	10	0.26	12	9	0.16	12	9	0.02	4	5	4.26	17	11
Squid Trawl	2009	43.92	25	8	15.64	24	7	7.80	19	5	3.05	17	5	0.88	5	15	22.74	25	8
Squid Trawl	2010	11.98	30	11	2.74	23	10	0.89	18	8	0.20	13	7	0.02	3	4	12.34	29	9
Squid Trawl	2011	35.59	23	10	8.19	21	10	5.41	19	10	2.63	15	7	0.12	7	9	11.90	23	10
Squid Trawl	2012	5.45	12	10	2.47	10	8	0.51	8	7	0.32	4	4	0.06	3	3	1.84	12	10
Pot/Trap	2005	11.11	5	3	3.84	5	3	2.13	5	3	-	-	2	-	-	1	8.10	5	3
Pot/Trap	2006	319.91	81	6	104.47	69	4	30.63	61	4	18.26	51	4	4.36	32	3	177.81	93	5
Pot/Trap	2007	337.25	75	3	130.95	66	3	46.65	62	3	24.61	51	3	7.33	36	3	160.98	86	4
Pot/Trap	2008	350.63	57	5	140.42	49	5	49.60	44	5	31.85	37	3	12.04	26	3	132.67	65	5
Pot/Trap	2009	275.17	50	5	85.65	39	4	30.72	30	3	20.24	28	3	-	-	2	98.49	63	5
Pot/Trap	2010	307.01	62	4	125.77	56	4	44.03	51	3	-	-	2	-	-	2	117.68	83	5
Pot/Trap	2011	260.73	44	4	98.56	37	3	32.57	29	3	19.18	27	3	-	-	2	88.84	56	5
Pot/Trap	2012	216.55	36	3	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	1	62.24	42	3
GC Scallop	2006	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	1	0.00	0	0	-	-	1
GC Scallop	2011	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	1
GC Scallop	2012	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	1	0.00	0	0	-	-	1
LA Scallop	2005	0.06	77	58	0.05	71	57	0.04	53	64	0.03	51	62	0.01	49	60	0.08	67	51
LA Scallop	2006	0.47	151	68	0.14	138	65	0.07	63	131	0.04	60	121	0.02	57	106	0.23	142	68
LA Scallop	2007	0.02	26	23	0.01	25	23	0.00	19	20	0.00	15	16	0.00	9	10	0.01	27	24
LA Scallop	2008	0.04	17	16	0.00	17	16	0.00	14	15	0.00	11	12	0.00	6	7	0.00	17	16
LA Scallop	2009	5.13	31	29	0.94	30	28	0.36	27	29	0.06	27	28	0.01	25	26	2.39	30	28
LA Scallop	2010	0.41	37	35	0.18	35	33	0.04	28	28	0.01	25	25	0.00	16	16	0.08	34	32
LA Scallop	2011	0.19	27	20	0.04	26	19	0.03	19	23	0.02	18	21	0.00	13	13	0.27	28	21
LA Scallop	2012	0.56	39	31	0.46	34	28	0.44	27	32	0.02	25	29	0.01	21	23	0.33	36	29

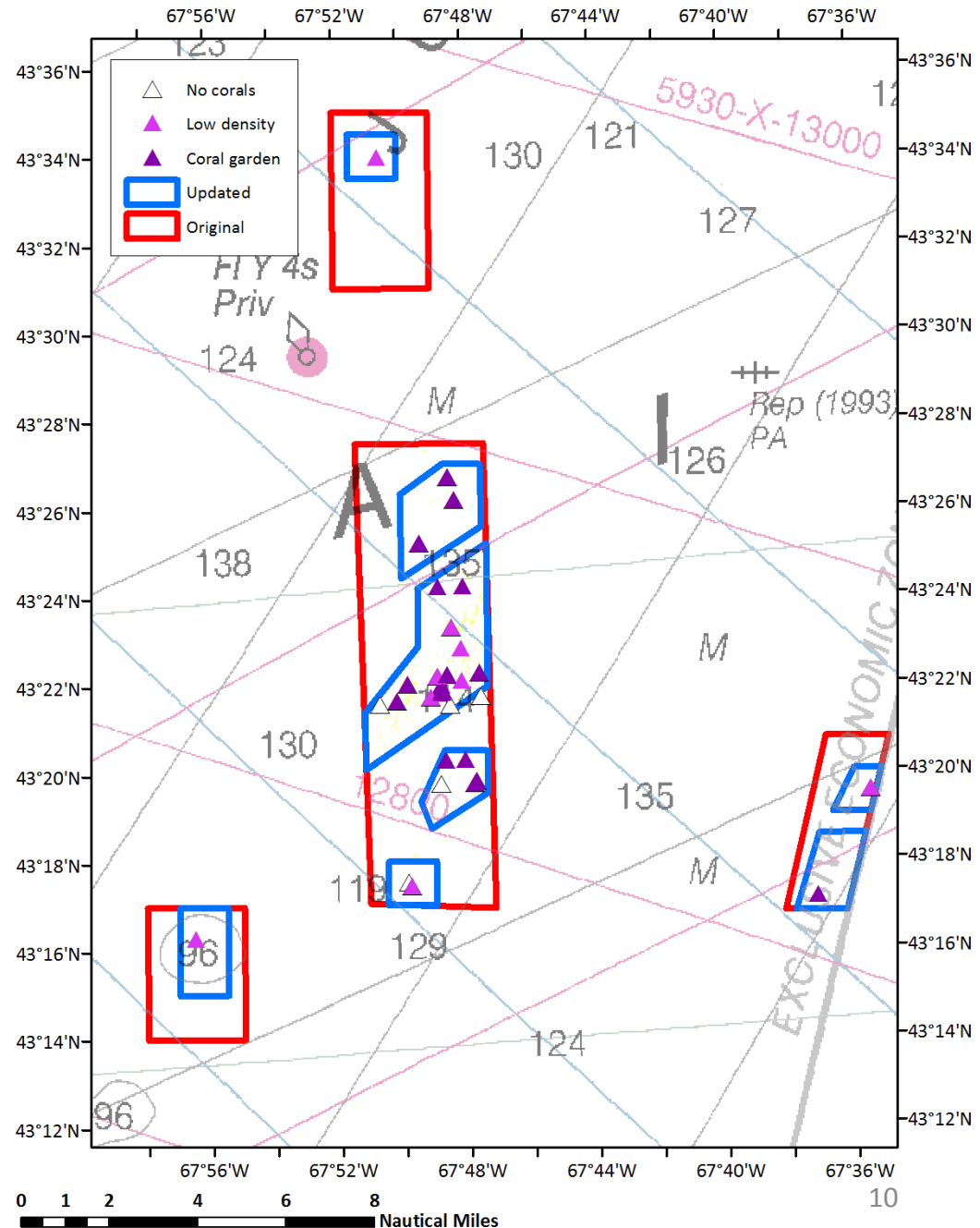
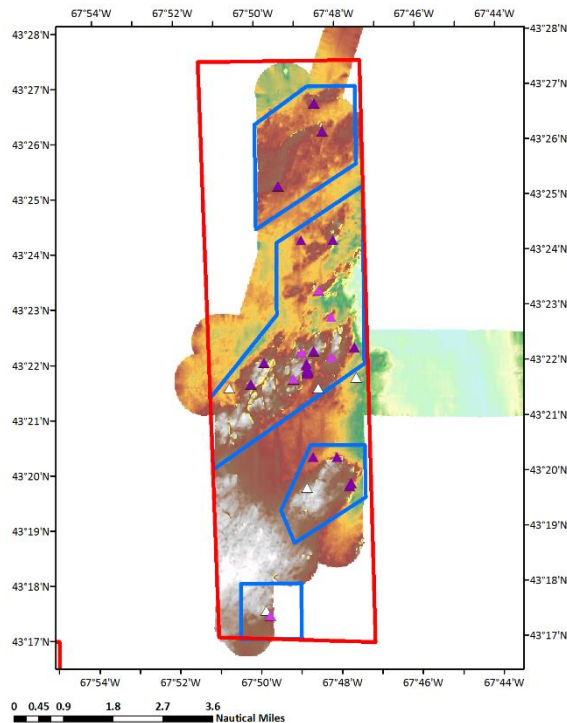
Additional boundary option Mt. Desert Rock

- Targets areas of high slope
- Targets coral observations
- 19.2 km² vs. 46.8 km²



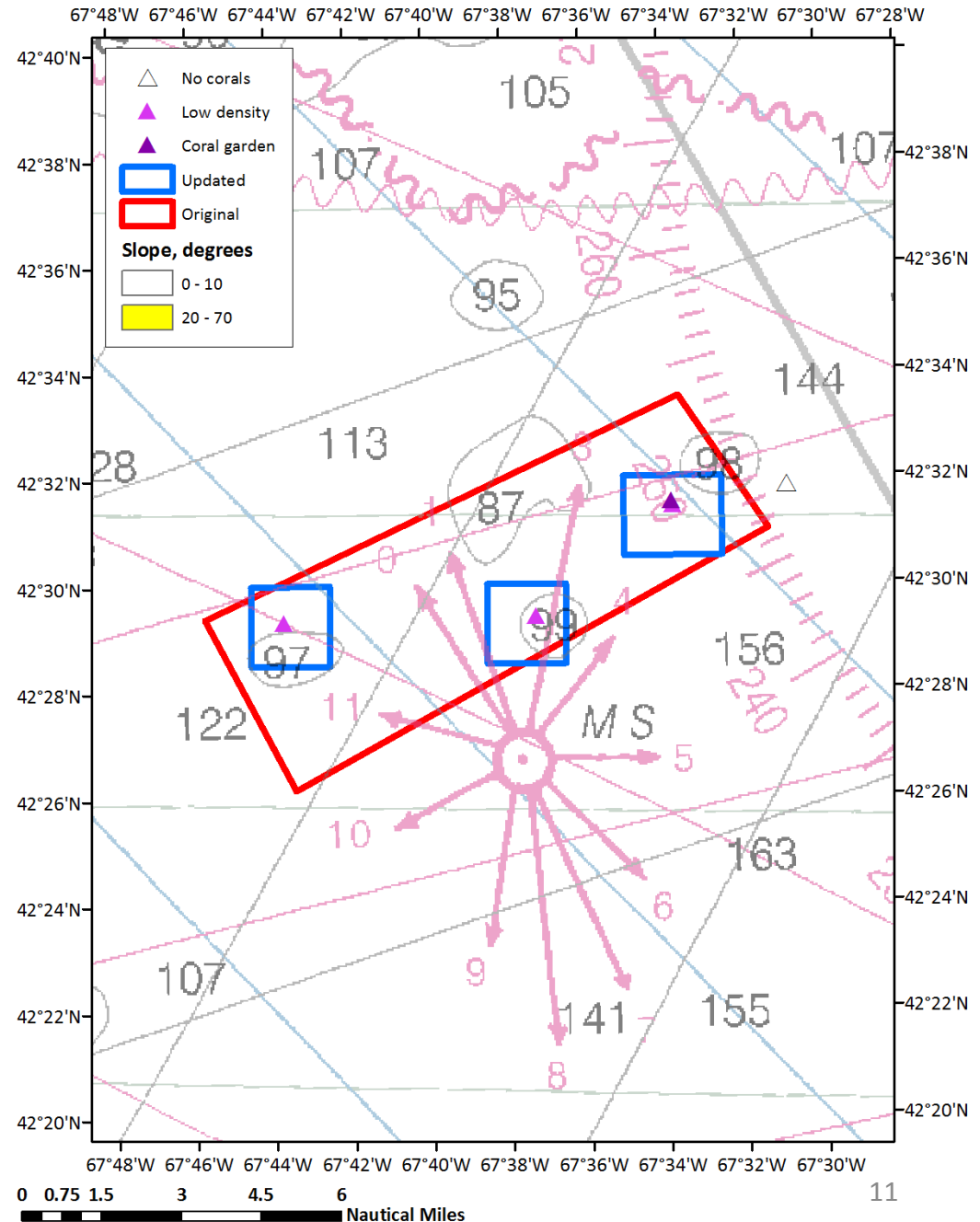
Additional boundary option - Jordan Basin

- Targets areas of high slope, when known
- Targets coral observations
- 66.0 km² vs. 174.6 km² total area



Additional boundary option Linden Kohl Knoll

- Targets coral observations
- 24.7 km² vs. 113 km²



§4.4 Special fishery programs

- Alternative 1/No Action: No special access or exploratory fishing programs; no additional coral-related research requirements
- Alternative 2: Special access program fishing
- Alternative 3: Exploratory fishing
- Alternative 4: Request letter of acknowledgement for research activities

§4.5 Framework adjustment alternatives

- Alternative 1/No Action: No additional frameworkable coral management measures
- Alternative 2: Add, revise, or remove coral zones
- Alternative 3: Change fishing restrictions
- Alternative 4: Allow development of special access or exploratory fishing programs

Preferred alternatives

- Broad zone with 600m minimum depth, closed to all bottom-tending gears, red crab trap fishery exempt
- Gulf of Maine zones closed to all mobile bottom-tending gears
 - Original vs. updated boundaries not specified
- Request letters of acknowledgement from researchers working in coral zones
- Allow changes to coral zones, fishing restrictions in coral zones, and development of special fishery programs for coral zones via framework adjustment
- Include coral research priorities in amendment

Timeline

- April 14: Habitat Committee reviewed workshop outcomes and recommended preferred alternatives
- April 18: Council selects preferred alternatives
- May: Public hearings/comment period
- May 30: Committee reviews written and hearing comments, recommends any updates to preferred alternatives
- June 20-22: Council takes final action on coral amendment
- Summer/fall: Amendment submission and rulemaking
- 2018: Implementation