

HABITAT AREAS OF PARTICULAR CONCERN PROCESS (HAPC)

HAPCs are areas of special importance that may require additional protection from adverse effects. The final rule states “Fishery Management Plans (FMPs) should identify specific types or areas of habitat within EFH as habitat areas of particular concern based on one or more of the following considerations:

- The importance of the ecological function provided by the habitat
- The extent to which the habitat is sensitive to human-induced environmental degradation
- Whether, and to what extent the development activities are, or will be, stressing the habitat type.
- The rarity of the habitat.”

A joint stipulation and court order in the *AOC v. Daley* case mandated that NMFS work with the Council to develop a process for the evaluation and possible designation of HAPCs and the implementation of any associated measures. NMFS must promulgate any resulting regulations, supported by appropriate National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis, no later than August 13, 2006.

The Council adopted a HAPC identification and review process during its October 2003 meeting. Additionally the Council has identified HAPC priority areas for 2003. Additional details of the process are provided in the Council EFH motion, which can be found on the Council website.. The Council will be accepting proposals for initial HAPC designation between November 1, 2003 – January 10, 2004. The Council invited proposals to identify HAPC sites within the following priority areas.

1. Seamounts in the EEZ, named on NOAA charts, that provide important habitat for managed species.
2. Largely undisturbed, high relief, long lived hard coral beds, with particular attention in the Aleutian Islands, which provide habitat for life stages of rockfish, or other important managed species. Nominations shall be based upon best available scientific information, and include the following features
 - a) Sites must have likely or documented presence of FMP rockfish species.
 - b) Sites must be largely undisturbed and occur outside core fishing areas

Criteria for consideration of HAPCs:

The following criteria were established for consideration of HAPC proposals. HAPC proposals will be required to meet at least two of the four HAPC considerations (criteria) established in the EFH Final Rule: importance of ecological function, sensitivity, vulnerability, and rarity. Rarity will be a mandatory criterion of all HAPC proposals.

HABITAT AREAS OF PARTICULAR CONCERN (HAPC) PROPOSALS

Please check applicable box (es):
<input type="checkbox"/> GOA Groundfish FMP
<input type="checkbox"/> BSAI Groundfish FMP
<input type="checkbox"/> Scallop FMP
<input type="checkbox"/> BSAI Crab FMP
<input type="checkbox"/> Salmon FMP

Name of Proposer:

Date:

Address:

Affiliation:

Title and Brief Statement of Proposal:

(Provide a title for the HAPC proposal and a single, brief paragraph concisely describing the proposed action.)

Objectives of Proposal:

(Identification of the habitat and FMP species the HAPC proposal is intended to protect.)

Statement of purpose and need:

A description of how the proposed HAPC addresses the four considerations set out in the final EFH regulations:

Proposed management measures and their specific objectives, if appropriate:

Proposed solutions to achieve these objectives: *(how might the problem be solved?)* Include concepts of methods of measuring progress towards those objectives.

Expected benefits to the FMP species of the proposed HAPC, and supporting information/data:

Identification of the fisheries, sectors, stakeholders and communities to be affected by the establishment of the proposed HAPC (Who benefits from the proposal and who would it harm?) and any information you can provide on socioeconomic costs, including catch data from the proposed area over the last five years:

Clear geographic delineation for proposed HAPC (example written latitude and longitude reference points and/or delineation on an appropriately scaled NOAA chart):

Provide best available information and sources of such information to support the objectives for the proposed HAPC. (Citations for common information or copies of uncommon information):

Address proposals or request further information to:
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