Proposed NPFMC evaluation criteria for HAPC proposals
for public review; Council intends to adopt criteria in April 2010

The EFH provisions indicate that the Council should identify HAPCs based on one or more of four considerations. The Council has decided as part of its HAPC process, in the FMPs, that HAPCs in Alaska must meet at least two of the four considerations, of which at least one should be the 'rarity' consideration. Proposals are evaluated by the Plan Teams and the SSC based on how they compare against these four considerations. In order to address concerns during the last HAPC proposal process about how the considerations are to be interpreted, the Council has adopted the following revised HAPC criteria evaluation process, which will be used in evaluating submitted proposals nominating HAPC sites.

Factor →	Rarity	Ecological Importance	Sensitivity	Level of Disturbance (applicable to activities other than fishing)
EFH Final Rule Consideration:	*The rarity of the habitat type.*	*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 development activities are or will be stressing the habitat type*
Score 0	Habitat[1] common throughout the Alaska regions: Gulf of Alaska, Bering Sea, Aleutian Islands, and Arctic.	Habitat does not provide any ecological associations[2].	Habitat resilient (not sensitive).	Habitat not subject to developmental stress.
1	Habitat less frequent and occurs to some extent in 2 or more regions.	Habitat provides little structure[3] or refugia. Foraging and spawning areas do not exist.	Habitat somewhat sensitive and quickly recovers; 1- 5 years. Effects considered temporary.	Habitat is or will be exposed to minimal disturbance from development.
2	Habitat unique, less frequent, and occurs to some extent in 1 or 2 regions.	Habitat exhibits structure and provides refugia or substrates for spawning and foraging.	Habitat sensitive and recovery is within 10 years. Effects considered temporary, however may be more than minimal.	Habitat is or will be stressed by activities. Short term effects evident.
3	Habitat unique and occurs in discrete areas within only one region.	Complex habitat condition and substrate serve as refugia, concentrate prey, and/or are known to be important for spawning.	Habitat is highly sensitive and slow to recover; exceeds 10s of years. Effects will persist and more than minimal.	Habitat is or will be severely stressed or disturbed by development. Cumulative impacts require consideration from long term effects.

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[1] Habitat includes living (infauna, epifauna, megafauna, etc.) and non-living substrate (rock, cobble, gravel, sand, mud, silt, etc.) as well as pelagic waters important to managed species. *[NOTE: new SSC edit in Feb 2010]*
[2] Ecological associations are those associations where the habitat provides for reproductive traits (i.e. spawning and rearing aggregations) and foraging areas; areas necessary for survival of the species. Associations include habitat complexity (features, structures, etc.) and habitat associations (provide refugia, spawning substrates, concentrate prey, etc.). Ecological importance is not to be applied across all waters or substrates.
3 'Structure' refers to three-dimensional structure.

Data Certainty Factor

The Data Certainty Factor (DCF) determines the level of information known to describe and assess the HAPC. The DCF is used to determine if information is adequate prior to taking further action. Thus, a HAPC proposal with a high criteria score and a low DCF is to be highlighted (flagged) as a potential candidate for HAPC and for further consideration as a research priority. The DCFs are color coded according to their weight to provide a visual way of informing the criteria scores, i.e., proposal scores with a DCF of 3 are color coded green, scores with a DCF of 2 are color coded yellow, and scores with a DCF of 1 are color coded red

Weight	Data Certainty
3	Site-specific habitat information is available.
2	Habitat information can be inferred or proxy conditions allow for information to be reliable.
1	Habitat information does not exist; neither by inference or proxy.

HAPC Proposal Rank

HAPC ranking formula provides a color coded score (sum of criteria scores) to further the proposal along within the immediate HAPC Process. A high ranked HAPC with a DCF of 3 (score color coded green) has a high criteria score and information exists to assess the site.

HAPC Proposal Rank = <u>Additive HAPC Criteria Score supplemented with Data Certainty Factor</u>

Example evaluation of HAPC proposals:

HAPC Evaluation	Proposal A	Proposal B	Proposal C
Rarity	0	2	3
Ecological Importance	2	1	3
Sensitivity	2	3	3
Stress	n/a	n/a	2
Criteria Total (+)	4	6	11
Data Certainty Factor	3	3	1
HAPC Proposal Rank (=)	**4**	**6**	**11**
Research Priority Flag			

The top scoring proposals within each color category could then be forwarded for further consideration with the additional information that red high criteria scores may warrant consideration as a research priority and may not be an appropriate candidate for HAPC until further research is conducted.