

NEW ENGLAND FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

Habitat

I. STATUS

MEETINGS AND ONGOING WORK

The Habitat PDT met on March 7 to develop deep-sea coral protection zone and adverse effects minimization area boundaries for the EFH Omnibus Amendment. The PDT also discussed metrics for evaluating the costs and benefits of the adverse effects minimization options.

Meeting outcomes included:

- Discrete deep-sea coral protection zone boundaries for canyons and slope areas, seamounts, and two locations in the Gulf of Maine
- Updated boundaries for the Cox Ledge, Fippennies Ledge, and Platts Bank adverse effects minimization areas

The Habitat Committee met on February 23 and April 6 to review (1) PDT-recommendations for alternatives to protect deep-sea corals and (2) additional options to minimize the effects of fishing on EFH in the western Gulf of Maine.

Meeting outcomes included:

- A range of alternatives for deep-sea coral protection zones and associated fishing restriction measures, to be forwarded to the Council
- A range of adverse effects minimization areas and associated fishing restrictions, to be forwarded to the Groundfish Committee and PDT

II. COUNCIL ACTION

Approve deep-sea coral alternatives to be analyzed in the Omnibus EFH Amendment, including designation of coral zones and fishing restrictions within those zones

III. INFORMATION

1. Meeting summaries – February 23 and April 6 Committee meetings, March 7 PDT meeting; also see March Enforcement Committee summary with information about coral zones
2. Deep-sea coral background information document
3. Deep-sea coral decision document
4. Presentation – deep-sea coral alternatives