

NEW ENGLAND FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

Habitat

I. STATUS

MEETINGS AND ONGOING WORK

- A. The Habitat PDT met on March 6. They discussed options for a single adverse effects minimization area in the Great South Channel and forwarded a range of options to the Committee. The PDT discussed the feasibility of gear modifications to minimize seabed impacts of scallop dredges and did not recommend further development of such options in Omnibus EFH Amendment 2. They requested that the Committee allow development of an additional adverse effects minimization area on the northern edge of Georges Bank. They developed draft boundaries for a dedicated habitat research area in eastern Maine.
- B. The Habitat Committee met on March 19. They recommended further analysis of three single-area options for the Great South Channel (motions 1-3), and removed from further consideration the four individual GSC areas (motion 5). They recommended that the Habitat Committee facilitate the coordination of CATT recommendations among the habitat, groundfish, and scallop PDTs and Committees and the habitat PDT (motion 4). The Committee concurred with the PDT's analysis of possible scallop dredge modifications and did not move forward with any options. They did request that the groundfish Advisory Panel help develop a list of gear characteristics that should be collected to facilitate future development of gear modification measures. The Committee requested that the PDT craft more narrowly focused areas across existing and proposed habitat areas on the northern edge of Georges Bank, giving consideration to increasing scallop and groundfish CPUE, and protection of cobble and boulder habitats (motion 7). With respect to Dedicated Habitat Research Areas, the Committee recommended modifying the PDT's boundaries for the eastern Maine DHRA.
- C. The range of area management options and alternatives is described in Document 2.
- D. The development of management options related to groundfish objectives is summarized on the Groundfish status sheet.

II. COUNCIL ACTION

No formal action required. Provide feedback on Habitat Committee recommendations for adverse effects minimization areas and habitat research areas.

III. INFORMATION

1. Meeting summary from the March 19 Habitat Committee meeting.
2. Updated Omnibus EFH Amendment 2 options/alternatives document. Includes area management options for minimizing the adverse effects of fishing on EFH as well as Dedicated Habitat Research Areas.