

NEW ENGLAND FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

Habitat (Revised Status Sheet)

I. STATUS

MEETINGS AND ONGOING WORK

The Habitat PDT met on June 6. Among other items, the PDT discussed methods for analyzing deep-sea coral alternatives, discussed fishing access options for coral zones, and reviewed preliminary dedicated habitat research area proposals to be forwarded to the Habitat Committee.

The Habitat Committee met on June 8. The Committee approved for further development revised boundaries of some of the adverse effects minimization areas and made some other changes to the range of adverse effects options. Regarding deep-sea corals, the Committee discussed the pros and cons of splitting coral alternatives out of the EFH Amendment, and on a related topic, coordination with MAFMC. This issue is summarized in document 1; for an explanation of the deep sea coral discretionary authority, see document 2. Also, the Committee reviewed ideas for fishing access/exploratory fishing in coral zones, and received a progress update from the PDT on analysis of coral zone alternatives. Finally, the Committee reviewed ongoing PDT work to develop dedicated habitat research areas, and provided guidance for further work in this area.

II. COUNCIL ACTION

Discuss issue of splitting alternatives to protect deep-sea corals out of Omnibus EFH amendment. Committee recommended that the Council request publication of a Notice of Intent, indicating that the Council is considering the possibility of separating the coral and EFH aspects of the Omnibus EFH Amendment.

III. INFORMATION

1. Memo to Council on issue of splitting corals out of the Omnibus EFH amendment and into a separate omnibus amendment
2. Presentation – Deep-sea coral management authority and guidance