

NEW ENGLAND FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

Habitat

I. STATUS

MEETINGS AND ONGOING WORK

The Habitat PDT met on August 9. The agenda included a review of fishing effort distributions in proposed deep-sea coral management areas, a discussion of dedicated habitat research areas, and a discussion on the use of ground cable length modifications to minimize adverse effects to EFH. The PDT also discussed the habitat management implications of an August 2 groundfish committee motion regarding closed areas.

The Habitat Committee met on August 23. Related to deep-sea corals, the Committee recommended that the Council split the coral discretionary provision alternatives out of OA2 (document 1), reviewed preliminary fishing effort data within broad coral zones, and reviewed a draft Memorandum of Understanding with other Atlantic coast Councils (document 2). The Committee recommended that the Council approve the MOU, pending advice from General Counsel.

Related to adverse effects minimization/EFH, the Committee discussed ground cable options and recommended that they be reviewed by the advisory panel and developed further as appropriate. This meeting is planned for October. The Committee combined individual adverse effects minimization options into alternatives as shown in document 3. Finally, the Committee discussed PDT recommendations on Dedicated Habitat Research Areas.

II. COUNCIL ACTION

Consider whether to split deep-sea coral alternatives out of OA2 and initiate development of a coral-focused omnibus amendment; review and possibly approve a Memorandum of Understanding with the other Atlantic coast Councils related to deep-sea corals. Also review draft adverse effects minimization alternatives under development in OA2.

III. INFORMATION

1. Memo to Council on issue of splitting corals out of OA2, Federal Register notice related to splitting corals and public comments received
2. Draft Memorandum of Understanding on deep-sea coral management
3. OA2 adverse effects minimization options and alternatives
4. Recent meeting summaries – PDT 8/9, Committee 8/23
5. Presentation – Developing OA2 adverse effects minimization options (will be provided at the meeting)