



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
West Coast Region
1201 NE Lloyd Boulevard, Suite 1100
PORTLAND, OREGON 97232-1274

September 28, 2018

Dear Recipient:

In accordance with provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), we announce the availability for review of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for Changes to Groundfish Essential Fish Habitat Conservation Areas and Boundaries of the Trawl Gear Rockfish Conservation Areas.

The proposed action is intended to protect essential fish habitat (EFH) and other benthic habitats (including deep sea coral) by closing marine areas off the coasts of Washington, Oregon, and California to fishing with bottom trawl or bottom contacting gears. The proposed action is also intended to re-open historically productive fishing grounds to vessels fishing bottom trawl gear and participating in the groundfish individual fishing quota (IFQ) program off Oregon and California. In concert, these changes are anticipated to minimize the effects of fishing on EFH to the extent practicable, and increase management flexibility and fishing opportunities in the IFQ program.

The document is accessible electronically through the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) West Coast Region's website at www.westcoast.fisheries.noaa.gov. Hard copies or digital copies of the document may be obtained from the comment coordinator, Gretchen Hanshew, at the contact information provided below.

Written comments may be submitted to NMFS via electronic mail, physical mail, or fax to the comment coordinator, during the public-comment period (the closing date for the public comment period is noted at the above website). When submitting comments, please include the identifier "Groundfish Plan Amendment 28" on the subject line or fax cover page.

Thank you in advance for your input and assistance in finalizing the Environmental Impact Statement.

Comment Coordinator: Gretchen Hanshew
Fishery Management Specialist
National Marine Fisheries Service, West Coast Region
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Seattle, WA 98115
(206) 526-6147, (206) 526-6426
Commenting Email Address:
Amendment28.wcr@noaa.gov

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Barry A. Thom".

Barry A. Thom
Regional Administrator

