

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration****50 CFR Part 600****[I.D. 030398C]****Magnuson Act Provisions; Essential Fish Habitat**

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Proposed recommendations for Essential Fish Habitat for Pacific coast salmon, groundfish, and coastal pelagics; reopening of comment period.

SUMMARY: NMFS requests public comments on proposed recommendations for Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) to the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) for its Fishery Management Plans (FMPs) for salmon, groundfish, and coastal pelagics. To provide greater opportunity for public comment, the comment period on proposed EFH recommendations for these FMPs is reopened until May 22, 1998.

DATES: Comments will be accepted until May 22, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Send comments or requests for copies of the proposed EFH recommendations for the salmon and groundfish FMPs to Northwest Region, Sustainable Fisheries Division, NMFS, 7600 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle, WA 98115. Send comments or requests for a copy of the proposed EFH recommendations for the coastal pelagics FMP to Southwest Region, Sustainable Fisheries Division, NMFS, 501 West Ocean Blvd., Suite 4200, Long Beach, CA 90802.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Joe Scordino, NMFS Northwest Region, 206-526-6143, on salmon EFH; Yvonne deReynier, NMFS Northwest Region, 206-526-6120, on groundfish EFH; and Mark Helvey, NMFS Southwest Region, 707-575-7585, on coastal pelagics EFH.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Councils are required to amend their FMPs by October 11, 1998, by describing and identifying EFH for each managed fishery by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act; 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*). NMFS promulgated an

interim final rule on December 19, 1997 (62 FR 66531-66559), providing guidelines to assist the Councils in describing and identifying EFH in FMPs (including adverse impacts on EFH) and in consideration of actions to ensure the conservation and enhancement of EFH. The Magnuson-Stevens Act also requires NMFS to provide each Council with recommendations and information regarding EFH for each fishery under that Council's authority.

NMFS announced the availability of its proposed EFH recommendations for the Pacific Council's FMPs for salmon, groundfish, and coastal pelagics and a series of public meetings to receive public comments on March 9, 1998 (63 FR 11402 - 11403). For copies of the proposed EFH recommendations, see **ADDRESSES**. Public comments are requested by May 22, 1998.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: May 8, 1998.

James P. Burgess,

*Director, Office of Habitat Conservation,
National Marine Fisheries Service.*

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