MPAs for Fishery Management off Alaska

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The Fishing Fleet Managed by the Council

Catcher Vessels (deliver shoreside)

150 Trawlers: pollock, cod, flatfish, rockfish
500 Longliners: cod, halibut, sablefish
75 Jig Gear vessels: cod
300 Pot Gear vessels: cod, crabs

Catcher-Processors (process at sea)

35 Trawlers: pollock, flatfish, mackerel, rockfish
50 Longliners: cod, sablefish, turbot
10 Pot Gear vessels: cod, crabs
5 Dredge Gear vessels: scallops

Note: vessel numbers are rounded numbers based on recent participation.
Major Fish Species Managed by the Council

- Pollock
- Cod
- Snow Crab
- Flatfish
- Halibut
- Sablefish
- Mackerel
- Rockfish
- Scallops
- Dutch Harbor
- Bering Sea
- Kodiak
- Juneau
- Gulf of Alaska
- Red King Crab
- Aleutian Is.
Alaska Fisheries are Well Managed

Fish stocks are healthy: No overfishing; No overfished groundfish.
Reliance on scientific advice, using an ecosystem-based approach to management.
Comprehensive monitoring.
Viable & profitable fisheries.
Salmon closure area
Closed under FMP to salmon fishing with nets

Southeast Alaska
Trawl Closure
Closed under FMP to all trawling

Pink = No Federal Fishery MPAs

Total area coverage for all areas that appear to meet MPA Criteria

EEZ = 1,019,261 nm$^2$
Closed Areas = 988,817 nm$^2$
97% covered by MPAs
Status of region re: MPA system

NMFS sent a letter to the Council in May, with list of eligible sites.

Initial list of eligible sites from MPA Center contained errors and omissions.

Council will review discussion paper and revised list of potential eligible sites in December, and decide how to proceed.
Issues of Concern:

1. Avoid Harm Provision

- Avoid harm provision = new requirement. How do we know if our regulations meet this requirement for our own MPAs? And for evaluating fishing regulatory changes on other agency MPAs, how do we do that if we don’t know what resources are protected by the MPA?

- One suggestion: The resource(s) protected by each MPA should be listed, and an evaluation of the avoid harm provision should be made at initial listing, and re-evaluated at every regulatory change.
Issues of Concern:

2. Gap Analysis

- Gap Analysis - entire EEZ will be covered many times over to meet all 21 PCOs using only MPAs. When is enough, enough?
- SSC is the peer review process pursuant to the Information Quality Act. The SSC needs to evaluate the Gap analysis to see if it represents the best scientific information available.
Issues of Concern:
3. Council Authority

- Only the Councils, not NMFS, have the authority to initiate action to develop new fishery MPAs, modify or eliminate them. Yet under MPA framework, NMFS given authority to override Councils recommendations re: MPAs in system.

- Once an MPA is on the list, it is only a presidential signature away from being a national monument [WPFMC experience].