

MEMORANDUM

TO: Council, SSC, and AP
FROM: Chris Oliver *Chris*
Acting Executive Director
DATE: November 28, 2000
SUBJECT: HAPC Stakeholder Process

ESTIMATED TIME
1 HOUR

ACTION REQUIRED

Receive status report on the HAPC stakeholder process.

BACKGROUND

Habitat areas of particular concern (HAPC) are those areas of special importance that may require additional protection from adverse effects. Part one of the HAPC amendment package was finalized for action in April 2000, and applies to both the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska groundfish FMPs. The amendment added corals and sponges to the prohibited species category. The action split prohibited species into two types, the first will continue to allow no retention and includes halibut, salmon, and crab species and the second type would include only corals and sponges. These HAPC prohibited species would allow retention for personal use, but sale, barter, and trade would be prohibited.

The second part of the HAPC initiative is to develop a more comprehensive and iterative approach for future HAPC identification and habitat protection involving researchers, stakeholders and management agencies. A draft discussion paper, "The Stakeholder Process and Identification of Habitat Areas of Particular Concern," was prepared by staff and discussed at the last Council meeting. Copies of the discussion paper have been distributed and the paper is also available on our website.

In June, the Council directed staff to prepare meeting materials on corals and sponges for an initial set of stakeholder meetings this fall. The purpose of the meetings will be information exchange on gorgonian corals. The meetings will be held in Sitka, Yakutat, and a location representing the Western Aleutians. Staff recently presented a paper summarizing the why's and how's of protecting gorgonian corals off Alaska, and a copy of that paper is available on our website.

Council staff is currently setting meeting dates for early January for Sitka and Yakutat.