

North Pacific Fishery Management Council Proposal to Form an Area-based Management CCC Subcommittee

Executive Order 14008 has highlighted the need for the regional fishery management councils to have a seat at the table for decisions about area-based management for conservation, fisheries management, and ecosystem protection. The Conserving and Restoring America the Beautiful report directs that “NOAA should work closely with the regional fishery management councils to identify areas or networks of areas where their fisheries management efforts would support long-term conservation goals.”

A new CCC subcommittee is proposed to develop a common understanding among the Councils of area-based management measures, and assist the regional councils in coordinating with NOAA to achieve the goals set forth in the EO and report to the Climate Change Task Force.

Products: The subcommittee would provide the following products and services.

1. A CCC advisory body to assist the CCC with tracking and reacting to the 30 by 30 initiative and associated America the Beautiful annual reports.
2. A CCC report on Area-based Measures in the U.S. EEZ. This report would include:
 - A comprehensive evaluation of all existing EEZ Federal fishery area closures and other area-based measures in the U.S. relative to the IUCN criteria for marine protected areas “MPAs” and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECM), relative to the 30 by 30 initiative. This will assist each council in ensuring that the American Conservation and Stewardship Atlas includes all appropriate and accurate information in their database.
 - A discussion of the pros and cons of area-based management, particularly with respect to adaptation to climate change and shifting stocks.
3. A journal article (Marine Fisheries Review?) on the conservation value of area-based measures for marine fisheries in the U.S. This peer reviewed paper would provide a review of area-based management for fisheries, and become an authoritative reference from which we can base future CCC letters on 30 by 30, monuments, sanctuaries, and other area designations. The article would be supported with a suite of maps and other informational items to help to identify and evaluate the potential efficacy of intended conservation outcomes.

Membership: The subcommittee membership would include one staff person from each council. Additional staff could provide assistance as needed.

Process: The subcommittee will meet virtually at regular intervals as need to develop the products in a timely fashion and report progress to the CCC. In-person meeting(s) may be called, if deemed necessary. The Subcommittee updates to the CCC will be provided by the Subcommittee chair and/or the Subcommittee staff from the Council hosting the CCC annual meeting that year.

Proposed Timeline: The following is a tentative (and perhaps overly ambitious) timeline to meet specific milestones.

- CCC Fall meeting 2021 – A subcommittee report with a draft outline for the report, and a draft Excel file of fishery related MPAs and OECMs in the U.S. EEZ.
- CCC Spring meeting 2022 –A draft report on Area measures presented to the CCC.
- CCC Fall meeting 2022 – Final report due. First draft of journal article completed.
- CCC Spring meeting 2023 - Journal article submitted.