



New England Fishery Management Council

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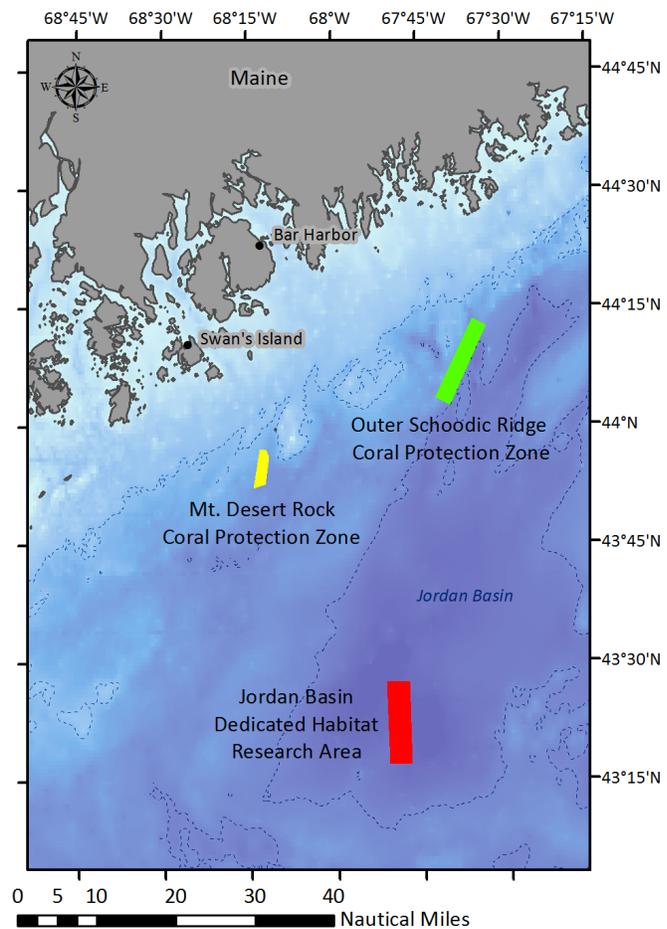
Council Postpones Coral Action for Continental Slope/Canyons Pending Analysis of New Alternative; Takes Steps for GOM

The New England Fishery Management Council today adopted coral protection zones for the Gulf of Maine as part of its Omnibus Deep-Sea Coral Amendment. However, it postponed action for the Continental Slope south of Georges Bank in order to further develop an additional alternative. The Council's Plan Development Team (PDT) will work with the Habitat Advisory Panel to further refine this new alternative. The Council's Habitat Committee then will review the results and develop a recommendation for the full Council to consider. The timing of final action is uncertain.

Gulf of Maine

For the Gulf of Maine, the Council approved the following measures:

- **Outer Schoodic Ridge** – The Council adopted a discrete coral protection zone for this area where bottom-tending mobile gear (trawls and dredges) will be prohibited. Other types of fishing gear will be allowed, including lobster traps/pots.
- **Mt. Desert Rock** – The Council adopted a discrete coral protection zone for this area as well where bottom-tending mobile gear will be prohibited but other gears, including lobster traps/pots, will be allowed.
- **Jordan Basin DHRA** – The Council designated a Dedicated Habitat Research Area in Jordan Basin on/around the 114 fathom bump site, which encompasses roughly 40 square miles. This designation is meant to focus attention on the coral habitats at this site. The Council believes additional research on corals and fishing gear impacts should be directed here. No fishing restrictions are proposed at this time.



Coral protection areas for Mt. Desert Rock and Outer Schoodic Ridge. – NEFMC graphic



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- **Jordan Basin and Lindenkohl Knoll** – The Council did not adopt any coral protection zones for either of these offshore Gulf of Maine areas or support any new fishing restrictions there.

Framework Items, Research Activities

The Council included a list of items that could be modified in the Omnibus Deep-Sea Coral Amendment through framework adjustments rather than through additional amendments. These include: (1) adding, revising, or removing coral protection zones; (2) changing fishing restrictions; and (3) adopting or changing special fishery programs.

The Council also agreed that anyone conducting research activities in coral zones would be required to obtain a letter of acknowledgement of these activities from the National Marine Fisheries Service's Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office.

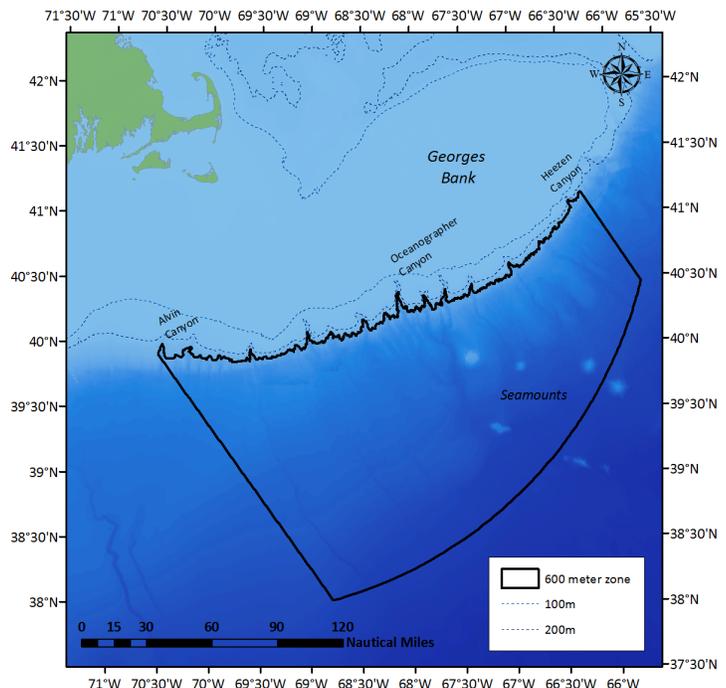
South of Georges Bank, Continental Slope and Canyons Region

During its April meeting, the Council considered six options for the Continental Slope/canyons region, which is south of Georges Bank, and selected Alternative 6 as its preferred option. This alternative calls for a broad coral protection zone boundary of 600 meters minimum depth, equivalent to roughly 325 fathoms. The use of all bottom-tending gear would be prohibited within the zone, but a pot gear exemption for the deep-sea red crab fishery was included. This is the only fishery using bottom-tending gear known to take place deeper than 600 meters.

During the May public hearings on the coral amendment, a coalition of environmental groups put forward a new broad zone alternative, which the Council's Habitat Committee agreed to have analyzed.

At today's meeting in Portland, ME, the Council reviewed this analysis for what was being called Alternative 7. The alternative reflects both fishing effort and coral data at depths ranging from 300 to 550 meters and was developed to freeze the footprint of bottom-tending mobile gears.

The Council voted to consider combining Alternatives 6 and 7 and will review the analyses at a future meeting. Consideration of the additional alternative means final action on this portion of the Coral Amendment is delayed to later this year.



Continental Slope/canyons region showing 600-meter alternative.
– NEFMC graphic