

Perspectives on MPAs for Fisheries Management in Alaska



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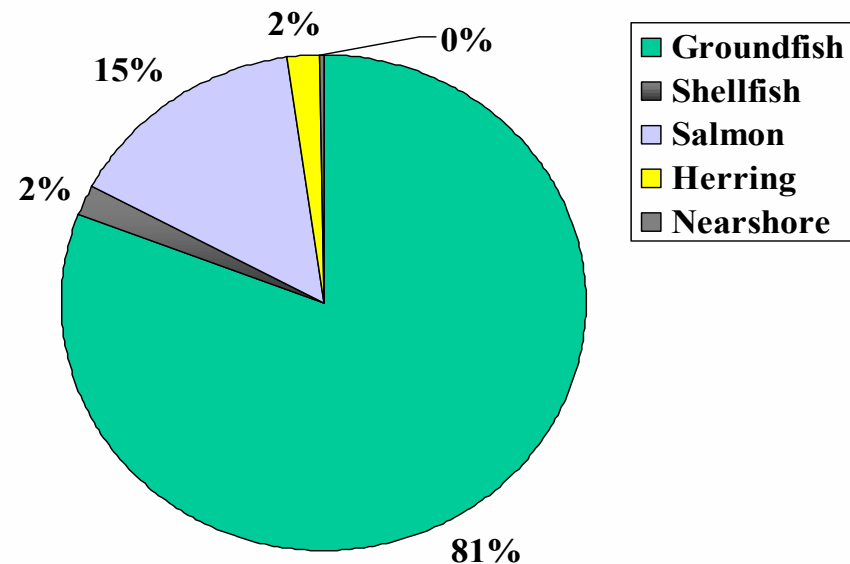
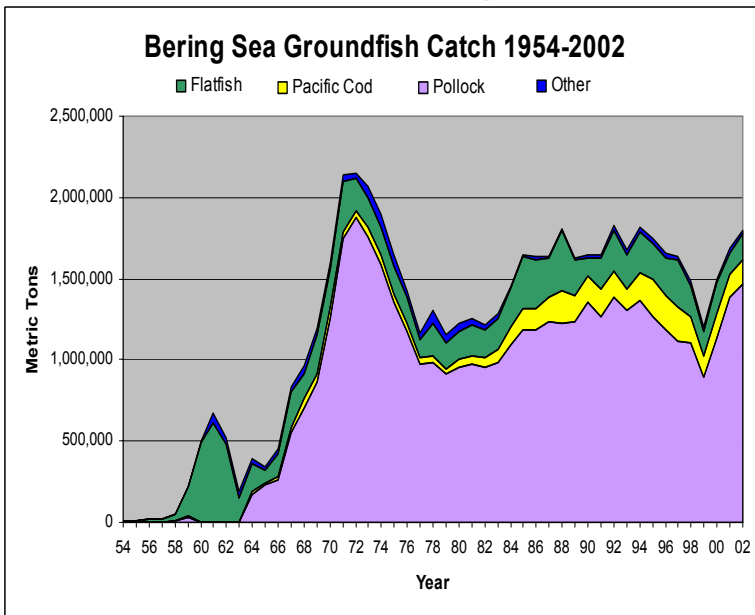
Objectives of This Presentation

- Provide overview of precautionary approach to fisheries management in North Pacific.
- Illustrate that many MPAs have been implemented in the North Pacific to achieve specified objectives, such as conservation of vulnerable species and habitats.
- Provide information on additional MPAs that are currently being considered to further conserve habitat.
- Provide our thoughts on the use of MPAs for resource conservation.

Additional details can be found in the handout paper *Witherell, D. 2004. Application of Marine Protected Areas for Sustainable Production and Marine Biodiversity off Alaska. North Pacific Fishery Management Council, Anchorage, Alaska.*

Background on Alaska Fisheries

- **Large** - 50% of total U.S. catch from Alaska.
- **Sustainable** - Catches of ~4,000,000,000 pounds/year over the last 30 years. No groundfish overfished or subject to overfishing.
- **Ecosystem-based Management** – Fisheries are managed to minimize effects on benthic habitat, marine mammals and seabirds, non-target species, etc.





Elements of the Successful Management Program for Alaska Fisheries

- Strong science and research base
- Adherence to scientific advice
- Effective monitoring, accounting, and enforcement
- Comprehensive observer program
- Limits on fishing capacity
- Conservative and strict catch limits
- Bycatch limits and control measures
- Habitat protection
- Ecosystem considerations
- Open and transparent public process
- Coordinated decision-making by all agencies with jurisdiction (e.g., NMFS, USFWS, USCG, ADF&G, PSMFC, State Dept., etc.)

Overview of MPAs for Fisheries in the North Pacific



- Over 20 named MPAs, many with multiple sites, encompass the entire Alaska EEZ area if overlapped.
- MPAs have been developed, using a bottom-up approach, as a cost-effective way to achieve specified and often multiple objectives.
- Most MPAs prohibit a particular fishery or gear type from the area. Example: ~104,000 nm² closed to bottom trawling.
- Many MPAs appear to have successfully met their objectives. Some have been re-evaluated and adjusted as new information becomes available.
- Additional MPAs are under consideration to conserve fish habitat.

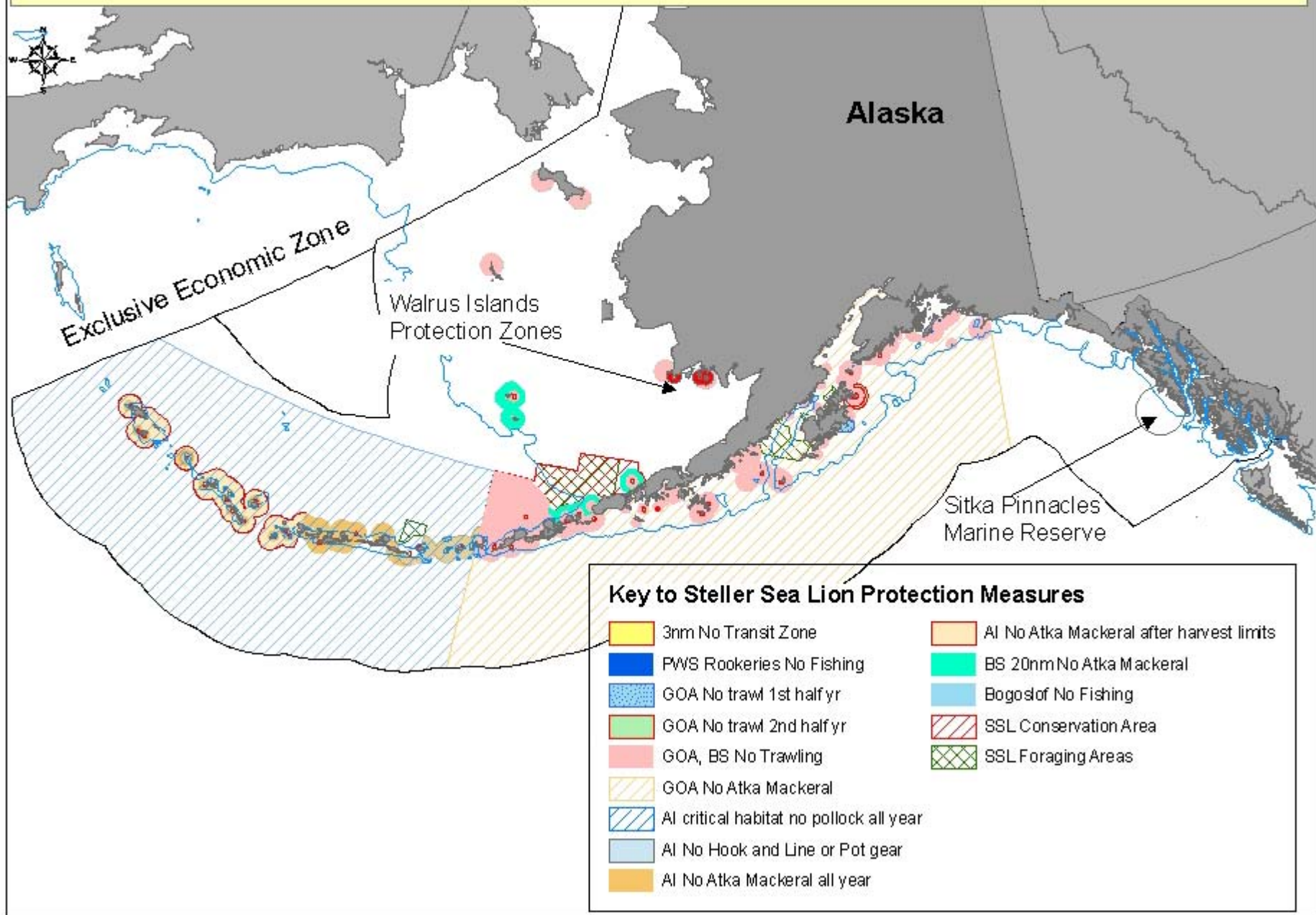


Classification of MPAs in the North Pacific

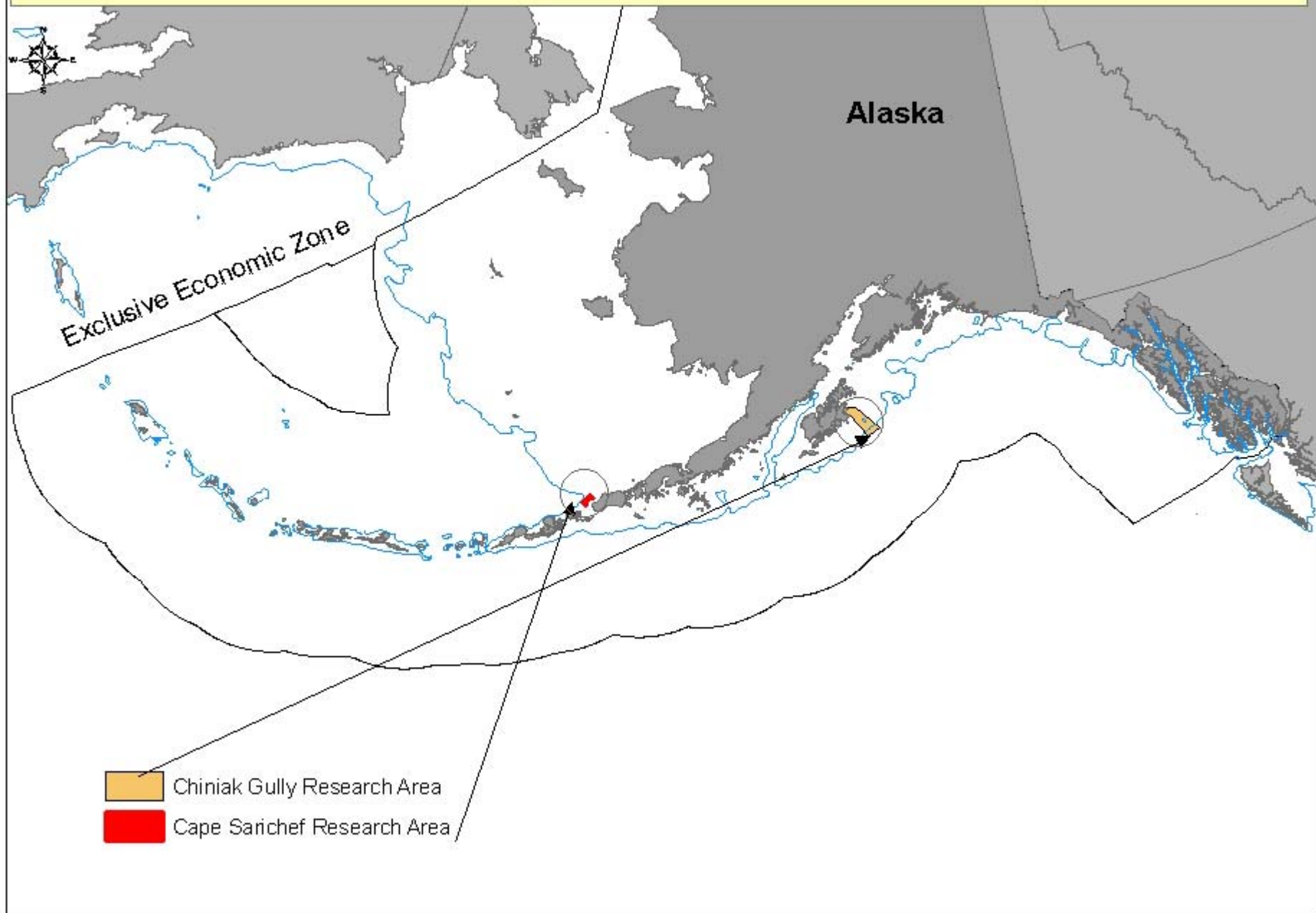
There are 5 types of MPAs, based on management objectives:

1. Ecosystem MPAs – protect unique systems and non-fish components of the marine ecosystem.
2. Scientific Research MPAs – provide control sites for research on the effects of fisheries.
3. Habitat Conservation MPAs – conserve sensitive habitat from potential fishing impacts.
4. Vulnerable Stocks MPAs – protect vulnerable species from effects of non-target fisheries.
5. Cultural Resources MPAs – protect access to resource for subsistence users.

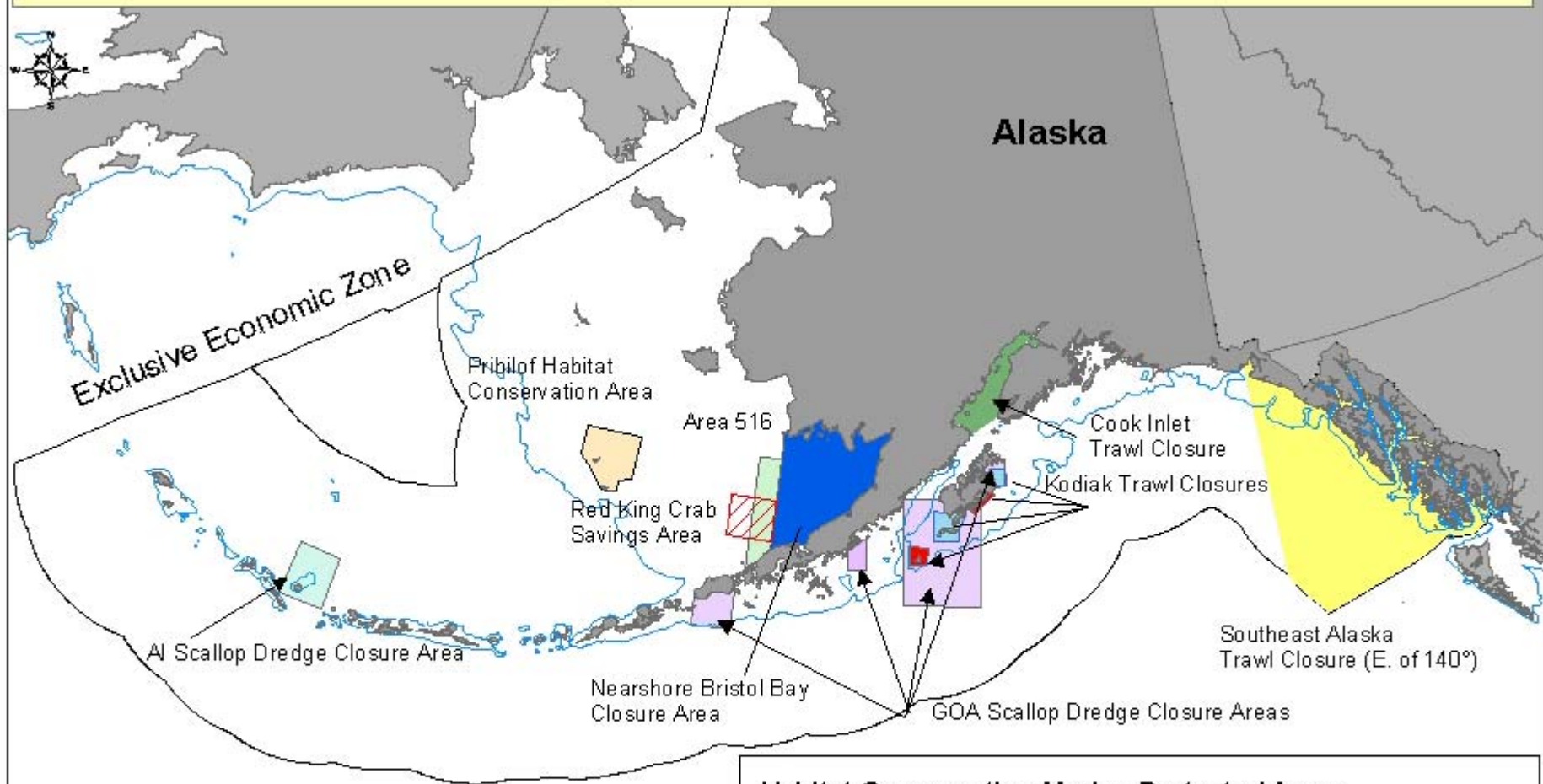
Ecosystem Marine Protected Areas



Scientific Research Marine Protected Areas



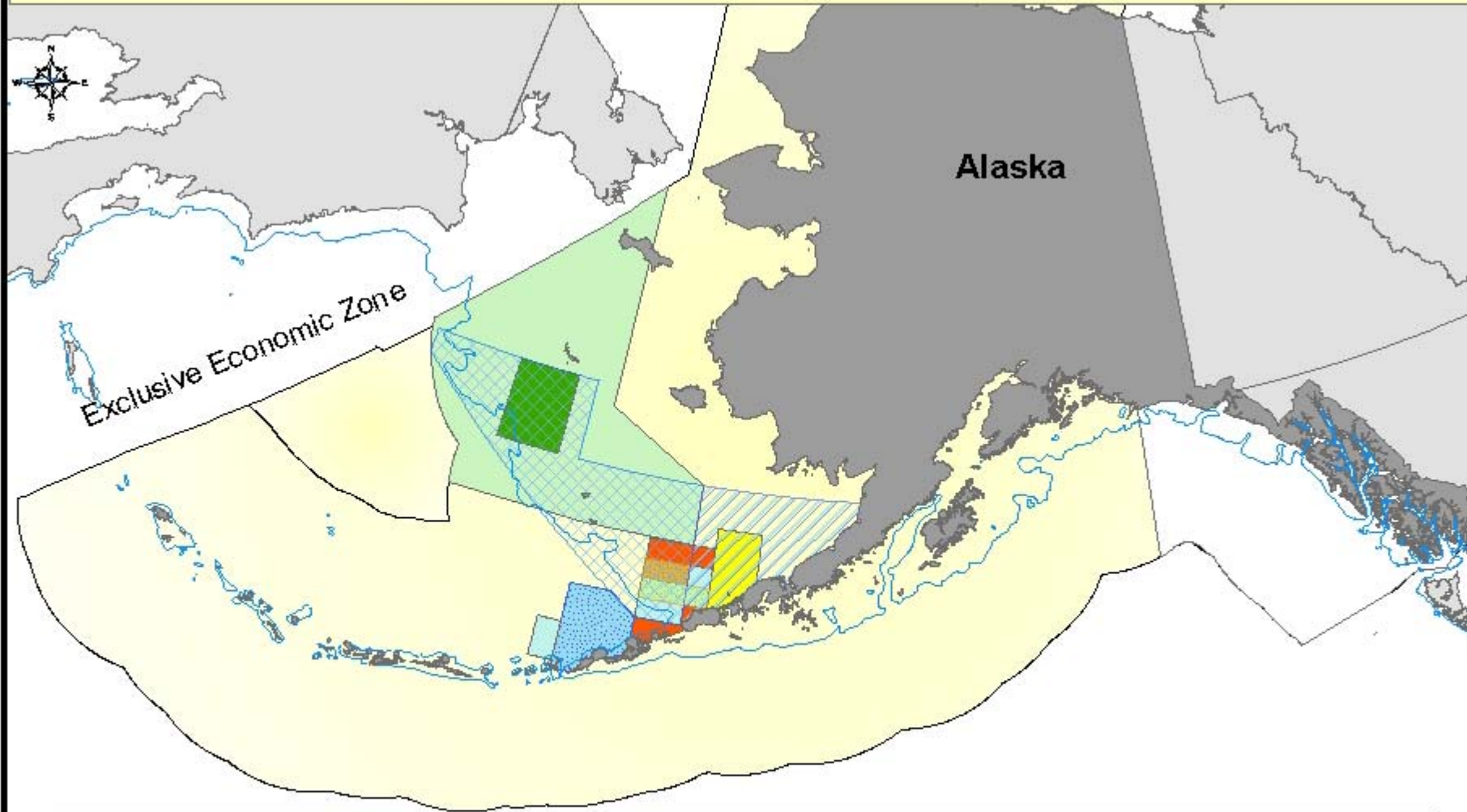
Habitat Conservation Marine Protected Areas



Habitat Conservation Marine Protected Areas

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
|  | Southeast Alaska Trawl Closure |  | Scallop Dredge Closure Areas |
|  | Cook Inlet Trawl Closure |  | Scallop Dredge Closure Area |
| Kodiak trawl closures | |  | Red King Crab Savings Area |
|  | Type 1 |  | Area 516 |
|  | Type 2 |  | Near Shore Bristol Bay Trawl Closure |
| | |  | Pribilof Is Habitat Conservation Area |

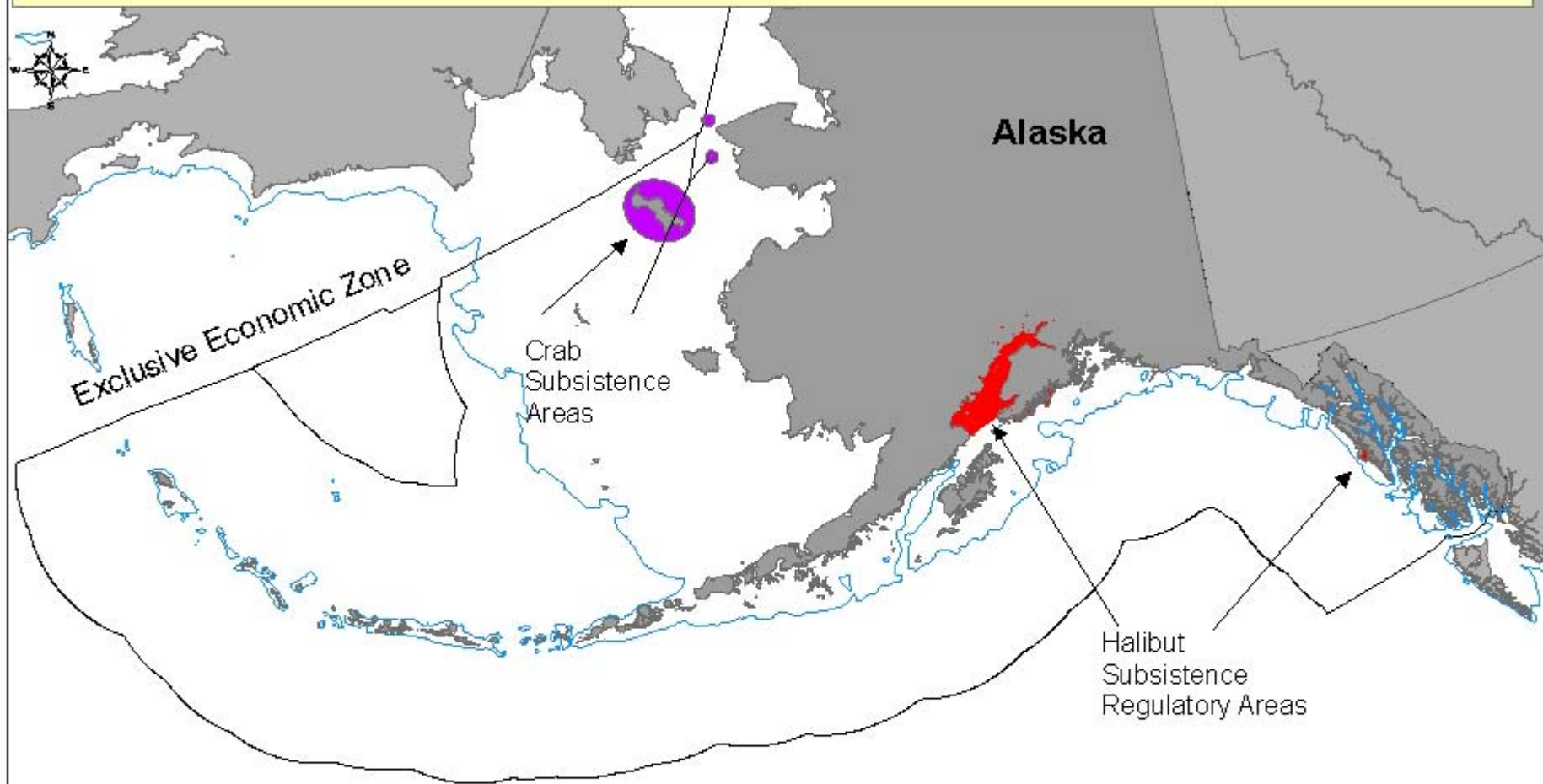
Vulnerable Stocks Marine Protected Areas





Vulnerable Stocks Marine Protected Areas



Cultural Resources Marine Protected Areas



Cultural Resources Marine Protected Areas

-  Halibut Subsistence Regulatory Areas
-  Crab Subsistence Areas

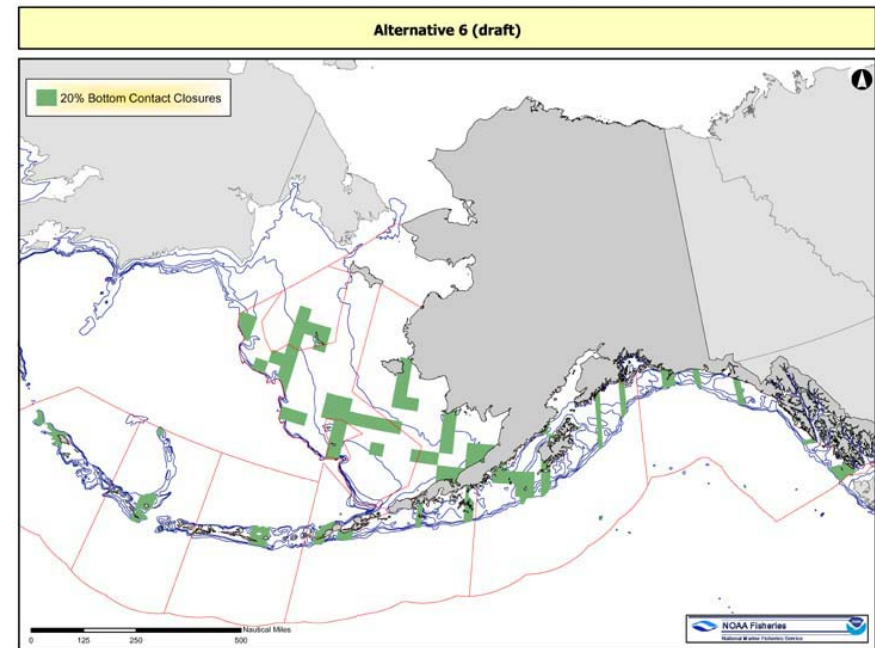
Additional MPAs Under Consideration

- No-Take Marine Reserves are being considered, but not likely to be adopted – *more on next slide*
- Additional bottom trawl closures in Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska to conserve EFH.
- A prohibition on all bottom trawling throughout the Aleutian Islands (292,400 nm²), except in a few small designated ‘open areas’ totaling 2,100 nm², or <1% of AI management area.
- A prohibition on bottom contact gear on some habitat areas of particular concern -- seamounts and areas with hard corals.
- Final decision to adopt these MPAs is scheduled for February 2005.



No-Take Marine Reserves Analyzed

- Origin: The Ocean Conservancy requested NMFS to ask the Council to include no-take marine reserves on 20% of shelf and slope as alternative to conserve EFH.
- Areas: Representative areas chosen by NMFS analysts and modified slightly to avoid some important fishing areas.
- Analysis: Theoretically could increase biodiversity but would cause fishing effort to shift onto open areas, thus offsetting habitat conservation benefits. Would have big impact on small vessels from adjacent fishery dependent communities. Would cost fishermen up to \$237 million/yr if catch couldn't be caught outside area.



Current HAPC Proposals in Alaska

NPFMC 2004 HAPC Call for Proposals

Agenda C4 (c)ii
Feb 2004





General Comments on MPAs

1. MPAs should be developed within existing management authorities to address specific goals.
2. For fisheries, MPAs are not a surrogate for controls on fishing effort and overfishing; better tools available and effectively used in the North Pacific.
3. Although no-take marine reserves may theoretically increase biodiversity, field research is needed off Alaska to test this. For sustainably managed fisheries, such as we have in the North Pacific, marine reserves may provide little added benefits in the way of seeding or spillover effects.



Summary

The North Pacific Council has established an extensive network of MPAs to achieve specified goals.

For example, extensive areas of the ocean ($> 104,00 \text{ nm}^2$) have been closed to trawling to protect habitat from potential harm. In total, this area equates to the land area encompassed by the states of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia COMBINED.

The North Pacific Council continues to use the scientific based, stakeholder process to consider additional MPAs, and re-evaluate existing ones to improve them.

The Council system has all the attributes necessary for developing a functional national MPA system.

- ✓ MPA decisions are based on strong scientific foundation
- ✓ MPAs are developed through an open, transparent, and public process
- ✓ All agencies and stakeholders are brought to one table