

C-3 Council motion
10/9/15

Scientific evidence does not suggest there is a risk to the deep-sea corals present in the Pribilof and Zhemchug canyons and adjacent slope areas under current management. This conclusion is based on both the coral abundance model developed by NOAA Fisheries and the recent stereo camera survey. The evidence shows low occurrence and density of deep-sea corals, lack of substrate to support corals, and low vulnerability of existing deep-sea corals in these areas to fishery impacts.

In order to be responsive to the purpose and need to evaluate the historical and current patterns of fishing effort, the Council requests the agency provide updated data on the distribution, intensity, and depth of fishing effort in locations of both known and predicted coral abundance.

In order to provide continued monitoring of the current coral communities in the Bering Sea canyons and slope, the Council also requests that AFSC report in the Ecosystem SAFE chapter:

1. Changes in coral frequency, composition and distribution in the trawl survey.
2. Changes in trawl and fixed gear effort in areas of model predicted coral abundance.