MID-ATLANTIC
FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

Fish Habitat and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council

Jessica Coakley

June 19, 2017

Today

- Council's habitat interests (evolution)
- Essential Fish Habitat Redo progress
- Mid-Atlantic fish habitat assessment project

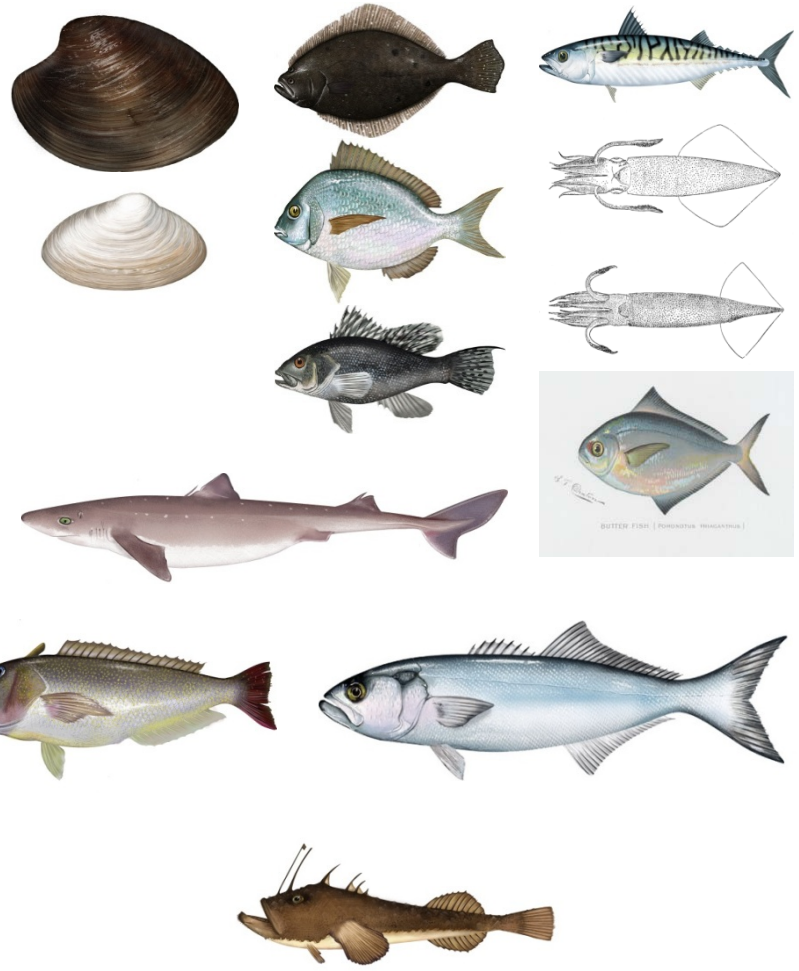
US Fisheries Management

- Department of the Interior
  - US Fish and Wildlife Service
  - Inland waters
- Fishery Commissions
  - State water management to 3 miles
  - State agencies
- Department of Commerce
  - NOAA Fisheries
  - Fishery Councils
  - Marine Federal waters (>3mi)

Species Managed by FMP

- Summer flounder, scup, black sea bass
- Atlantic mackerel, 2 squids, butterfish
- Bluefish
- Surfclam and ocean quahog
- Tilefish
- Spiny dogfish (joint with New England Council)

- Monkfish (joint but New England Council is lead)

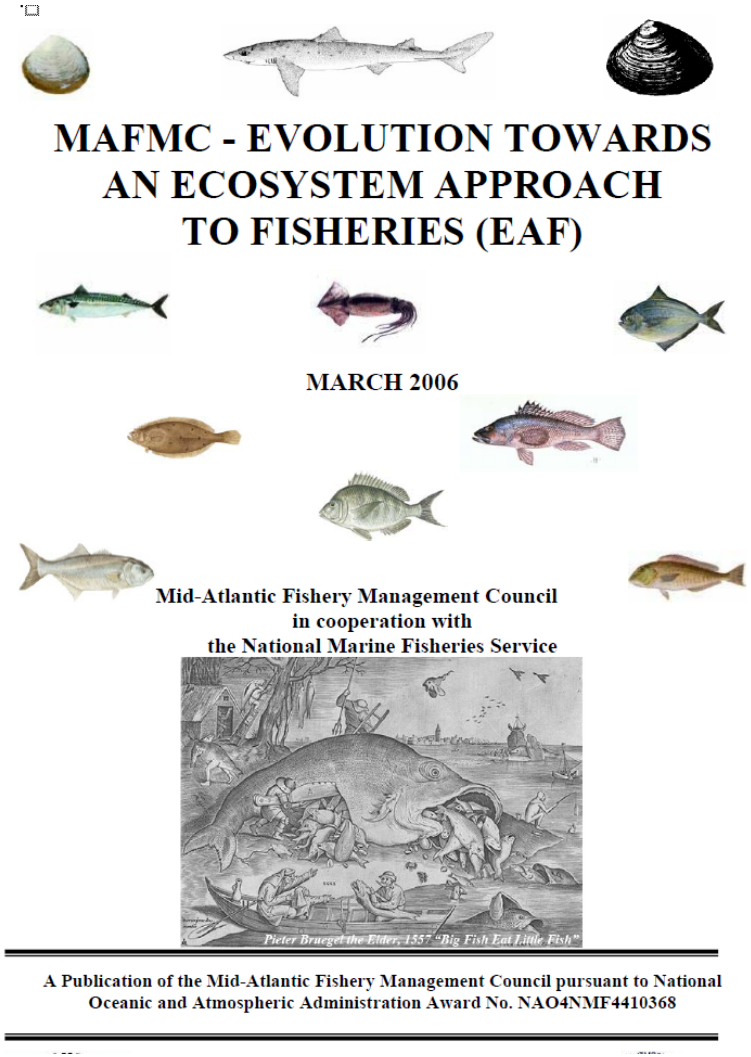


Managed Species

- Don't respect management boundaries
- Strong nearshore/offshore connections
- 11/13 species have at least 1 life stage nearshore/estuarine

Evolution to EAFM (2006)

- Developed with input from stakeholder groups and partners of the Council
- Documented Council positions on moving towards EAF
- Council noted desire to be evolutionary, not revolutionary in approach



MAFMC - EVOLUTION TOWARDS AN ECOSYSTEM APPROACH TO FISHERIES (EAF)

MARCH 2006

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council
in cooperation with
the National Marine Fisheries Service

Pieter Brueghel the Elder, 1557 "Big Fish Eat Little Fish"

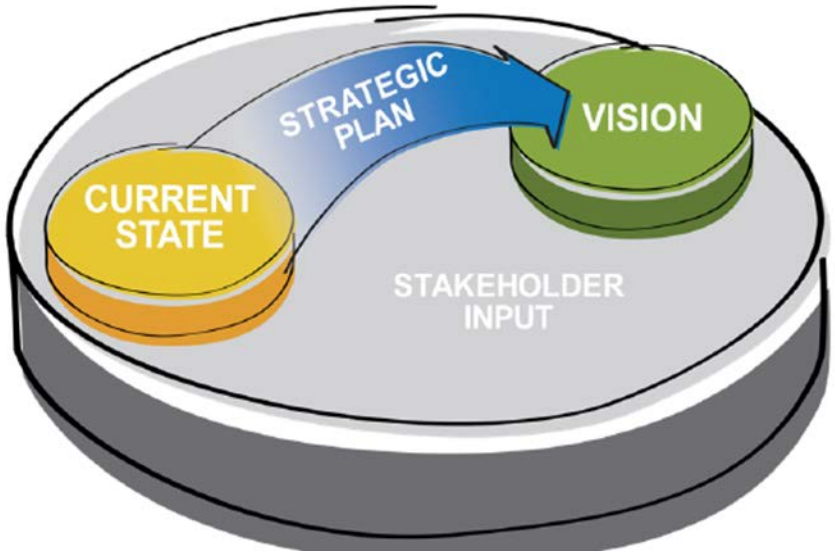
A Publication of the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council pursuant to National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Award No. NAO4NMF4410368

Habitat Ecosystem Workshop (2010)

- Organized in partnership with NMFS OHC, S&T, and GARFO (then NERO)
- 3 panels developed recommendations - policy/management, science, stakeholder
- Goal to identify opportunities to advance habitat and ecosystem initiatives for the Council

MAFMC Vision and Strategic Plan

- Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM) development was identified as a priority in the Council's **2014-2018 Strategic Plan.**



CCC Habitat Workgroup (2014)

- Mid-Atlantic staff chaired the 1st year formed
- Ongoing forum for sharing ideas/information across Council and NMFS habitat staff
- Quarterly webinars to discuss habitat science and management topics
- Helped support planning of May 2016 EFH Summit

Habitat Pilot Project (2014)

- Initiated with support from NMFS OHC
- Project Team comprised of MAFMC and NMFS staff
- Jumpstarted work on multiple actions:
  - Habitat policies
  - Habitat objectives for EAFM
  - Use of more goal and objective based approaches
  - Improved HAPC use

"Hab in the Mab Project" (2015)

- NFHP Beyond the Pond Fund
- ACFHP solicited and coordinated project
- Brad Stevens, University of Maryland Eastern Shores, to study black sea bass habitat characteristics, fish abundance, and fish diets in the Mid-Atlantic

Habitat Policies (2015-2016)

- General Non-fishing
- Liquefied Natural Gas
- Wind
- Oil
- Marine Transport
- Coastal Development
- Fishing

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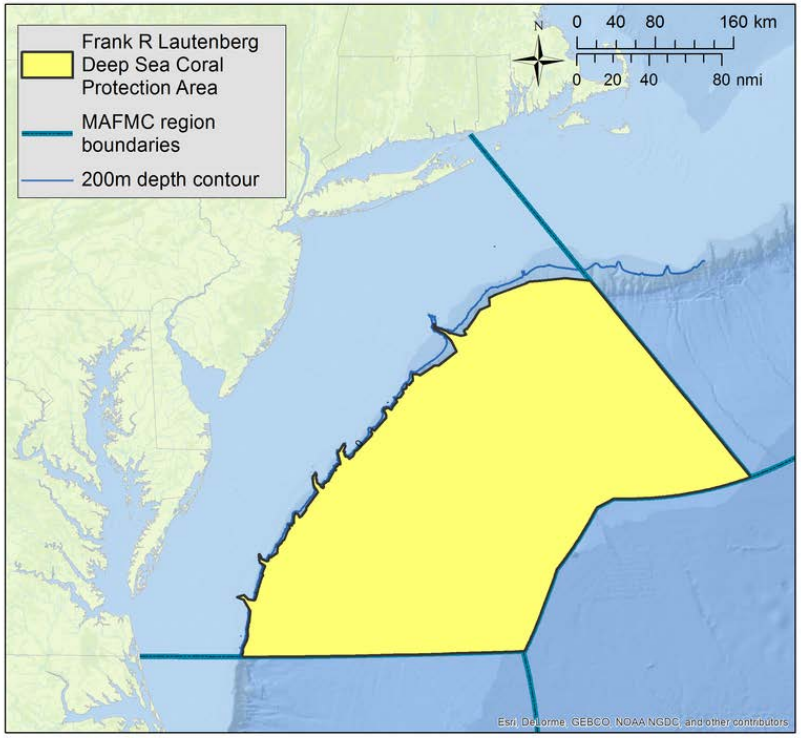
Deep Sea Corals (Final 2016)

- Named after the late Senator Frank Lautenberg
- Used deep sea coral discretionary authority in MSA
- Prohibited from using most types of bottom-tending fishing gear
- Encompasses more than 38,000 square miles



Habitat and EAFM Intertwined

GUEST COLUMN
POLICY

Incorporating Habitat into Ecosystem-Based Fisheries Management Strategies

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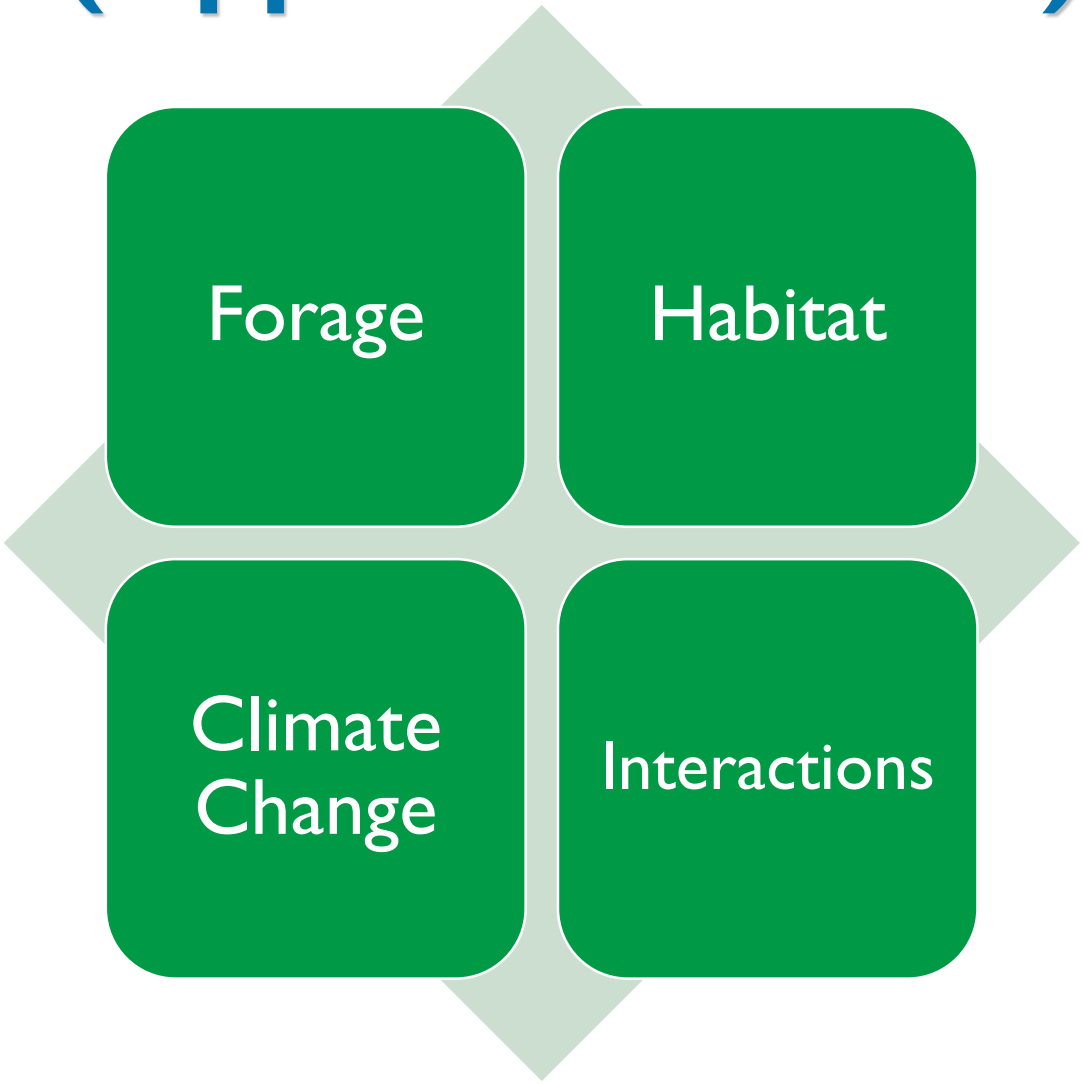
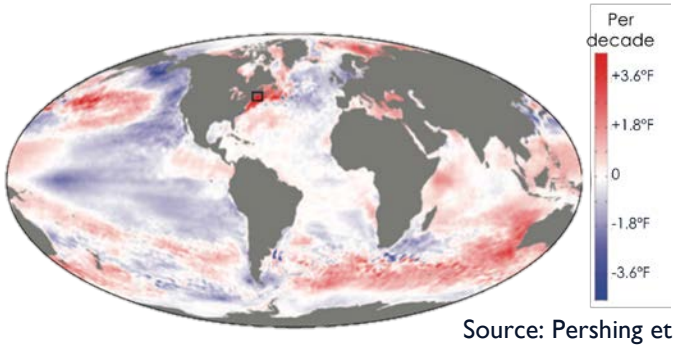
Fish habitat earned legal status in 1996 (Sustainable Fisheries Act) when the U.S. Congress added it as "essential fish habitat (EFH)" to the Magnuson–Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, the law governing the management of U.S. federal marine fisheries. Given rapid climate change and increasing anthropogenic pressure on our coastal and ocean habitats, better defined EFH will be key for the development of successful ecosystem-based fisheries management strategies by the fishery management councils.

EAFM Guidance Document (Approved in 2016)

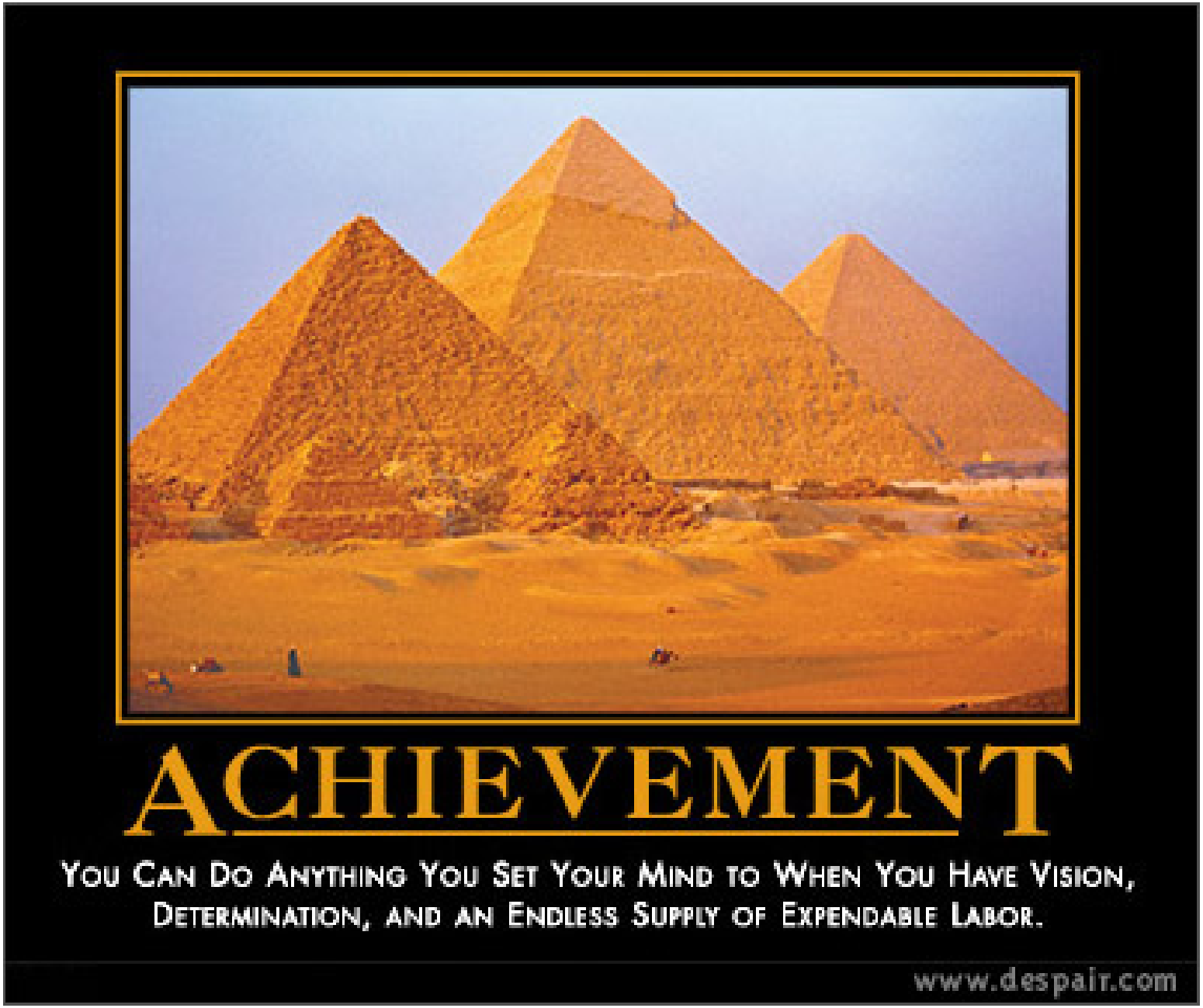


EAFM Habitat Objectives

- Strengthen Essential Fish Habitat designations
- Consider "essential" habitat from a multispecies/ecosystem perspective
- Emphasize the connectivity between species, life history stages, and inshore/offshore habitats
- Link habitat conservation to fishery outcomes (focus on resilience and productivity)
- Linkages to other focus areas: Climate Change, Species Interactions, Forage



Source: Pershing et al. 2015 *Science*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EFH ~~Review~~ Redo (2017-2018)

- Part of broader Mid-Atlantic habitat project initiated with support from NOAA OHC
- Considered experience of other regions EFH reviews
- 2017-2018 develop new science products to support EFH/HAPC descriptions

EFH Redo (2017-2018)

- March 28-30, 2017 FMAT Data/Methods Meeting
- Developed roadmap for creating the next generation of EFH products
- Strengthen EFH designations for consultation process
- Utilize HAPCs as a tool – habitat conservation/prioritization, support marine spatial planning, track habitat change and develop potential metrics, indicators

EFH Redo (2017-2018)

- Broad scale maps to support EFH consult process
- Text descriptions improved/refined with requirements that link to EAFM
- Explore and test new methods for mapping EFH and HAPC (state/fed surveys, environ., oceanographic factors)
- Model-based approaches to fill holes in maps

EFH Redo (2017-2018)

- Improving designations in nearshore areas is a higher priority

- Greater use of HAPCs as tool for focusing management attention on nearshore habitat most at risk from coastal development

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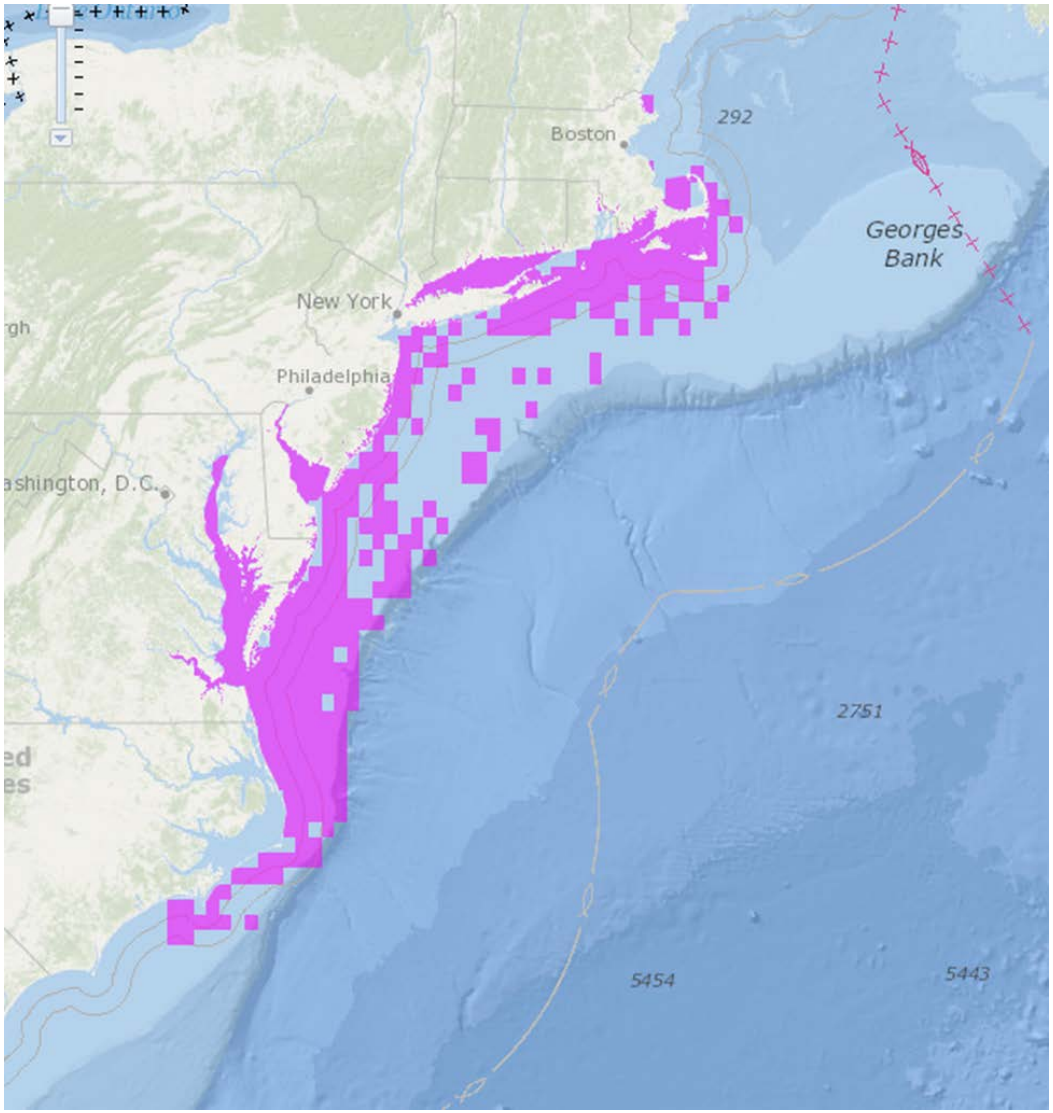
EFH Redo (2017-2018)



Juveniles: 1) Offshore, EFH is the demersal waters over the Continental Shelf (from the coast out to the limits of the EEZ), from the Gulf of Maine to Cape Hatteras, North Carolina, in the highest 90% of all the ranked squares of the area where juvenile black sea bass are collected in the NEFSC trawl survey. 2) Inshore, EFH is the estuaries where black sea bass are identified as being common, abundant, or highly abundant in the ELMR database for the "mixing" and "seawater" salinity zones. Juveniles are found in the estuaries in the summer and spring. Generally, juvenile black sea bass are found in waters warmer than 43 °F with salinities greater than 18 ppt and coastal areas between Virginia and Massachusetts, but winter offshore from New Jersey and south. Juvenile black sea bass are usually found in association with rough bottom, shellfish and eelgrass beds, man-made structures in sandy-shelly areas; offshore clam beds and shell patches may also be used during the wintering.

The Drivers that Work

- Individuals
  - Supportive Council Leadership (Chairs & ED)
  - Engaged Council members
  - Council staff habitat and EAFM leads

The Drivers that Work

- The Environment
  - Sustainable management - no stocks under rebuilding
  - Evolving habitat issues to be addressed
    - ocean planning
    - climate change
    - threats to fish habitat (non-fishing and fishing)

The Drivers that Work

- Partnerships
  - Other Fishery Councils
  - NOAA Fisheries
  - NFHP
  - ACFHP
  - ASMFC
  - NOAA MPAs
  - MARACOOS
  - Etc.

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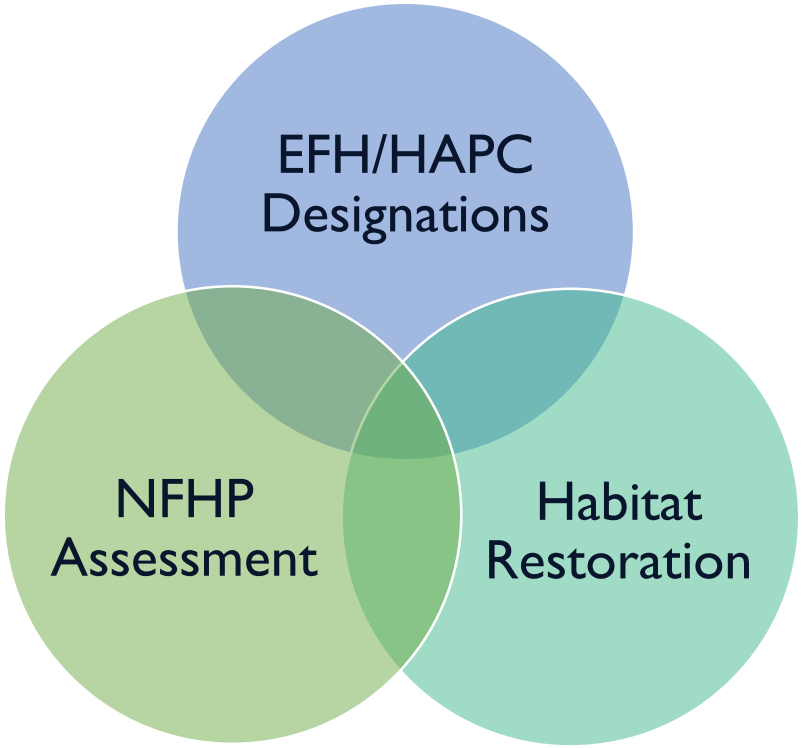
Regional Habitat Assessment to Support National Habitat Initiatives

NFHP Assessment

- 2015 national assessment of fish habitat quality
- Limited to national level datasets
- Not as useful as could have been for restoration and Council habitat initiatives
- Looking for ways to improve their next assessment

Regional assessment

- Assessment of fish habitat in the Mid-Atlantic that meets both regional and national needs



Regional assessment

- Allow for regional areas to be compared across the nation
  - Some standard metrics across regions
  - Take advantage of regional data strengths
  - Lessen need for nation-wide only datasets

Regional assessment

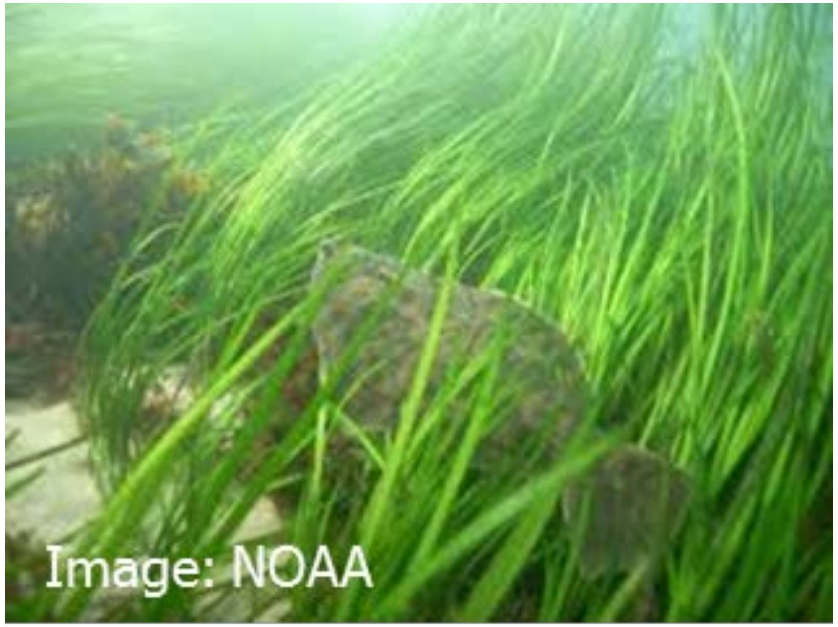
- Next steps:
  - Form a steering committee
  - Exploring different way to tackle this project

Build off Current Work

- Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership (SARP)
  - Regional assessment focused on coastal habitat and indicators – emphasis on habitat type
- Pacific Marine and Estuarine Fish Habitat Partnership (PMEP)
  - Model for partner engagement
  - Estuaries Inventory
  - State of Knowledge Report
- Gulf of Mexico Estuary Program (GMEP)
  - Considered fish presence/absence with habitat indicators

Build off Current Work

- Something that is more fish habitat centric
- Includes indicators of habitat health/quality
- Includes opportunities for partnerships with NOAA, and other groups



http://www.mafmc.org/habitat

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UPCOMING EVENTS

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Chub Mackerel Fishery Management Action Team (FMAT) Meeting
Monday, June 19, 2017
9:00am – 5:00pm

NEFMC June 2017 Council Meeting
Tue, Jun 20, 2017, 9:00am – Thu, Jun 22, 2017, 1:00pm
Holiday Inn Portland-By The Bay (map)

Fish Habitat

Fish habitat plays an essential role in the reproduction, growth, and sustainability of commercial and recreational fisheries and is essential to the biodiversity of marine and coastal ecosystems. Marine fish depend on healthy habitats for survival, and many species require specific types of habitats for spawning, breeding, feeding, and growth. The Council works cooperatively with its management partners to protect essential fish habitat areas and minimize adverse impacts of fishing activities on fish habitat.

Staff Contact: Jessica Coakley - (302) 526-5252

RELATED PAGES

- Ecosystem and Ocean Planning Committee
- Ecosystem and Ocean Planning Advisory Panel
- Protected Resources
- Ecosystem Approaches to Fisheries Management

MAFMC Habitat Initiatives

Council Policy on Impacts of Fishing on Fish Habitat

The Council developed a policy to address impacts of fishing activities on fish habitat to 1) ensure that changes to fishery management plans (FMPs) incorporate effective approaches to managing the impact of fishing on sensitive fish habitat, 2) to assist Council committees in considering policy elements in support of ecosystem approaches to fisheries management (EAFM) when making changes to FMPs, and 3) to focus research and funding opportunities on information needs regarding ocean habitat

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