



NOAA
FISHERIES

Habitat Conservation and Restoration Policies

03-101, 03-201, 03-202



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Goals of Habitat Conservation policy webinar



- ✓ Illustrate the breadth of our mission to protect and restore habitat, and how our programs fit into the broader goals and mission of NOAA Fisheries
- ✓ Inform participants of our efforts to protect and restore habitat for managed fish species
 - Describe the types of EFH guidance available through the Policy Directives System
 - Describe how we work with federal partners and the fishery management councils to efficiently implement our EFH authority.

Existing Habitat Conservation policies

- **03-101** Habitat Conservation Policy
- **03-104** Ecosystem Management Of Chesapeake Bay
- **03-201** Essential Fish Habitat
- **03-202** EFH Delegations of Authority
- **03-301** Wetlands Policy
- **03-401** Anadromous Fish Policy

Essential Fish Habitat policies

03-201 Essential Fish Habitat Policy

03-202 EFH Delegations of Authority

- Describe and Identify EFH
- Minimize impacts of fishing on EFH
- Work with federal partners to protect EFH from non-fishing impacts
- Streamline the EFH consultation process



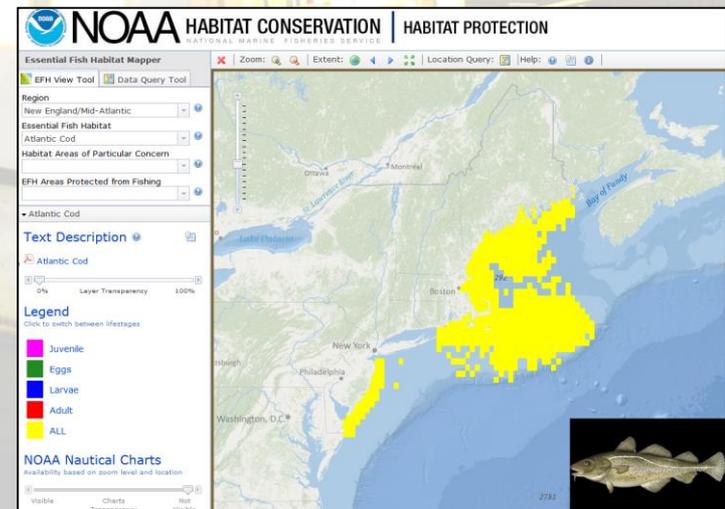
Guidance for fishery management councils

03-201-15 Guidance to Refine the Description and Identification of EFH

- Use clear and consistent habitat classification terms
- Depict EFH in maps that are useful to the public and managers
- Prevent overly-expansive EFH descriptions, identifications, and interpretation of authority
- Use Habitat Areas of Particular Concern as a management tool to focus EFH conservation.

Impacts:

- Improved EFH descriptions
- Some maps of EFH improved
- Research and analysis to support refined EFH designations



Guidance for NOAA & federal partners on non-fishing impacts

03-201-11 EFH consultation guidance

- How to determine the effect of a proposed activity
- How to use existing environmental review procedures to satisfy EFH requirements
- How to use the various types of consultation procedures
- How to provide recommendations to state agencies
- Examples of consultation documents

Impacts:

- Good assessments of the effect of an action expedites consultation
- Provides training materials for biologists developing an assessment and responding to NOAA comments

03-201-04 Guidance on EFH conservation recommendations

- Desirable components of a NOAA letter transmitting EFH conservation recommendations

Impacts:

- Better coordination with federal partners
- Higher success rate

Guidance for NOAA staff to streamline consultations

03-202 EFH Delegations of Authority

- Delegates consultation authority to OHC, RAs, and Habitat ARAs

Impacts:

- Faster response rate

03-201-10 National Finding to use ESA to complete EFH consultations

03-201-07 Further guidance on combined EFH & ESA consultations

- Scenarios for combining consultations
- Procedures and template text to use to convey recommendations

Impacts:

- Streamlined federal permitting
- Northwest Regional Office has combined almost all EFH and ESA Section 7 consultations
- Others regions moving this way



03-101 Habitat Conservation Policy (Nov 1983)

Why did we need a Habitat Conservation Policy in 1983?

- NOAA Fisheries habitat activities not well organized
- Focused on FWCA & NEPA
- NOAA Fisheries wanted to focus on species managed under MSFCMA, ESA, and MMPA

Developing the policy:

- NOAA Fisheries sought public input on draft
- Published policy in the Federal Register

03-101 Habitat Conservation Policy (Nov 1983)



12 Implementation Strategies:

1. Organize regional habitat programs
2. Establish environmental and ecological research programs
3. Address habitat considerations in fishery management plans
4. Influence federal permitting decisions under FWCA
5. Coordinate with states, interstate commissions, and fishery management councils
6. Support interagency efforts to coordinate on habitat issues.

03-101 Habitat Conservation Policy (Nov 1983)



12 Implementation Strategies continued...

7. Focus freshwater activities on anadromous species
8. Early coordination on permit applications
9. Ensure NOAA Fisheries legislative & regulatory authorities adequately consider habitat
10. Coordinate with other NOAA programs
11. Review and participate in development of federal legislation
12. Improve communication of habitat activities to constituents.

Results of the policy



- Established current framework for NOAA Fisheries' habitat program
- Precursor to EFH authority of MSA
- Did not fully implement all strategies
- Did not keep up with new authorities

Time for a new Habitat Conservation Policy?

New habitat focus for NOAA:

- NOAA Habitat Blueprint
- NOAA Habitat Conservation Team

Benefits of an updated policy:

- Demonstrate that habitat conservation is an integral part of managing harvested and protected species.
- Formalize NOAA's renewed commitment to habitat
- Acknowledge new habitat authorities
- Develop explicit objectives for our habitat programs

Thanks!

www.habitat.noaa.gov

www.noaa.gov/habitatblueprint.html