



# Essential Fish Habitat: What do Council Members Need to Know?

Heather Ludemann  
NMFS Office of Habitat Conservation  
October 23, 2007  
NMFS Council Training  
Silver Spring, MD



# Magnuson-Stevens Act (1996)

“...to promote the protection of essential fish habitat in the review of projects conducted under Federal permits, licenses, or other authorities that affect or have the potential to affect such habitat.” -- Magnuson-Stevens Act, 1996





# Essential Fish Habitat

*“Essential fish habitat means those **waters and substrate** necessary to fish for **spawning, breeding, feeding, or growth to maturity.**” - -*

Magnuson-Stevens Act, 1996



# Role of Councils

- Identify and Describe EFH
- Designate HAPCs
- Minimize Adverse Effects of Fishing on EFH
- Consultations on Non-Fishing Activities

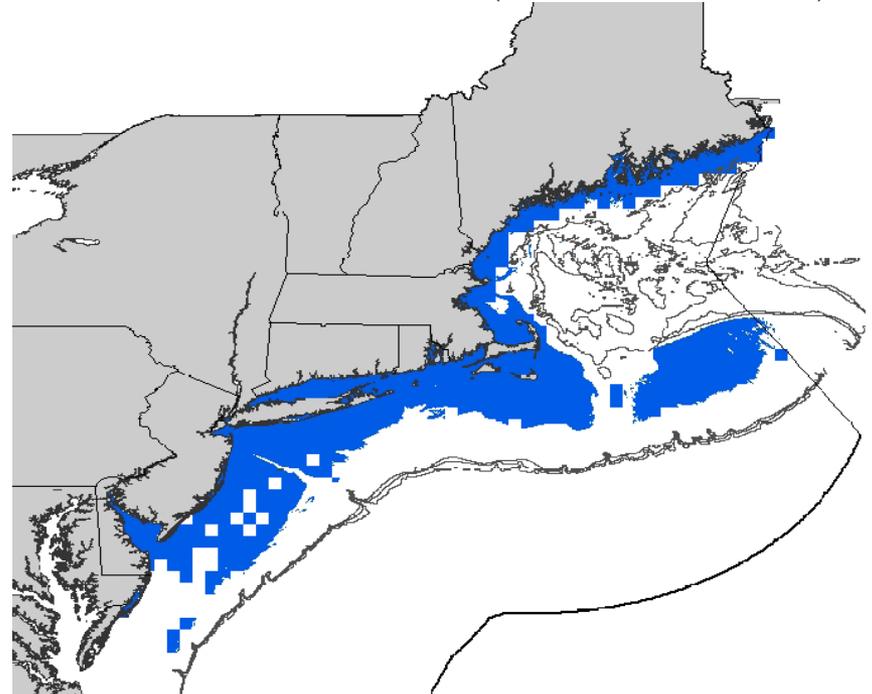


# Identify & Describe EFH

*Councils required to identify EFH for each managed species and life-stage*

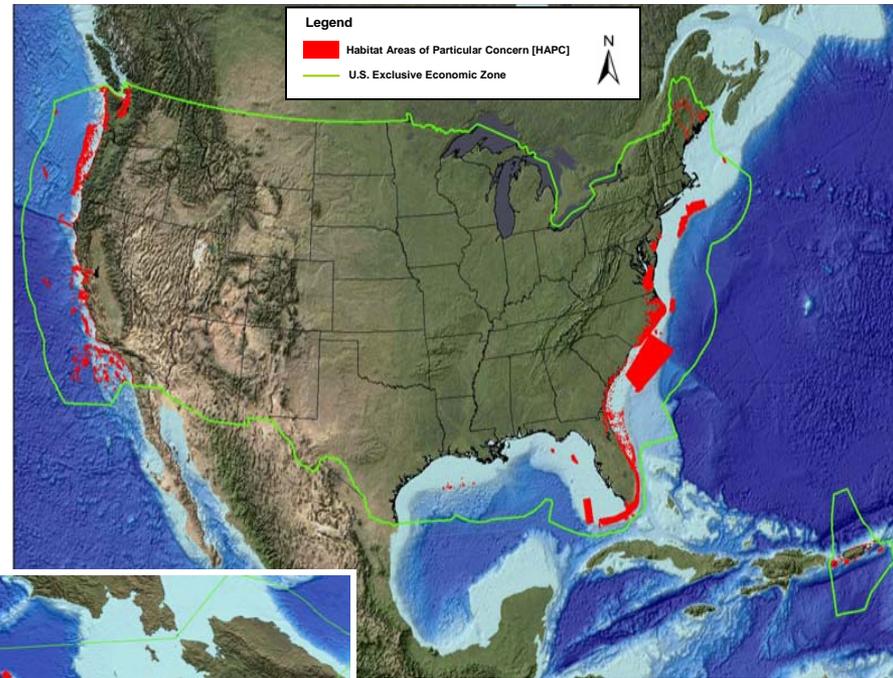
- Text descriptions
- Maps
- Geographic extent

Winter Flounder- Adult (NEFMC Omnibus)



# Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (HAPCs)

- HAPCs are subsets of EFH
- Purpose - focus conservation efforts
- HAPC Criteria
  - Ecological functions provided
  - Sensitivity to human-induced degradation
  - Rarity of habitat type
  - Stress from development activities
- Encourage discrete areas with clearly defined geographic boundaries



# Minimize Fishing Effects on EFH

- Councils responsible for managing harvest, bycatch, AND habitat
- Must minimize the adverse effects of fishing to the extent practicable
- Adverse effect: any impact that reduces quality and/or quantity of EFH

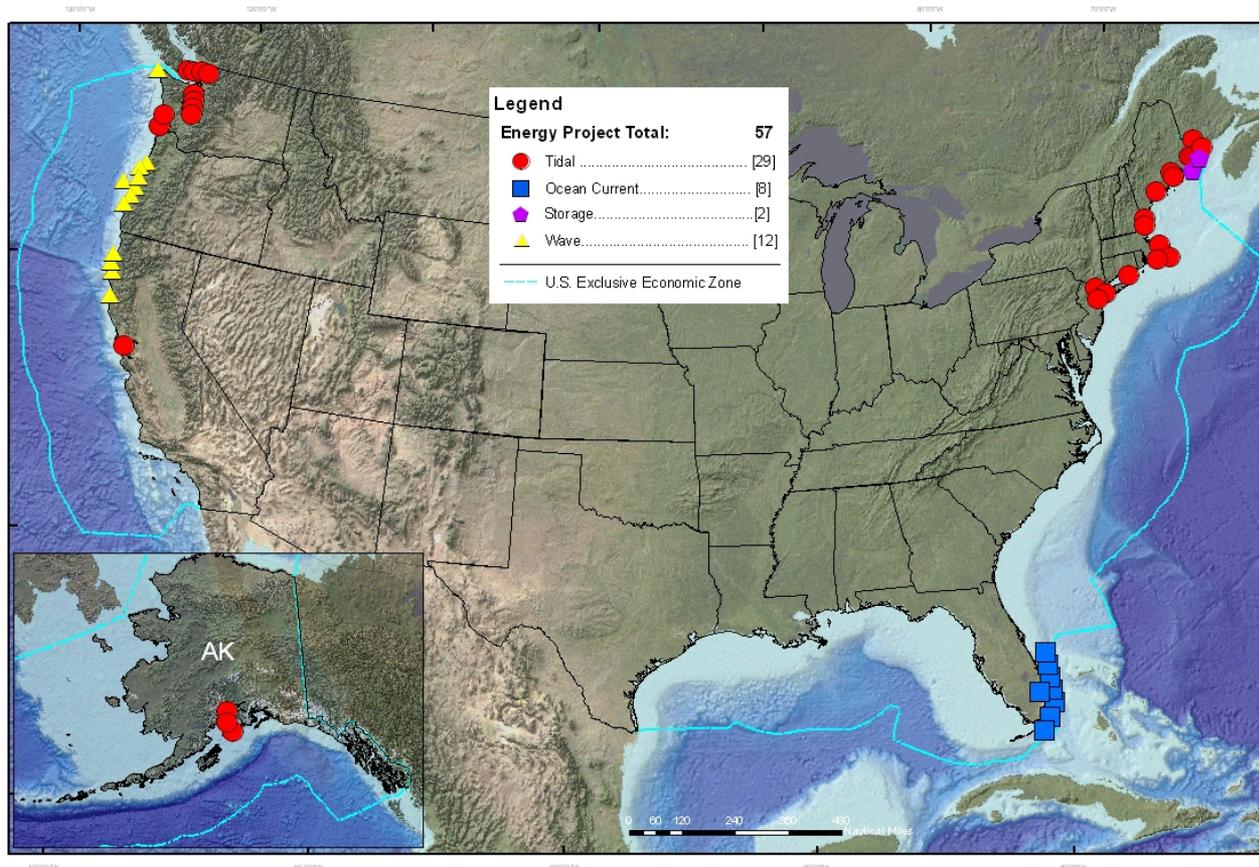


# Non-Fishing Effects Consultation Role

- Councils may provide comments to Secretary and any Federal or state agency concerning any activity or proposed activity that may affect the habitat, including EFH, of a fishery resource under its authority.
- Councils shall provide such comments concerning any activity that is likely to substantially affect the habitat, including EFH, of an anadromous fishery resource under Council authority.



# Renewable Ocean Energy Projects



Produced by NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service Office of Habitat Conservation August 17th, 2007.  
"License status accurate as of Fri. August 17th 2007." For reference purposes only.



# Recent Accomplishments

- Completed court-ordered EISs for 5 FMCs as required by AOC v. Daley lawsuit
- Pacific Groundfish FMP: PFMC closed 150,000 square miles to bottom-trawling in 2006.
- Bering Sea Habitat Conservation Area: NPFMC has proposed the closure of over 174,000 square miles to bottom trawling to protect blue king crab & snow crab EFH.

Pacific Groundfish FMP (2006)



# Five Year Review

- Need to review EFH information and actions every 5 years and update if appropriate
- Review based on available information
- Reviews needed for Mid-Atlantic, South-Atlantic, Pacific, Western Pacific



# MSRA & Habitat

- No changes to EFH Mandate
- New in MSRA:
  - Projects identifying HAPCs noted as a priority for cooperative research funding
  - Deep Sea Coral Research and Technology Program authorized
  - Discretionary provision to designate deep sea coral zones for additional protection



# Deep Sea Corals

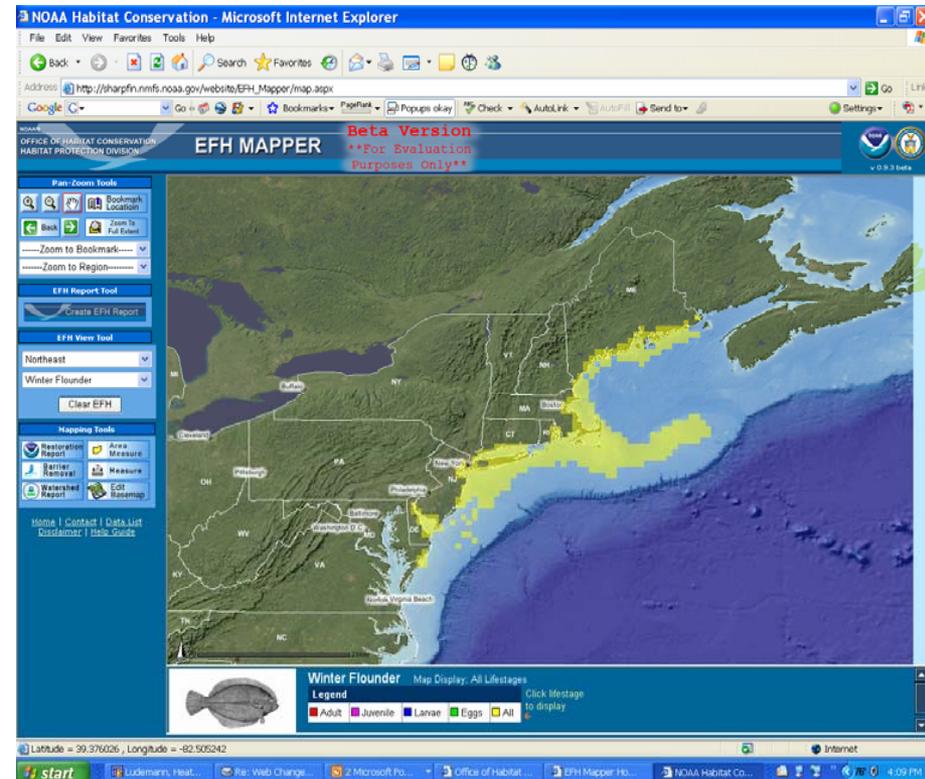


- Deep sea coral habitats are biodiverse, fragile and a U.S. priority for protection
- MSRA provides the Councils and NOAA additional authority to designate zones to protect corals from fishing damage in addition to existing bycatch and EFH authorities.
- Deep Sea Coral Report to Congress - 2008
  - Will identify known deep coral locations
  - Developed in coordination with Councils



# Future Direction

- Development of an internet-based mapping tool for EFH and HAPCs
- Integrating EFH with EAM



# Questions

## Additional Resources

---

- Website
  - <<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/habitat/habitatprotection/efh/index.htm>>
- Regulations 50 CFR 600
- Handouts & Outreach Materials
  - Essential Fish Habitat brochure
  - EFH and Critical Habitat: A Comparison
  - NMFS Habitat 2006 Accomplishments Report

