

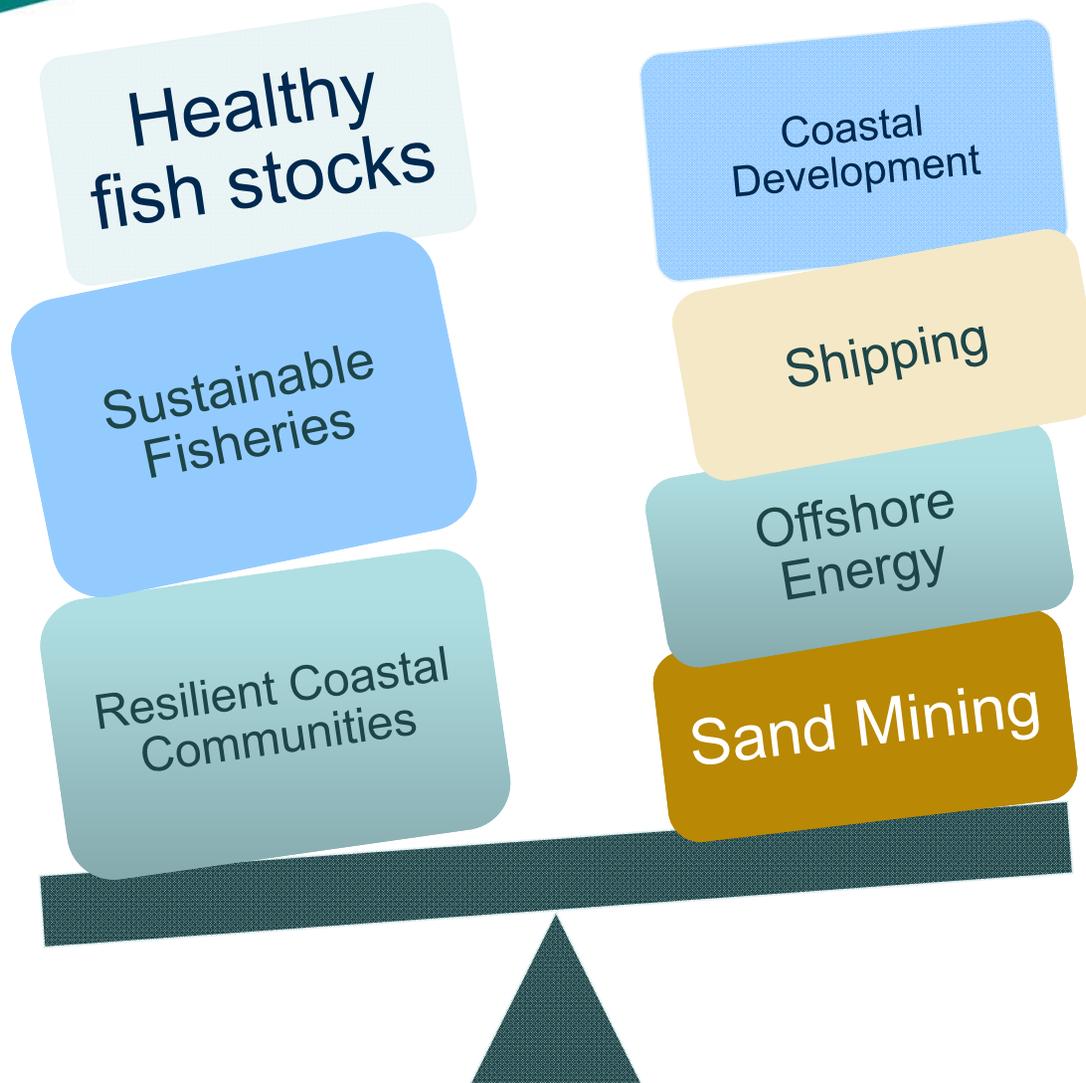
*Science, Service, Stewardship*



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

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NMFS Office of Habitat Conservation  
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**NOAA  
FISHERIES  
SERVICE**





## 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.**” -*

50 C.F.R. §600.10



## NOAA and the Councils work together to conserve EFH

### **Council role:**

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1. Describe and identify EFH by life stage
2. Develop maps to display geographic locations of EFH
3. Designate Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (HAPCs)
4. Minimize adverse effects of fishing on EFH (Councils)
5. Review and update EFH information every 5 years

**Optional:** Weigh in on non-fishing actions that may impact EFH

### **NOAA role:**

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6. Consult on non-fishing actions that may adversely affect EFH



## 1. Describe and identify EFH by lifestage

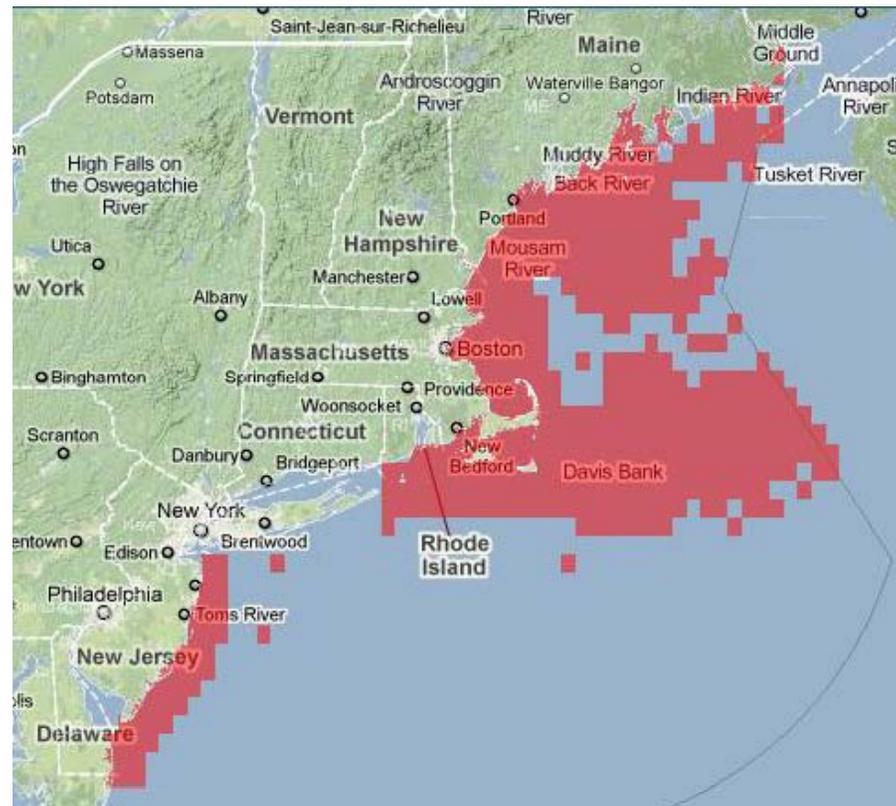
- May include physical, biological, geological factors
- May include seasonal and/or temporal descriptors

### **Example: Adult Atlantic Cod EFH**

Bottom habitats with a substrate of rocks, pebbles, or gravel in the Gulf of Maine, Georges Bank, southern New England, and the Middle Atlantic south to Delaware Bay. Generally, the following conditions exist where cod adults are found: water temperatures below 10° C, depths from 10 - 150 meters, and a wide range of oceanic salinities.



## 2. Develop maps to display geographic locations of EFH



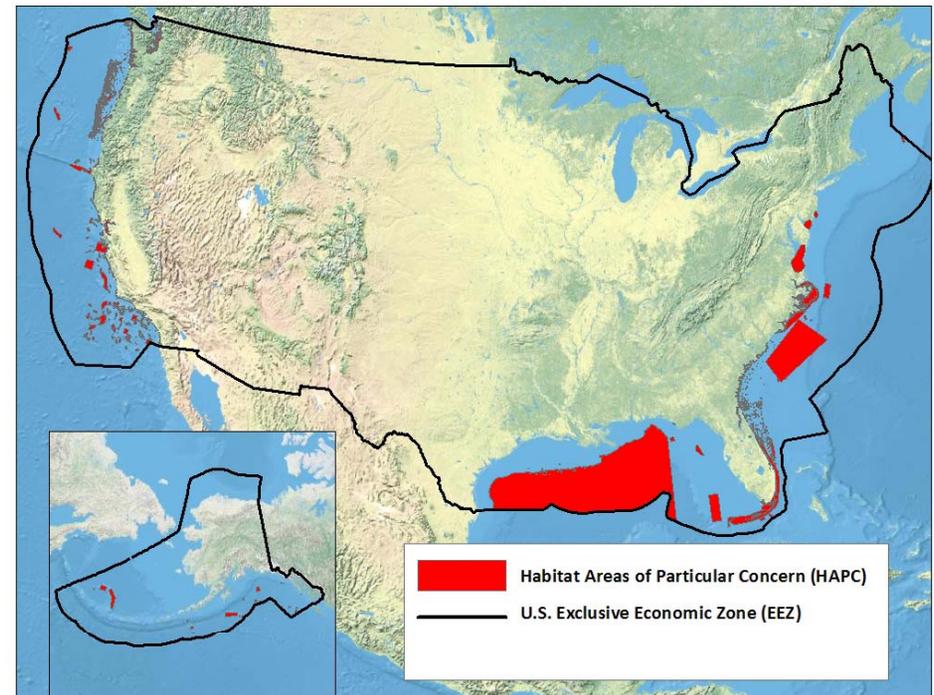
Atlantic Cod – Adult

(1998 NEFMC Omnibus EFH amendment)



### 3. Designate Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (HAPCs)

- HAPCs are subsets of EFH
- Purpose is to 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





## 4. Minimize adverse effects of fishing on EFH

**Adverse effect:** any impact that reduces quality and/or quantity of EFH

★ Since 2004, NOAA and the Councils have protected more than 700 million acres of EFH from harmful fishing practices

### Example: **Alaska Seamount Habitat Protection Area**

NPFMC designated these areas to protect EFH of multiple species, including groundfish, king crab, and Pacific salmon



Fishing with bottom contact gear by federally permitted vessels is prohibited



## 5. Review and update EFH information every 5 years

- Federal regulations require that EFH information be periodically reviewed and updated if appropriate
  - ✓ EFH descriptions
  - ✓ EFH maps
  - ✓ Impacts of fishing on EFH
- Review based on best available information, such as
  - Peer-reviewed scientific articles
  - State and federal technical memos
  - Traditional knowledge
  - Etc.



## 6. Consult on non-fishing actions that may adversely affect EFH

- NOAA must consult on Federal actions or proposed actions that may impact EFH.
  - A Council may provide comments to Secretary and any Federal or state agency for actions impacting 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.





# EFH Mapper

www.habitat.noaa.gov/efhmapper

Essential Fish Habitat Mapper  
NOAA Fisheries

-- Data Inventory --    -- Location Query --

Mapper Updates

EFH View Tool

Atlantic Highly Migratory Spe

zoom to selected region

Bluefin Tuna

-----Select HAPC-----

--Select Area Protected from--

zoom to extents -->

Data Query Tool

-- Location Query --

Link to Text Description

Bluefin Tuna

For links to all text descriptions:  
Open Data Inventory -->

Home | Contact

Google Maps Terms of Use

Map of the Eastern United States and Gulf of Mexico showing EFH for Bluefin Tuna. Red shaded areas indicate EFH. A location query window is open over the Atlantic coast.

**Query Results**  
(Latitude = 26.757623, Longitude = -90.571289)  
The query location intersects with spatial data representing EFH and/or HAPCs for the following species/management units.

Link to EFH Text	Data Caveats	Show on Map	Species/Management Unit	Lifestage(s) Found at Location	Management Council	FMP
			Albacore Tuna	Adult	SECRETARIAL	HMS
			Bigeye Thresher Shark	All	SECRETARIAL	HMS
			Bigeye Tuna	Adult	SECRETARIAL	HMS
			Blue Marlin	Adult	SECRETARIAL	HMS
			Longfin Mako Shark	All	SECRETARIAL	HMS
			Oceanic Whitetip Shark	All	SECRETARIAL	HMS
			Silky Shark	All	SECRETARIAL	HMS
			Swordfish	Adult, Juvenile, Larvae	SECRETARIAL	HMS
			White Marlin	Adult, Juvenile	SECRETARIAL	HMS
			Bluefin Tuna	Adult, Eggs and Larvae	SECRETARIAL	HMS
			Skipjack Tuna	Adult, Spawning Adults, Juvenile	SECRETARIAL	HMS
			Yellowfin Tuna	Adult, Juvenile, Spawning Adults	SECRETARIAL	HMS

Done

Map data ©2010 Europa Technologies, Google, INEGI, LeadDog Consulting - Terms of Use

Bluefin Tuna Adult Lifestage  
Legend  
■ Adult    ■ Juvenile    ■ Spawning Eggs and Larvae    ■ All  
 Click lifestage to display



## EFH Program priorities for 2011 and beyond

Complete EFH 5-year reviews and implement protective actions

→ **51%** of FMPs have been reviewed or updated in the last 5 years.  
This will drop to **31%** in 2011.

Enhance habitat assessment and mapping capabilities

→ **35%** of FMPs do not have EFH data available in GIS format.

Strengthen effectiveness of EFH consultations

→ NMFS staff are currently able to review **75%** of Federal actions that may adversely affect EFH.



## Tools and Resources

- EFH Website [www.habitat.noaa.gov/efh](http://www.habitat.noaa.gov/efh)
- EFH Mapper [www.habitat.noaa.gov/efhmapper](http://www.habitat.noaa.gov/efhmapper)
- EFH Regulations 50 CFR 600  
[www.habitat.noaa.gov/pdf/efhregulatoryguidelines.pdf](http://www.habitat.noaa.gov/pdf/efhregulatoryguidelines.pdf)

