Using Existing Authorities to Achieve Broader Habitat Goals

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Essential Fish Habitat

Under MSA (16 U.S.C. 1802(10))...

“those waters and substrate necessary to fish for spawning, breeding, feeding or growth to maturity”
Essential Fish Habitat

- Designation supports consultations
- Other fed. agencies must provide assess impacts to EFH from activities
- NOAA Fisheries provides Conservation Recommendations
- Agencies must provide explanation describing which recommendations, if any, it has not adopted
Habitat Areas of Particular Concern

- Subset of EFH; Discretionary (50 CFR 600.815(8)):
  - importance of ecological function provided by habitat;
  - rarity of the habitat type;
  - extent to which the habitat is sensitive to human-induced environmental degradation; and
  - extent to which development activities are or will be stressing the habitat.
Habitat Areas of Particular Concern

– Address fishing Impacts

– Focus research

– Communicate habitat conservation priorities
Focus Research

- NPFMC designated areas of skate egg concentrations
- No gear restrictions
- Monitoring of these skate nursery/egg areas
- Inclusion in Ecosystem chapters of SAFE report
Address Fishing Impacts

- HAPCs for golden tilefish are GRAs (and MPAs too!)

Image: NOAA
Nearly all Caribbean HAPCs are located in state waters, and may include inland habitat.
Moving to EAFM

- Start to use HAPC provisions in a more comprehensive way
- Underutilized tool by MAFMC
- Summer flounder and Tilefish HAPC
Optimizing HAPC Effectiveness

- Setting a clear purpose and objectives for designations
- Focus on how habitat conservation is linked to specific fishery management objectives, not just “what is an EFH and HAPC”
- More top down approach...
Optimizing HAPC Effectiveness

- Take a more comprehensive approach to designation by considering:
  - All managed fisheries
  - Habitat requirements to support resources
  - Fishing activities
  - Non-fishing activities
Optimizing HAPC Effectiveness

Northeast Terrestrial Habitat and Secured Lands Map

A quick start map to get an overview of the land cover and currently secured lands in the Northeast U.S.

http://nalcc.databasin.org/
Optimizing HAPC Effectiveness

- Use it as a tool to communicate with stakeholders and partners about value of habitat to federally managed fisheries.
Optimizing HAPC Effectiveness

- Habitat type versus place in space
- Room for both
HAPC as a Policy Tool

- Do more and/or larger HAPCs more strongly communicate value?
HAPC as a Policy Tool

- Should these be long-term/intended as permanent or more dynamic designations?
HAPC ID Process

- All developed by Councils, but some use nomination/proposal process to developed suite to be considered.

- Council have different criteria for id and selection.
Define Habitat

- EFH/HAPC 5-year Technical Review beginning in 2016
- Opportunity for Council to advance use of these HAPC provisions in the broader EAFM context