

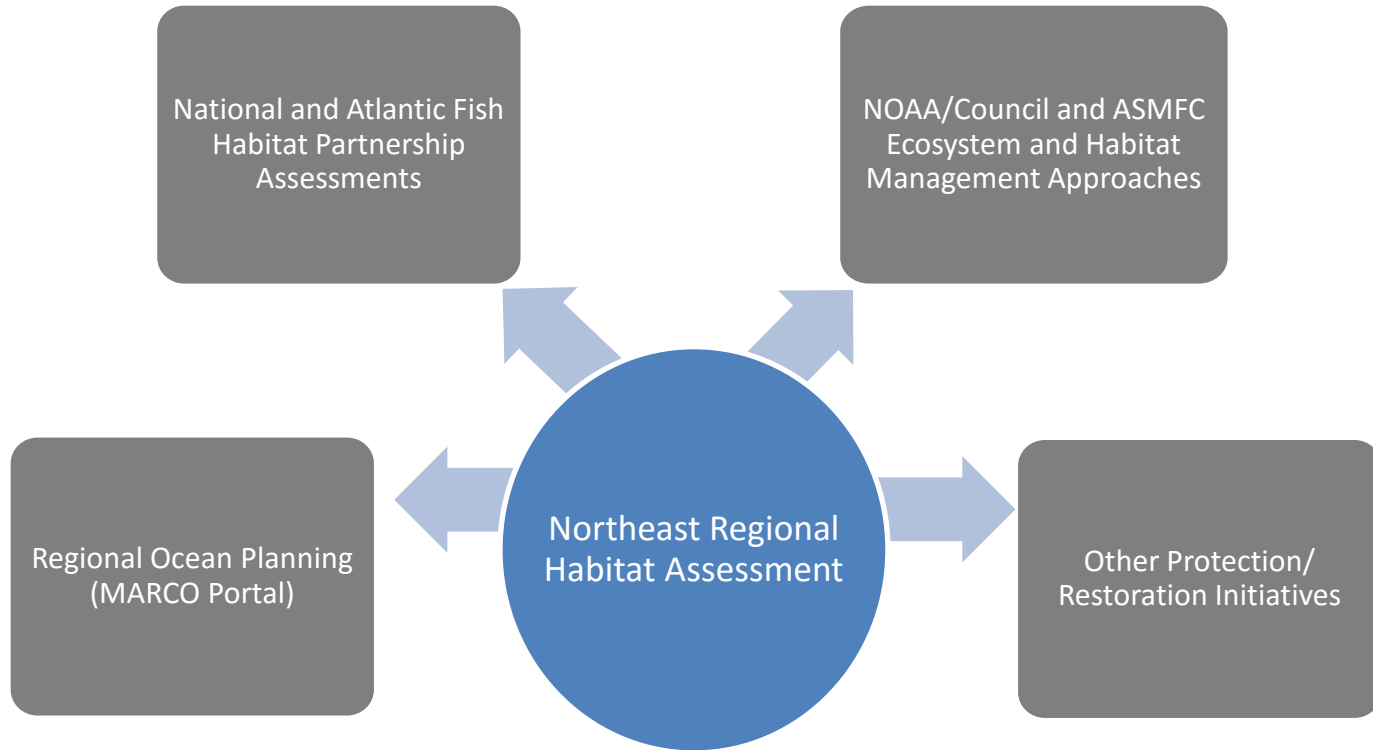
# Regional Fish Habitat Assessment

# Purpose | Northeast regional fish habitat assessment

- To describe and characterize estuarine, coastal, and offshore fish habitat in the Northeast using a partnership driven approach.
- To support ID of priority areas for protection and restoration for multiple partners



# Why work together?



# Integrated Assessment

## 1. Northeast Fish Habitat Footprint

- Identify habitat footprint using spatial, model-based approaches for key species and species groups in both the estuaries/inshore and offshore
- Project how habitat distribution may change over time (temperature/climate)

## 2. Inshore Assessment

- Identify and map prioritized estuarine habitats
- Compile information on fish habitat use, condition, threats, and indicators
- Identify areas that should be priorities for habitat protection or restoration

## 3. Offshore Assessment

- Identify and map prioritized offshore benthic habitats
- Identify seascape and/or ocean features that serve as important temporary or permanent habitats
- Identify important areas of fish productivity (spawning, etc.)
- Identify areas that should be priorities for habitat conservation and relevance for ocean planning

# Footprint of Fish Habitat

- **Model-based approaches**
- **Could include generalized additive modeling, habitat suitability modeling, etc.**
- **Key species and species groups**

## Resulting Products?

- Model frameworks that can be routinely updated
- EFH Maps (annual and potentially seasonal) that highlight footprint of habitat use in estuarine/offshore habitat for key species/groups
- Model-based approaches to enable tracking long-term changes in habitat footprint (links to EAFM)

- **Inventory important estuarine habitats and their stressors**
- **Include key species and species groups**

## Resulting Products?

- Improved information on key fish habitat types and estuarine use
- Maps to support more refined description of HAPCs
- Data to support NFHP regional assessment
- Info to support ACFHP, state, and other more focused nearshore restoration/conservation activities

- **Inventory important areas in offshore environment**
- **Examine linkages between inshore/offshore environment**

## Resulting Products?

- Maps to support marine spatial planning
- Model-based approaches to examine changes in important offshore habitats
- Habitat descriptions/maps to support refined offshore HAPCs and other habitat protection measures

# Additional Products?



- Evaluation of stressors on habitat
  - Fishing
  - Non-fishing
  - Cumulative impact analyses
- Products to support EBFM and stock assessments

Other products as appropriate

Image Source:

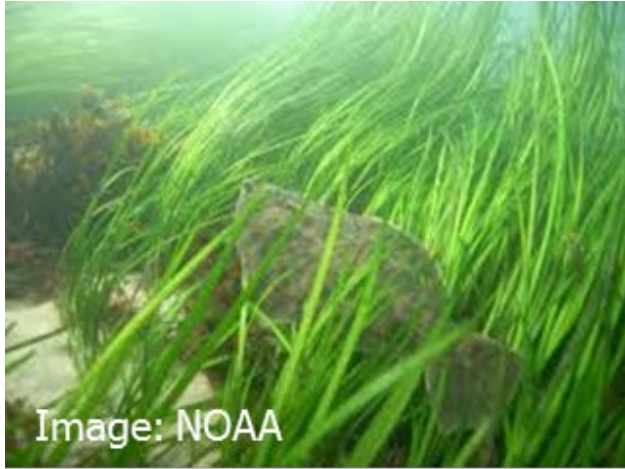
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# Steering Committee

- Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Chair)
- Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
- Atlantic Coast Fish Habitat Partnership
- Monmouth University
- National Fish Habitat Partnership
- New England Fishery Management Council
- NOAA Fisheries Offices of Habitat Conservation (Headquarters and Region)
- NOAA Fisheries Offices of Science and Technology (Ecosystems and Monitoring)
- NOAA Northeast Fisheries Science Center
- NOAA NCCOS Marine Spatial Ecology Division
- The Nature Conservancy
- Other needed membership as identified by the steering committee

# Steering Committee



- Provide oversight
- Identify staff for 3 project teams
- Approve:
  - Work plan and products
  - Delivery dates
  - Participant responsibilities (assign members to project teams)
  - Financial commitments

# Project Teams

- Carry out work plan as approved
- Provide updates to steering committee
- Provide products to the partners



# Timeline

- 6 month Updates to Steering Committee
- Partner timelines vary
  - EFH Redo (2019)
  - ACFHP Assessment (2019?)
  - NFHP (2024?)
- Work to align deliverables and timelines to serve all our partners

# Timeline

- Jan 11, 2018: 1<sup>st</sup> Steering Committee Meeting
- February 15, 2018: Scale subgroup met to refine advice to project teams
- March 2018: Form project teams (EFH Footprint, Inshore, Offshore) and task them
- March 2018: Initial team meeting
- May 2018: Complete draft work plan
- June 2018: 2<sup>nd</sup> Steering Committee Meeting – review/approve work plan
- July 1, 2018 Begin Work



Questions?