



search



this site all of NMFS

Coastal Wetlands

Corals

Essential Fish Habitat

Rivers: Hydropower & Fish Passage

Cape Fear River Partnership

[Habitat Home](#) » [Habitat Protection](#) » [Essential Fish Habitat](#)

- About Us
- Our Work
- About Habitat
- Funding Opportunities
- Our Partners
- News & Multimedia
- Publications & Resources

- Habitat Protection
- Restoration Center
- Chesapeake Bay



## What is Essential Fish Habitat?

Fish require healthy surroundings to survive and reproduce. Essential fish habitat includes all types of aquatic habitat—wetlands, coral reefs, seagrasses, rivers—where fish spawn, breed, feed, or grow to maturity.

NOAA Fisheries works with the regional fishery management councils to identify the essential habitat for every life stage of each federally managed species using the best available scientific information. Essential fish habitat has been described for approximately 1,000 managed species to date.

NOAA and the councils also identified more than 100 “habitat areas of particular concern” or HAPCs. These are considered high priority areas for conservation, management, or research because they are rare, sensitive, stressed by development, or important to ecosystem function.

### Impacts

Impacts from certain fishing practices as well as coastal and marine development threaten to alter, damage, or destroy these habitats. NOAA, the regional fishery management councils, and other federal agencies work together to minimize these threats. In addition, many projects conducted by NOAA’s Restoration Center focus on restoring essential fish habitat.

Productive commercial and recreational fisheries are inextricably linked to healthy marine habitats; protecting and restoring them will help support fishing communities now and for generations to come.



### Useful Links

- [Magnuson-Stevens Act](#)
- [EFH Regulatory Guidelines \(pdf - 104kb\)](#)
- [EFH and Critical Habitat Comparison \(pdf - 5.1mb\)](#)

STAY CONNECTED





# NOAA HABITAT CONSERVATION INTRANET

## NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE

- Home
- About Habitat
- Programmatic Links
- Policy and Procedures
- Resources
- Collaborations
- FY13 Action Plans



Welcome to the NMFS Essential Fish Habitat program Intranet site. This site serves as a depository of information to facilitate EFH staff access to the most up-to-date guidance documents and other EFH program information.

For more information please contact Terra Lederhouse, ([Terra.Lederhouse@noaa.gov](mailto:Terra.Lederhouse@noaa.gov), 301-427-8639).

Site Material hosted by Office of Habitat Conservation.

### ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT PROGRAM FILES

- Best Practices for EFH Consultations
- Clean Water Act 404q Elevations
- Consultation Agreements
- EFH Coordinator Calls
- Guidance Documents
- Performance Metrics
- Refine EFH

### HABITAT CALENDAR

April 2014

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				
«Mar					May»	

### HABITAT NEWS CLIPS

**HC NEWS CLIPS – 1/12/13 to 1/18/13**  
22 Jan 2013

**HC NEWS CLIPS – 1/5/13 to 1/11/13**  
15 Jan 2013

**HC NEWS CLIPS – 12/29/12 to 1/4/13**  
7 Jan 2013

### USEFUL LINKS

- [Habitat Blueprint](#)
- [OHC Welcome Book](#)
- [OHC Phone Directory](#)

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