

Ecosystem and Ocean Planning Committee

Newark, DE
June 13, 2016



Today

- Discuss policy on fishing activities that may impact fish habitat (Lapointe)
- Other Committee Updates (Coakley)
 - EFH Review FMAT
 - GARFO-HCD written update



Develop a policy for the impacts of fishing activities on habitat

- **High level policy**
 - Does not address specific gear types/changes or FMPs
 - Policy, not action
- **One component of Council's EAFM efforts**
 - Coral protection FMP
 - Non-fishing impacts on habitat
 - Forage fish amendment

Timeline

- **All EOP AP members contacted for views on:**
 - **First Draft of Fishing Impacts on Habitat Policy**
 - **Habitat Impacts of Fishing Activity Document**
- **EOP AP meeting on 11 May**
- **EOP Committee meeting to**
 - **Discuss questions from EOP AP**
 - **Review Draft Fishing Impacts on Habitat Policy**
- **Revise Draft Policy**
- **Council review and approval of Policy at August meeting**

AP DISCUSSION – GENERAL THEMES

- Relationship of policy to EFH review process
- Relationship of policy to other Council EAFM efforts
- Should the policy include forage, EFH policy, other relevant statutes and regulations?

AP DISCUSSION – GENERAL CONCERNS

- The policy could lock up offshore fishing because of changes in fish distribution with eutrophication and climate change
- Impacts of the policy on shifting environment over time. A lightly fished area may not be important in the future, or may be more important to current fisheries as fish move to adapt to changing ocean conditions
- The fishing impact policy may impose more restrictions on fishermen, in addition to restrictions imposed by the forage fish amendment
- The cumulative impact of various habitat and ecosystem actions, e.g. forage fish amendment, coral protection, on ability of fishermen to fish

AP DISCUSSION TOPICS

- ➔ ■ Include preamble regarding EFH and MSA language re. habitat?
- ➔ ■ Fishing and non-fishing impact policies should be different
- ➔ ■ Make policy adaptable for changing conditions
- ➔ ■ Separate historically fished areas from frontier areas
- ➔ ■ Include state waters in policy
- ➔ ■ Include seasonal habitat protection in policy
- ➔ ■ Include specific habitat types as examples only

AP DISCUSSION TOPICS

- Include forage fish as habitat impacted by fishing in policy
- Include ghost fishing gear in policy
- ■ Include gear modifications in policy
- Background document on different gear and impacts on habitat - discard

Question 1 from EOP AP

- What term to use to differentiate fished vs. less fished areas?
 - Historically Fished – Frontier Fishing Areas
 - Fished Areas – Unfished Areas
 - Areas with Significant Fishing – Areas with Little or No Fishing
 - Other Designations?

Question 2 from EOP AP

- Include State Waters in the Policy?

EOP AP recommended that state waters be included in policy

Question 3 from EOP AP

- **Include Temporary Habitat Protections in Policy?**

EOP AP members discussed whether to include temporary habitat protections for areas such as spawning or juvenile habitat

Question 4 from EOP AP

- **Include Habitat Restoration in Policy?**

Some EOP AP members think that habitat restoration should be included in Policy

Other Committee Updates

- EFH Review FMAT formed
- Met briefly on May 4 via conference call to discuss report and timeline
- More detailed workplan to be developed



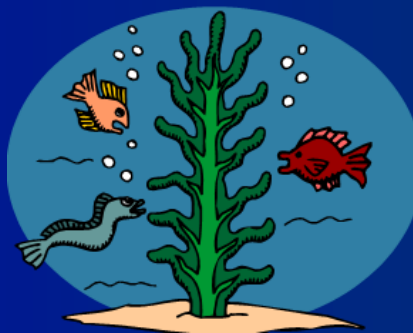
FMAT Members

- Jessica Coakley (Council staff; FMAT Chair)
- Michelle Bachman (NEFMC staff)
- Dave Packer and Howard Townsend (NMFS NEFSC)
- Terra Lederhouse and Dave Stevenson (NMFS HCD)



EFH Review Technical Report

- Report will address 10 components of Habitat Review for Council
- Support revising habitat designations and descriptions, etc.
- Council can consider initiating FMP action based on report



Timeline

2016-2018 Development Track	
First FMAT Meeting	May 2016
Develop report (may include additional meetings of the FMAT or other technical meetings as needed)	June 2016 – May 2017
Update Ecosystem and Ocean Planning (EOP) Committee on progress to date on 10 components of EFH Review	June 2017
Continued report development by FMAT	July 2017 – May 2018
Present EOP Committee and Council with final technical report	June 2018
Council can consider FMP action and form another FMAT to develop, as needed	?

Written Update from HCD

- In response to letter from Council asking for improved communication on habitat issues
- Provides updates on projects of concern to the Council
- Prepared by Karen Greene (GARFO-HCD)
- Try to do 2 updates a year, written or verbal depending
- NY Wind Lease Issue will come up during BOEM session