

Council Policies on Non-fishing Activities that Impact Fish Habitat

**December 7, 2015
Annapolis, MD**



Overview

How did we get here?

Policies

Improving
Communications on
Habitat



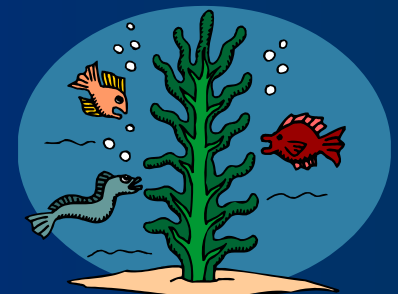
The Pressure is On

- Council only manages fisheries (and only in EEZ)
- Support from NOAA Fisheries Habitat to improve how Council's address habitat issues



Habitat Pilot Project

- Strengthen use of existing authorities/tools
- Communicate habitat concerns/positions through policy documents
- Identify goals/objectives to guide and develop more place-based solutions
- Leverage support with partners



2015 Policy Development

- July: Ecosystem and Ocean Planning (EOP) Advisors
 - Non-fishing and Fishing Policies
 - Communications/Comment Process
 - Not enough time
- August: EOP Committee
 - Disconnected Non-fishing and Fishing Policies
 - Comments; Add Water Quality Sections
- September: EOP Advisors
 - Additional Input on Non-fishing, Water Quality



Communicate Policy

- Preamble
- General
- Liquefied Natural Gas
- Wind
- Oil
- Marine Transport
- Coastal Development

Additions since August

- Changes based on EOP Committee input
 - Minor changes to preamble
 - List of species
 - Greater Atlantic Region
 - Statements at top of Offshore Oil
 - Addition of compensatory mitigation
 - Other minor changes, deletions, housekeeping

Additions since August

- Advisors comments worked into document
- Policy goals at top of documents

Council Policy on Coastal Development

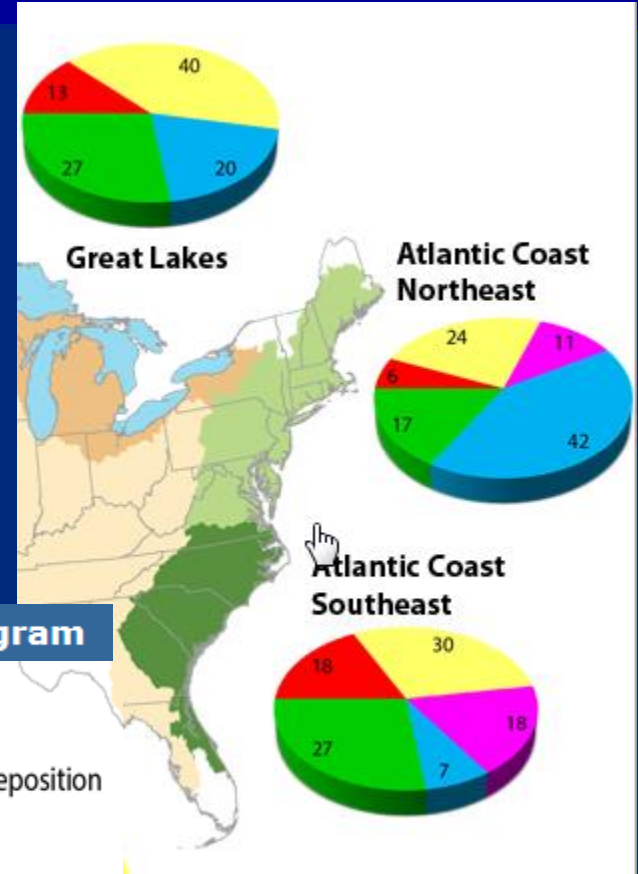
Policy Goal: The Council supports policies, projects, and investments which will stop and reverse the steady and ongoing deterioration of critical riverine, estuarine, and nearshore fish habitats caused by coastal development in the Mid-Atlantic.

Additions since August

- Policies on Water Quality
 - Eutrophication
 - Toxic contaminants
 - Aquatic acidification
 - Water physics

National Water-Quality Assessment (NAWQA) Program

Sources of Nitrogen to Estuaries



Addition since August

- New General policies under Coastal Development; what was there is now under Water-Dependent Coastal Development

General Policies

1. Coastal development poses an ongoing and significant threat to the marine ecosystem and the sustainability of Mid-Atlantic fisheries.
2. Federal agencies, including the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and Army Corps of Engineers (ACE), should be aligned in their support of practices that improve water quality for both people and nature.
3. Developers and regulators should consider the cumulative impacts of development practices and projects on the environment and fisheries habitat and resources.

Cumulative Impacts

- Advisors discussed role of Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body
- Both Warren Elliott (EOP Chair) and Mike Luisi attended Sept AP Meeting
- Luisi carried comments/points from advisors to RPB



Subject Matter Experts

- **Coastal Zone Management:** Sarah Cooksey (DNREC) and Catherine McCall (MD-DNR)
- **NOAA Fisheries Habitat Conservation:** Lou Chiarella, David O'Brien, Karen Greene, Terra Lederhouse (HQ), Lauren Latchford (HQ), Howard Townsend (Chesapeake Bay Program)
- **BOEM:** Brian Hooker and Jacob Levenson

Next Steps

- EFH/HAPC review across species/plans in 2016
- Technical white paper to be developed with recommendations for possible Council actions
- Fishing policy considerations during 2016



Revisit Policies

- Once complete, revisit? Link to 5-year review?
- Other policy topics?



Improved Communications

- Stay informed of projects within GAR
- Provide Council opportunity to comment, if desired

Projects of Concern

- Offshore Projects - All proposed projects (e.g., energy projects, cables, sand mining, etc.).
- Nearshore/estuarine Projects - Only large scale proposed projects, including any large transportation and port development projects.



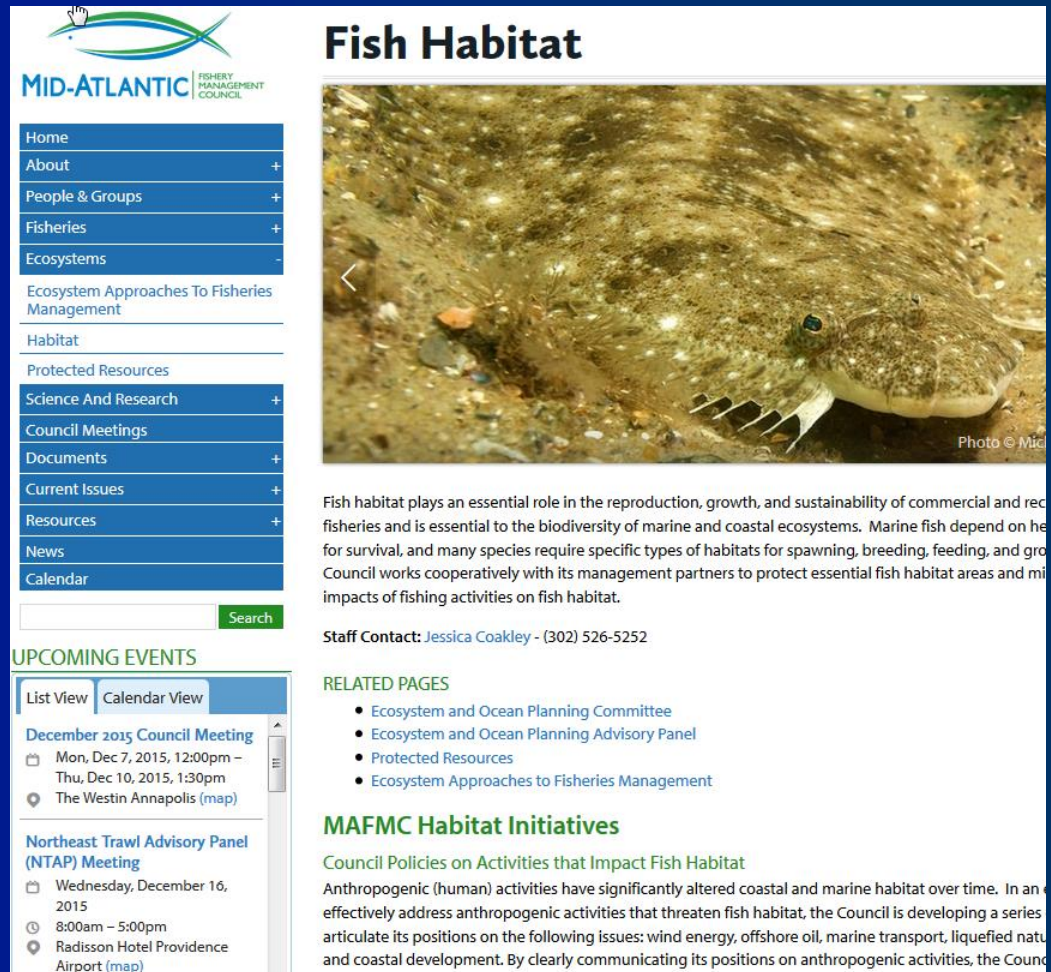
Projects of Concern

- Notify Council staff via email
- Periodic (bi-annual) verbal or written updates from GARFO-HCD
- Updates on other activities:
 - Restoration,
 - Dam removal, etc.



Projects Tracking

- Identify tools for online project tracking
- Post tools on website



The screenshot shows the website's navigation menu on the left, including links for Home, About, People & Groups, Fisheries, Ecosystems, Protected Resources, Science And Research, Council Meetings, Documents, Current Issues, Resources, News, and Calendar. The main content area features a 'Fish Habitat' section with a large image of a flatfish on the seabed. Below the image is a paragraph explaining the importance of fish habitat and a 'Staff Contact' for Jessica Coakley. A 'RELATED PAGES' section lists links to the Ecosystem and Ocean Planning Committee, Ecosystem and Ocean Planning Advisory Panel, Protected Resources, and Ecosystem Approaches to Fisheries Management. At the bottom, there is a section for 'UPCOMING EVENTS' with details for the December 2015 Council Meeting and the Northeast Trawl Advisory Panel (NTAP) Meeting.

Fish Habitat

Fish habitat plays an essential role in the reproduction, growth, and sustainability of commercial and recreational fisheries and is essential to the biodiversity of marine and coastal ecosystems. Marine fish depend on healthy habitats for survival, and many species require specific types of habitats for spawning, breeding, feeding, and growth. The Council works cooperatively with its management partners to protect essential fish habitat areas and minimize the impacts of fishing activities on fish habitat.

Staff Contact: Jessica Coakley - (302) 526-5252

RELATED PAGES

- Ecosystem and Ocean Planning Committee
- Ecosystem and Ocean Planning Advisory Panel
- Protected Resources
- Ecosystem Approaches to Fisheries Management

UPCOMING EVENTS

December 2015 Council Meeting
 Mon, Dec 7, 2015, 12:00pm – Thu, Dec 10, 2015, 1:30pm
 The Westin Annapolis (map)

Northeast Trawl Advisory Panel (NTAP) Meeting
 Wednesday, December 16, 2015
 8:00am – 5:00pm
 Radisson Hotel Providence Airport (map)

Today

- Review documents
- Consider possible approval
- Input on frequency of review of policies



Questions?



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