



# Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership

**Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Management Council Meeting**

**June 10, 2014**

# A Quick History...



2006: Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission charge



2007: Candidate Fish Habitat Partnership



2009: Official recognition as a Fish Habitat Partnership under the National Fish Habitat Partnership

# What is ACFHP: Mission



*To accelerate the conservation, protection, restoration, and enhancement of habitat for native Atlantic coastal, estuarine-dependent, and diadromous fishes through partnerships between federal, tribal, state, local, and other entities.*



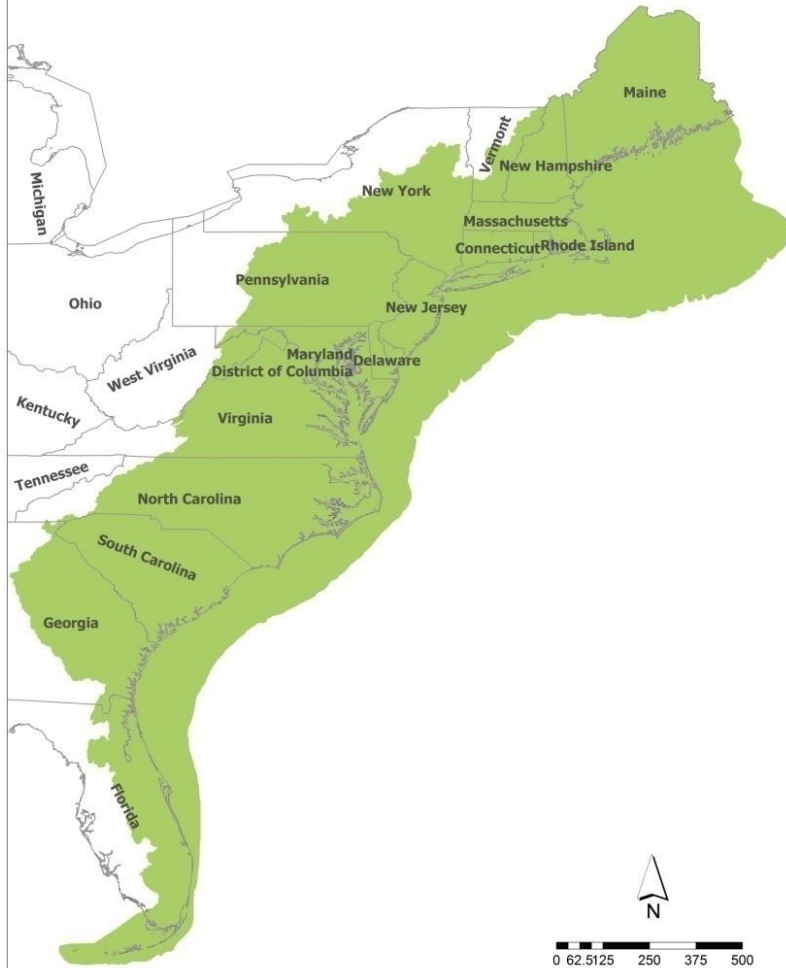
# What is ACFHP: Partners

- American Littoral Society
- American Rivers
- ASMFC
- Chesapeake Bay Foundation
- Connecticut DEP
- Delaware DNREC
- Environmental Defense Fund
- Florida FWCC
- Georgia DNR
- Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians
- Maine DMR
- Maryland DNR
- Massachusetts DMF
- Merrimack River Council
- NOAA
- New Hampshire FGD
- New Jersey DFW
- New York DEC
- North Carolina DENR
- Oyster Recovery Partnership
- Partnership for the Delaware Estuary
- Pennsylvania FBC
- Rhode Island DFW
- South Carolina DNR
- The Nature Conservancy
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Geological Survey
- Vermont FWD
- Virginia Marine Resources Commission
- Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve





## Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership Partnership Boundary



# What is ACFHP: Geographic Extent

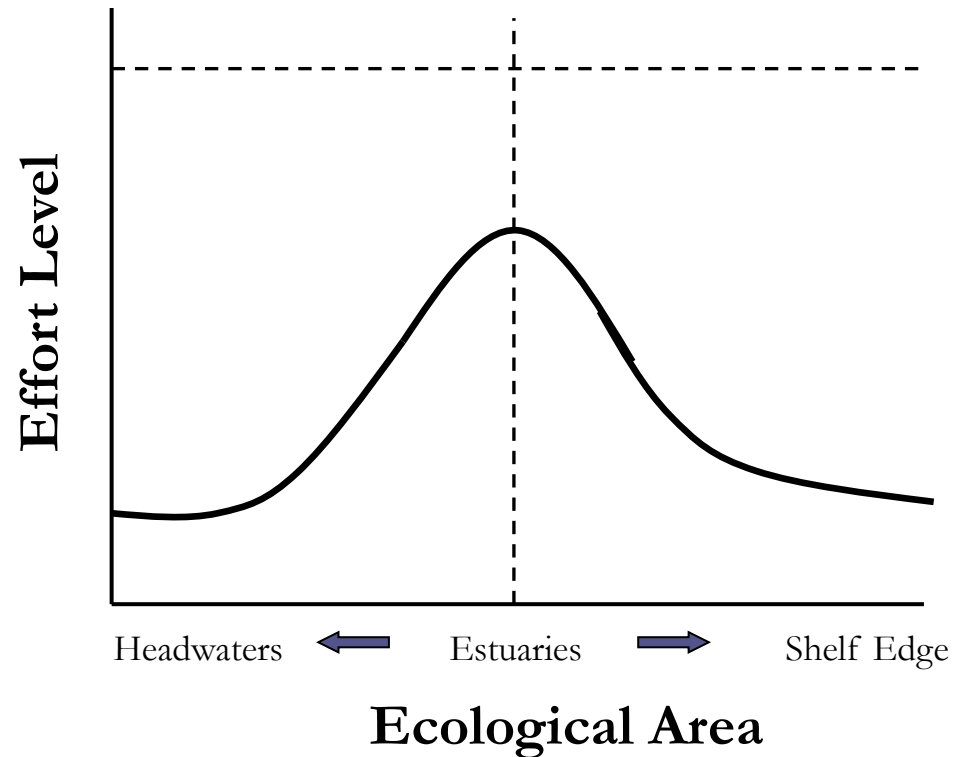




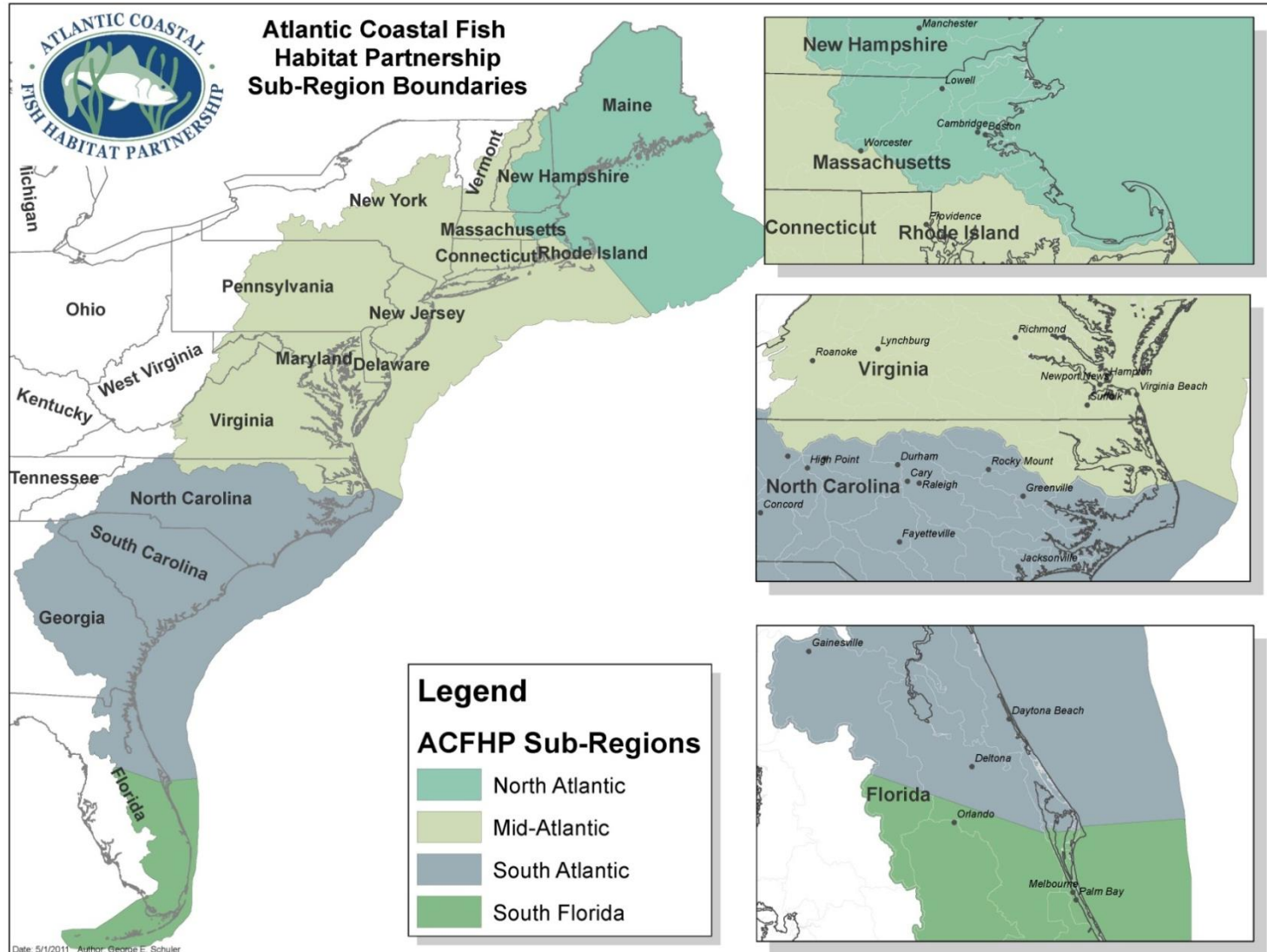
## Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership Partnership Boundary



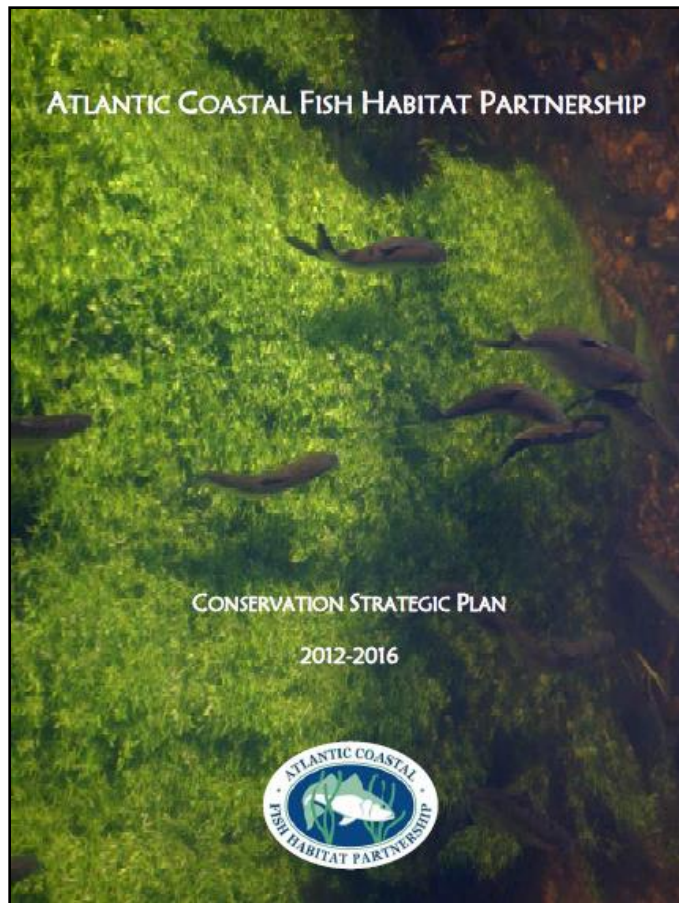
# What is ACFHP: Geographic Extent



# What is ACFHP: Partnership Sub-Regions



# Where we are and where we're going



ACFHP Goals → Objectives  
& Strategic Actions

Priority Threats and Habitats →  
Protection and Restoration

Programmatic Needs → Science  
and Data, Communications and  
Outreach, and Finance





# ACFHP Priority Habitats



- |                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| <b>North Atlantic</b> | Riverine Bottom<br>Submerged Aquatic Vegetation<br>Marine and Estuarine Shellfish Beds |
| <b>Mid-Atlantic</b>   | Riverine Bottom<br>Submerged Aquatic Vegetation<br>Tidal Vegetation                    |
| <b>South Atlantic</b> | Riverine Bottom<br>Marine and Estuarine Shellfish Beds<br>Tidal Vegetation             |
| <b>South Florida</b>  | Submerged Aquatic Vegetation<br>Coral and live / hard bottom<br>Mangrove               |



# ACFHP Priority Threats

- Obstructions to Fish Movement/ Habitat Connectivity
- Climate Change
- Dredging and Coastal Maintenance
- Water Quality Degradation and Eutrophication
- Consumptive Water Withdrawal
- Sedimentation
- Vessel Operation Impacts
- Contamination of Water (ground & surface) and Sediments
- Invasive Species



# Habitat Science Projects



- Assessment of Existing Habitat Information

[www8.nos.noaa.gov/bhv/spatbibindex.html](http://www8.nos.noaa.gov/bhv/spatbibindex.html)

- Species – Habitat Matrix

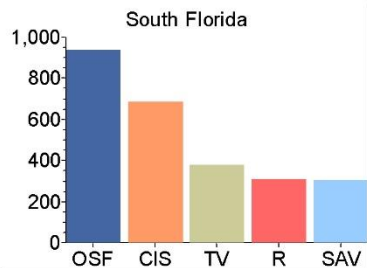
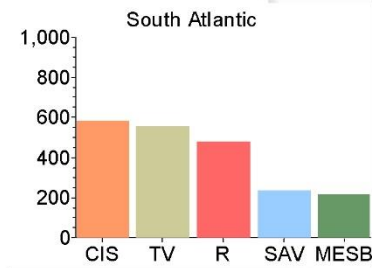
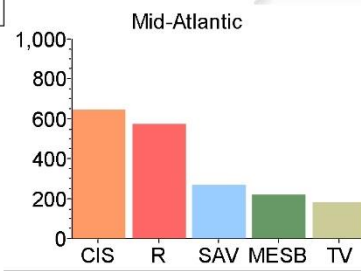
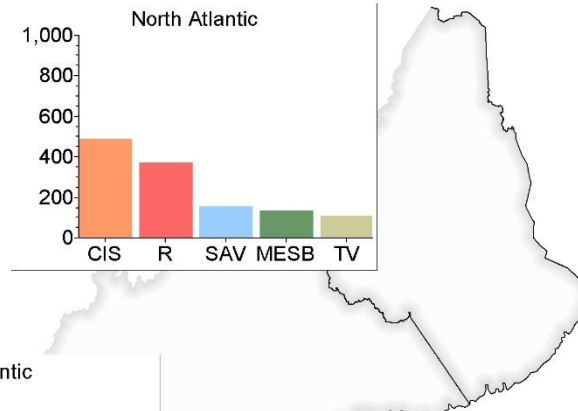
[www.atlanticfishhabitat.org/planningresources/database/](http://www.atlanticfishhabitat.org/planningresources/database/)

- North Atlantic Region Fish Habitat Assessment

- Winter flounder spatial habitat assessment model

[www.northatlanticlcc.org/projects/downstream-strategies-project](http://www.northatlanticlcc.org/projects/downstream-strategies-project)

# ACFHP Species-Habitat Matrix



Habitat Categories with the Highest Overall Scores



CIS - Coastal Inert Substrate



MESB - Marine & Estuarine Shellfish Beds



OSF - Other Sessile Fauna



R - Riverine

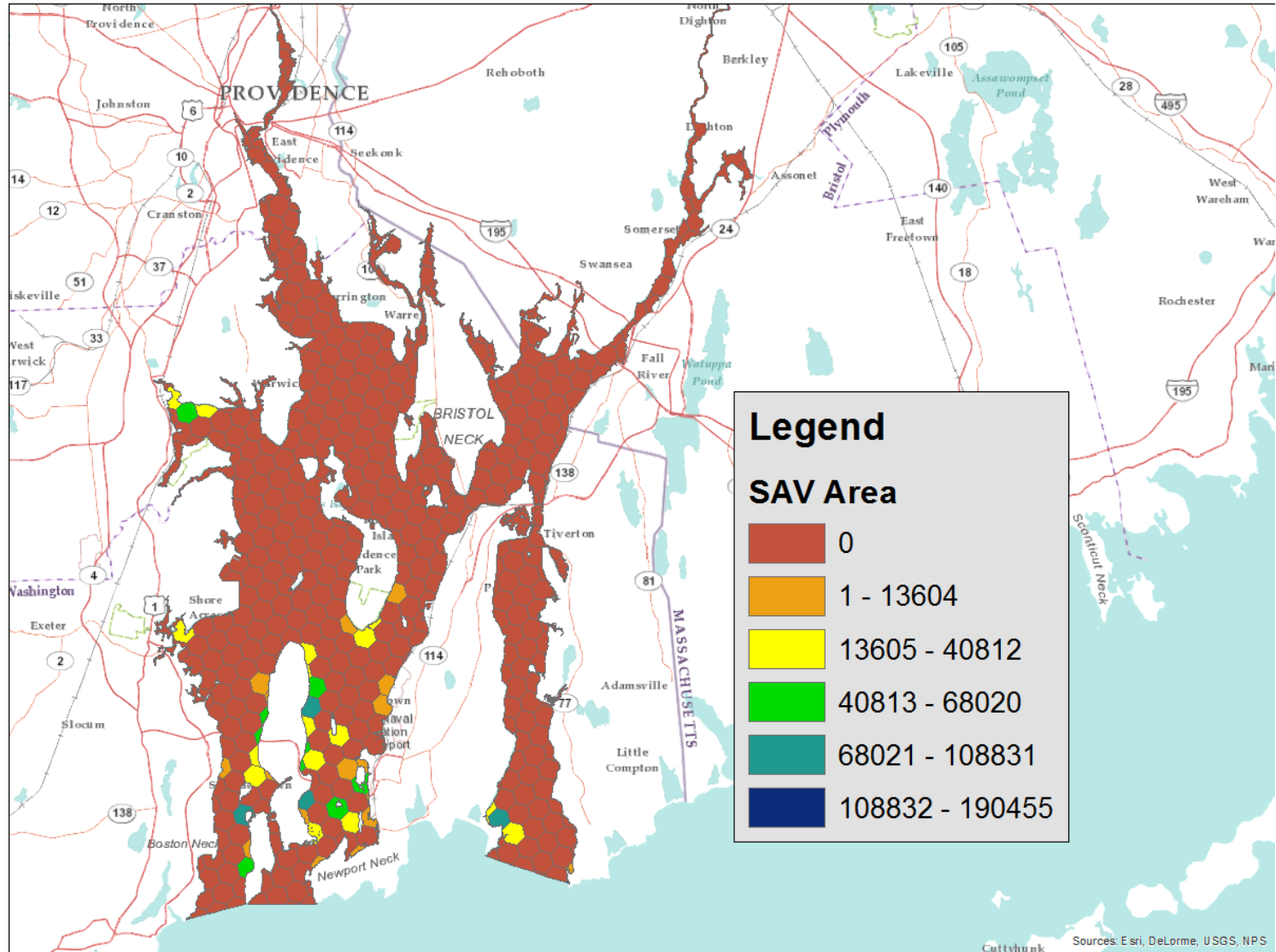


SAV - Submerged Aquatic Vegetation



TV - Tidal Vegetation

# ACFHP winter flounder habitat assessment




# On-the-Ground Project Funding

## USFWS-National Fish Habitat Partnership annual cycle


Fiscal Year	\$\$ Available	Applications Received	Projects Funded
2010	\$70,000	6	2
2011	\$74,000	8	2
2012	\$63,000	7	3
2013	\$59,000	11	2
2014	\$95,000	18	2


[www.atlanticfishhabitat.org/projects/fundedProjects/](http://www.atlanticfishhabitat.org/projects/fundedProjects/)



 Restoring Diadromous Fish Passage and Habitats to Shoreys Brook, ME (FY2011)

 Buzzards Bay Eelgrass Restoration, MA (FY2012)


 Scoy Pond and Staudinger's Pond Alewife Access and Habitat Enhancement, NY (FY2010)


 Expanding Marine Meadow Habitat, Peconic Estuary, NY (FY2013)

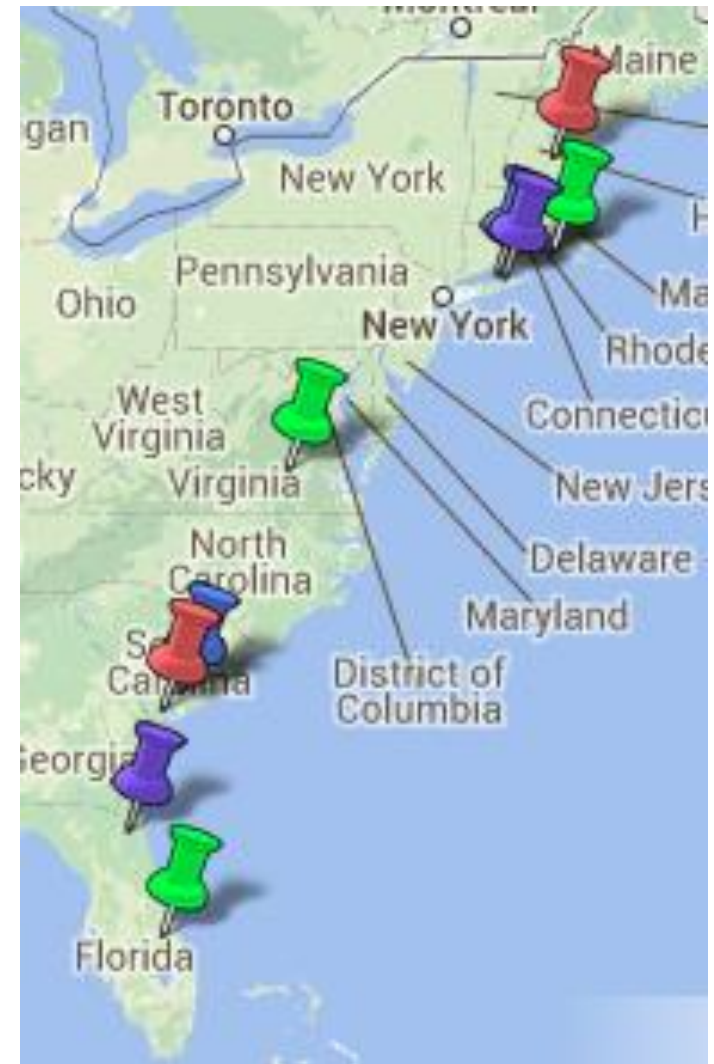
 James River Atlantic Sturgeon Habitat Restoration, VA (FY2012)

 Goose Creek Dam Eel Passage Restoration, SC (FY2010)

 Shoreline and *Spartina* Marsh Stabilization, Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway, SC (FY2011)

 Restoring Coastal Fish Habitat Using Oysters, Mussels, and Marsh Grass at Guana Peninsula, FL (FY2013)

 Restoring the Mangroves of the Indian River Lagoon, FL (FY2012)



# Endorsed Projects

-  Dam Removal and Habitat Restoration, Exeter/Squamscott River, NH
-  Eelgrass Conservation Moorings, MA & RI
-  Restore It and They Will Come: River Herring in the West River, CT
-  Alewife Outreach & Education, CT
-  South Atlantic Aquatic Connectivity Assessment and Tool
-  North River Farms Tidal Marsh Restoration, NC
-  Culvert Replacement on Longbranch Creek, SC
-  Grassy Flats Estuarine Habitat Restoration, FL





# Whitewater to Bluewater Initiative

## ■ ACFHP collaboration with other Eastern U.S. Fish Habitat Partnerships

- Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture
- Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership

<http://easternbrooktrout.org/groups/whitewater-to-bluewater>



## ■ Objectives

- Integrated aquatic habitat assessments
- Joint communications strategy and outreach products
- Focus on improving aquatic connectivity (eg, fish passage) to expand/re-open the range of species/stocks



# COASTAL FISH HABITAT PARTNERSHIPS

Ten of the 19 nationally recognized fish habitat partnerships help to protect, restore, and enhance fish habitats in coastal marine environments through:

- Outreach to enhance understanding and support for fish habitat improvements in marine systems
- On-the-ground fish habitat restoration projects
- Scientific research
- Fish habitat assessments
- Securing, leveraging and distributing resources
- Coordinating projects at a variety of scales
- Developing decision support tools
- Sharing information



## Pacific Marine and Estuarine FHP

- Protects, restores, and enhances juvenile fish habitat and connectivity among habitats in the nearshore Pacific Ocean and California, Oregon, and Washington estuaries
- Supports and promotes the protection, restoration, and enhancement of water quality and quantity to improve the function of estuarine and nearshore marine environments

## Western Native Trout Initiative

- Along the Pacific Northwest coast, WNTI supports coastal cutthroat trout data collection, conservation planning and habitat enhancement projects
- In Alaska, WNTI supports native trout and char data collection, conservation planning and habitat enhancement projects, including protection and enhancement of water quality and quantity of coastal freshwater systems

## Alaska Fish Habitat Partnerships

- Focus on abundant salmon resources and the shared recognition that coastal and estuarine waters are vital for salmon and other anadromous species
- Prevent the loss of vital coastal and estuarine waters, recognizing the role these habitats play in maintaining thriving fish, healthy habitats and vibrant communities
- Share a "ridges to reefs" approach, recognizing the intrinsic connections between freshwater and coastal habitats
- Help foster uncommon alliances of diverse stakeholders through efforts to better steward fish habitat

## California Fish Passage Forum

- Remediates barriers to effective fish migration
- Facilitates coordination and communication among entities working on fish passage
- Identifies, assesses, and prioritizes the removal of fish passage barriers
- Disseminates guidelines and design criteria for replacement of barriers

Southwest Alaska Salmon FHP  
Mat-Su Basin Salmon FHP  
Kenai Peninsula FHP  
Southeast Alaska FHP (candidate FHP)

## Hawaii FHP

- Develops and implements projects to benefit native aquatic life in streams, estuaries, and nearshore marine habitats
- Reduces impacts of instream structures that pose barriers to native species migration
- Plans and supports projects that link inland and nearshore marine ecosystems to protect, restore and maintain self-sustaining aquatic communities

## Atlantic Coastal FHP

- Accelerates the conservation, protection, and enhancement of habitat for native Atlantic coastal, estuarine-dependent, and diadromous fishes through partnerships
- Works from the headwaters of coastally draining rivers to the edge of the continental shelf to promote healthy fish habitats
- Produced a Species-Habitat Matrix for >100 fish species
- Funded and endorsed projects in coastal habitats from Maine through Florida

## Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership

- Strengthens the management and conservation of aquatic resources in estuarine and coastal habitats (2,900 miles of coast) in the SE U.S.
- Works with other FHPs to conserve fish habitat from "whitewater to bluewater" in 27 states (Maine to Texas)
- Implements and monitors restoration projects benefitting marine and anadromous fish habitat in nine SE states
- Provides cutting edge instream flow information through the Southern Instream Flow Network (SIFN)
- Addresses threats to coastal fish, shellfish and habitats

