

Council Habitat Initiatives

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Council Coordination Committee (CCC) Habitat Workgroup (Past, Present, and Future)

The CCC Habitat Workgroup was formed in 2014 to engage habitat staff from each Council with federal and regional NOAA Fisheries habitat coordinators to:

- 1) enable enhanced coordination of federal habitat initiatives,
- 2) discuss habitat requirements and their implementation, and,
- 3) allow members to share knowledge, experiences, and approaches to address fish habitat issues across the regions.

Since its inception, this workgroup has been chaired by Council staff and conducted in a manner that allows for both information sharing across regions as well as product development. In this presentation, the workgroup will highlight its past accomplishments, current projects and priorities, and suggest future priorities for the workgroup and CCC to consider.

Essential Fish Habitat Review (EFH) and Ecosystem Approaches to Fisheries Management (EAFM) for the Mid-Atlantic Council

The Mid-Atlantic Council is currently conducting an EFH Review. Its technical experts are working closely with the Northeast Fisheries Science Center to improve approaches to EFH and habitat area of particular concern designation, so that these designations better support the Council's EAFM goals. This presentation will discuss some of the products and tools that will improve the effectiveness of the designations for the EFH consultation process, the Council's EAFM risk assessment and management strategy evaluations, and for the future development of habitat indicators and metrics to track habitat change.

Regional Habitat Assessments to Support the National Habitat Initiatives

This presentation will discuss lessons learned from the 2015 National Fish Habitat Assessment⁴ and fish habitat assessment approaches in other regions that consider habitat degradation risk, fish habitat quality, and quantity of habitat. The Mid-Atlantic Council is developing a proposal to complete a regional fish habitat assessment. Region-specific assessments could more effectively accomplish the goals of the National Assessment while meeting other needs for the Councils, NOAA Fisheries, and habitat restoration practitioners in the region.

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⁴ Developed by the National Fish Habitat Partnership