



NOAA
FISHERIES

Restoring Our Nation's Coastal Habitat

The Importance of Habitat Restoration

Fish and other marine resources rely on healthy habitat to eat, grow, and reproduce—but **habitats benefit people, too**. Restoring habitat supports the communities that rely on those habitats for drinking water, flood protection, jobs, and more.

Wetlands provide tremendous benefits by filtering our water and protecting coastal communities from floods. Acting as natural sponges, wetlands can prevent up to 20 percent of damage from storms, protecting people, property, and infrastructure.

Rivers provide us with drinking water, irrigation, transportation, and more. By providing habitat for fish, they're also vital to our nation's economy. In 2016, commercial and recreational fishing supported 1.7 million jobs and generated \$212 billion in sales in the United States.

Coral reefs are one of the planet's most diverse habitats, supporting nearly one-quarter of all marine species. By providing jobs, habitat, and wave protection, coral reefs in the United States provide \$1.75 billion in ecosystem services each year.

Oyster reefs help filter our water; serve as habitat for fish, invertebrates, and other shellfish; and provide communities with food, jobs, and protection from waves and erosion. Restoring just 2.5 acres of oyster reefs can provide up to \$99,000 in ecosystem services each year.

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NOAA Restoration Center
Office of Habitat Conservation
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www.fisheries.noaa.gov/habitat-conservation

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About the NOAA Restoration Center

The NOAA Restoration Center, housed within the Office of Habitat Conservation in NOAA Fisheries, invests in habitat restoration across the country where our fisheries and protected resources need it most.

Since our creation in 1991, we have:



Collaborated with over **3,000** partners.



Supported more than **3,500** projects.



Restored over **146,000** acres of habitat.



Opened over **6,500** miles of streams to access by fish.

Over nearly 30 years, we have invested more than **\$1 billion**—and leveraged countless additional funds—for restoration activities across the country.

Our investments in habitat restoration strengthen communities and the economy. For example, restoration work in Muskegon, Michigan, led to a **6 to 1** return on investment to the local economy. On average, habitat restoration supports **15 jobs** per \$1 million invested.

Our funding supports work through programs such as our Community-based Restoration Program; NOAA's Damage Assessment, Remediation, and Restoration Program; the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection, and Restoration Act; the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative; and more.



Our Key Focus Areas

In collaboration with our national network of partners, we leverage funding, provide technical assistance, and develop high-quality restoration projects within four primary areas:

Recovering threatened and endangered species

All species need healthy habitat to survive: for food, protection, and safe areas to grow and reproduce.

We play a major role in the recovery of threatened and endangered species by supporting projects that restore the habitats these vulnerable species rely on.

Supporting sustainable fisheries

Coastal habitats are home to more than 75 percent of our nation's commercial fish catch and 80 to 90 percent of recreational fish catch.

Our work restoring habitats that these fish—and their prey—rely on helps sustain the cultural and economic benefits that fisheries provide the nation.

Reversing damage from oil spills and toxic releases

As stewards of the nation's coastal and marine resources, we work to restore natural resources damaged by oil spills, hazardous waste releases, and ship groundings.

In turn, we protect valuable benefits like tourism, recreation, jobs, and flood protection.

Strengthening coastal resilience

America's coasts are under increasing pressure from the impacts of extreme weather and changing ocean conditions.

Our work protects community safety and well-being by reducing vulnerability to floods and other hazards, saving hundreds of millions of dollars in storm damage.



While our office is headquartered in Silver Spring, Maryland, our regional staff work with communities across the country to develop meaningful partnerships and foster local restoration.

Across the United States, we provide funding and technical support for projects that support our nation's fisheries through a variety of strategies and programs, including restoring fish passage, wetlands, corals, and shellfish.

In the **Northeast** and **Great Lakes**, this work includes:

- Reopening historic river habitat to migratory fish.
- Restoring the flow of tides into and out of coastal wetlands.
- Supporting the restoration of "toxic hotspots" in the Great Lakes region, known as Areas of Concern.

In the **Southeast** and **Caribbean**, this work includes:

- Increasing coastal resilience through large-scale wetland restoration.
- Using cutting-edge techniques to restore healthy coral reefs.
- Restoring natural resources injured by the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill.

In the **Pacific**, this work includes:

- Restoring habitat for threatened and endangered species like salmon and steelhead.
- Reopening marsh and estuary habitat to juvenile fish while providing flood protection for local communities.
- Supporting healthy coral ecosystems.