

# Essential Fish Habitat in Hawai'i

## An Example for a Shallow-Water Bottomfish, Grey Snapper or Uku (*Aprion virescens*)

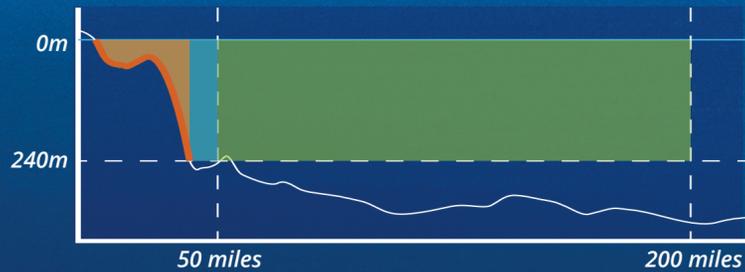
Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) includes all the places in the ocean where federally managed fish and invertebrates live and reproduce across their entire life cycle. These habitats are "essential" because, without them, fish would not be able to survive. To conserve these important habitats, federal agencies must consider them when planning, permitting, funding, or conducting other activities that may have negative effects. As an example for EFH, consider uku, an important commercial bottomfish species in the main Hawaiian Islands.

Uku is a relatively shallow-water snapper that lives in the water column and close to the seafloor at different points in its life. EFH for uku includes all of the ocean areas that support its life cycle—for spawning, breeding, growing, and feeding.

Shallow-Water Bottomfish EFH From Above



Shallow-Water Bottomfish EFH From the Side



The extent of the EFH footprint for uku varies by life history stage. EFH for eggs (BLUE) is bounded by the mean low tide line out to 50 miles. For larvae in the post-hatch pelagic life stage (GREEN), EFH runs all the way from the shore to the outer boundary of the 200 mile Exclusive Economic Zone. For juveniles and adults (ORANGE), EFH is designated to a line where the ocean bottom is a depth of 787.4 ft (240 m).

EFH can change over time as scientists learn more or as conditions change; this example is from March 2020.

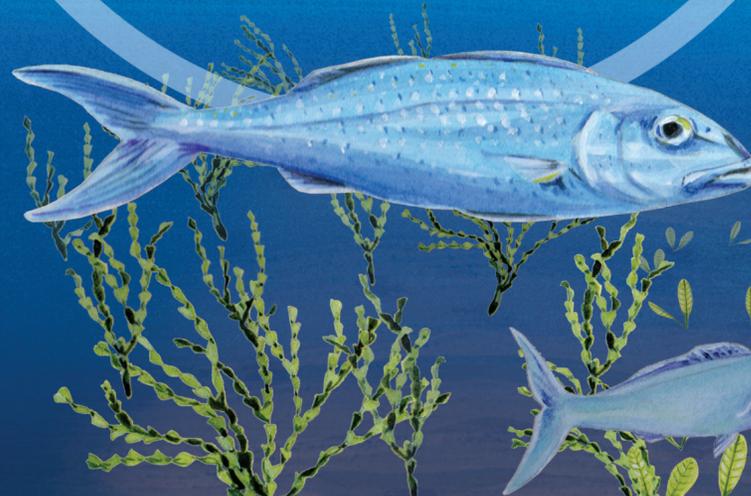


Eggs



Larvae

Uku eggs and larvae are found in the water column. EFH for eggs and post-hatch larvae includes the water column down to 787.4 ft (240 m).



Juveniles

Uku juveniles, sub-adults, and adults can live from the surface of the water to the seafloor across a variety of habitats. EFH for these life stages includes the water column to 787.4 ft (240 m) and all bottom habitats.



Adults

These bottom habitats include reefs and underwater vegetation, as well as man-made structures like piers and shipwrecks and their associated biological communities.

The health of fish populations like uku depends on the amount and quality of their habitat.

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