

# Session overview

- Linking habitat to fishery productivity.

*Correigh Greene, NMFS Northwest Fishery Science Center*

- Overview of NMFS and Council opportunities to communicate habitat objectives and guide habitat conservation investments.

*Kara Meckley, NMFS Office of Habitat Conservation*

- Group discussion on options and next steps.

# Discussion questions

- How can Councils better articulate habitat goals and objectives to NMFS and other partners?
- How would these concepts work in the Council process?
- How can we enhance cross-Council collaboration on habitat issues?
- How can NMFS assist the Councils in this work?



**NOAA**  
**FISHERIES**

# Habitat Conservation: Increasing Fishery Productivity

**Kara Meckley**

Office of Habitat Conservation  
NOAA Fisheries

Council Coordination Committee

May 13, 2014

# Concepts discussed today:

1. Habitat conservation objectives

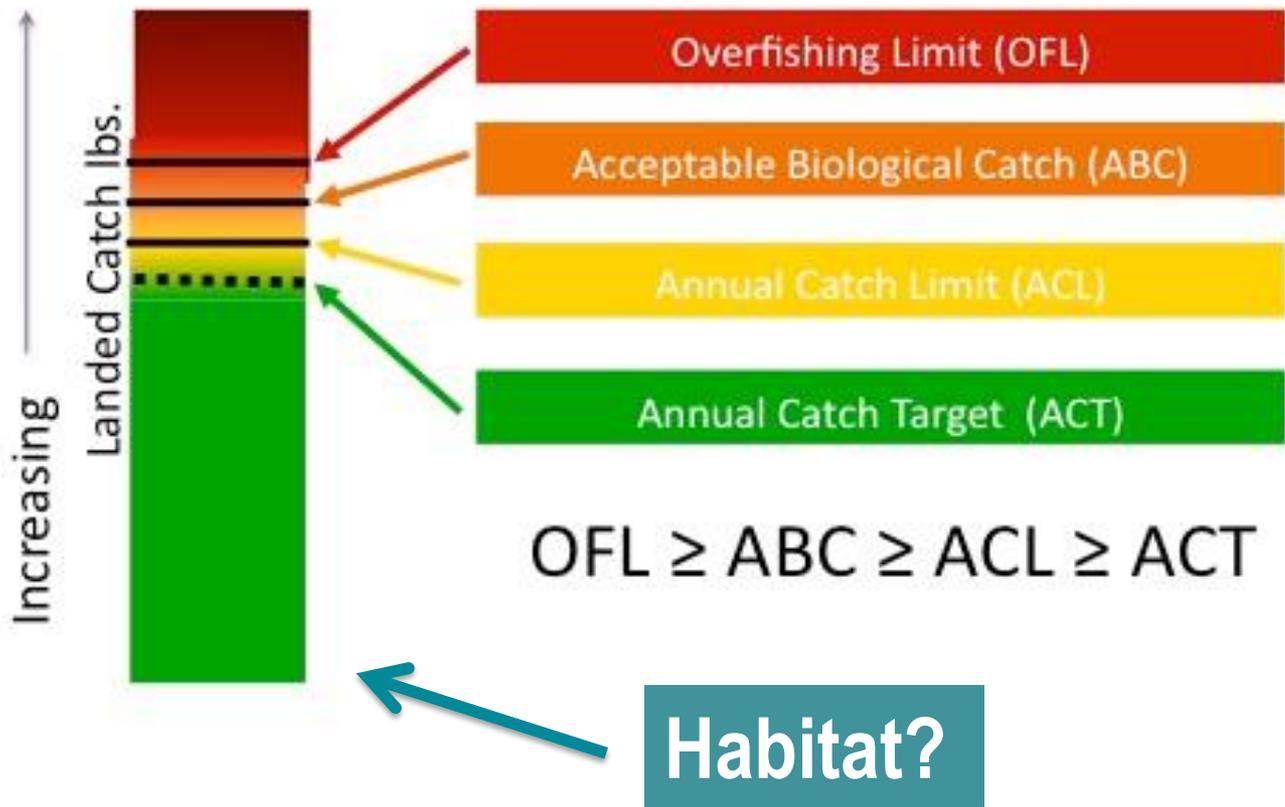
2. Strategic HAPCs

3. Cross-Council coordination

# 1: Habitat conservation objectives

- Drive habitat science & management decisions
- Guide investment decisions
- Measure progress
- Demonstrate value

# Fishing objectives in FMPs



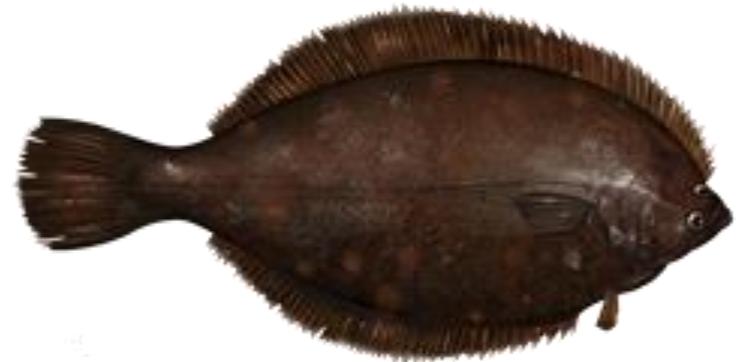
# Current **fishing** objective: Winter flounder

Rebuild SNE/MA winter flounder by 2023  
with a median probability of success

*Further established ACLs*

\*Stock assessments inform the objective.

\*Targets and management decisions driven by objective.



*Framework Adjustment 50 to NE Multispecies FMP*

# Habitat objectives: Winter flounder



Adopt measures consistent with the habitat provisions of MSA, including identification of EFH and minimizing impacts on habitat to the extent practicable.

*(Multispecies FMP Amendment 16)*

Improved refuge for critical life history stages

*(Omnibus Habitat Amendment 2)*

## *Potential habitat objective?*

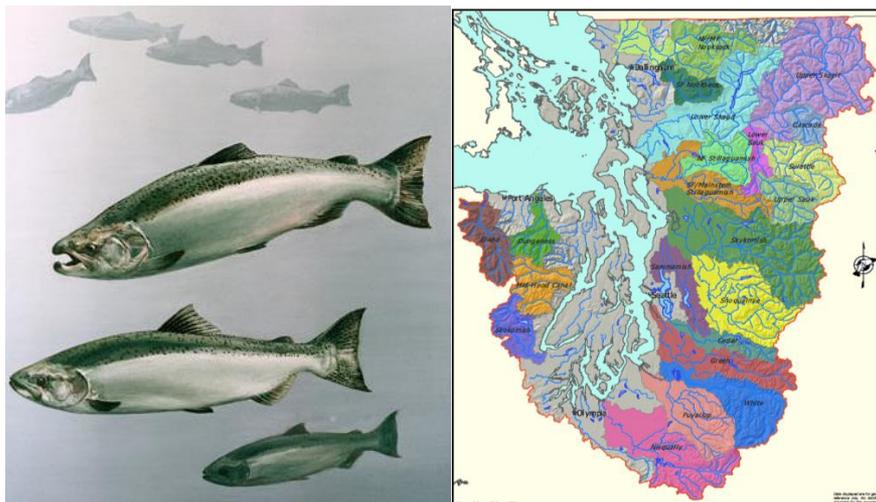
20% increase in winter flounder productivity by protecting shallow water habitats essential to juvenile settlement.

**Habitat target?:** 10% increase in eelgrass extent in Mid-Atlantic coastal areas by next EFH review.

## *Interim habitat objective?*

Protect shallow water winter flounder spawning habitats during juvenile settlement.

# Example: Puget Sound Partnership Chinook Salmon recovery goals



**PugetSoundPartnership**

LEADING PUGET SOUND RECOVERY

- No declining abundance in any wild Chinook populations.
- 10% of the bluff-backed beaches with high sediment supply or priority nearshore habitat facing development pressure are protected by 2020.
- 15% of degraded floodplain areas are restored ... and there is no additional loss of floodplain function in any Puget Sound watershed by 2020.

# Habitat conservation objectives: Outcomes



- Stronger recommendations during consultations
- Effective Council engagement on non-fishing impacts
- Increased partner investment
- Focused habitat research
- More targeted Habitat Areas of Particular Concern
- Ability to measure progress & demonstrate results

# Proposed next steps: West Coast Pilot



- Build on West Coast Habitat Assessments.
- Identify fishery-specific habitat conservation objectives for 2-4 focal species.
- Develop habitat conservation plan.
- Inform future PFMC work.
- Share lessons learned with other Councils.

## 2. Strategic HAPCs

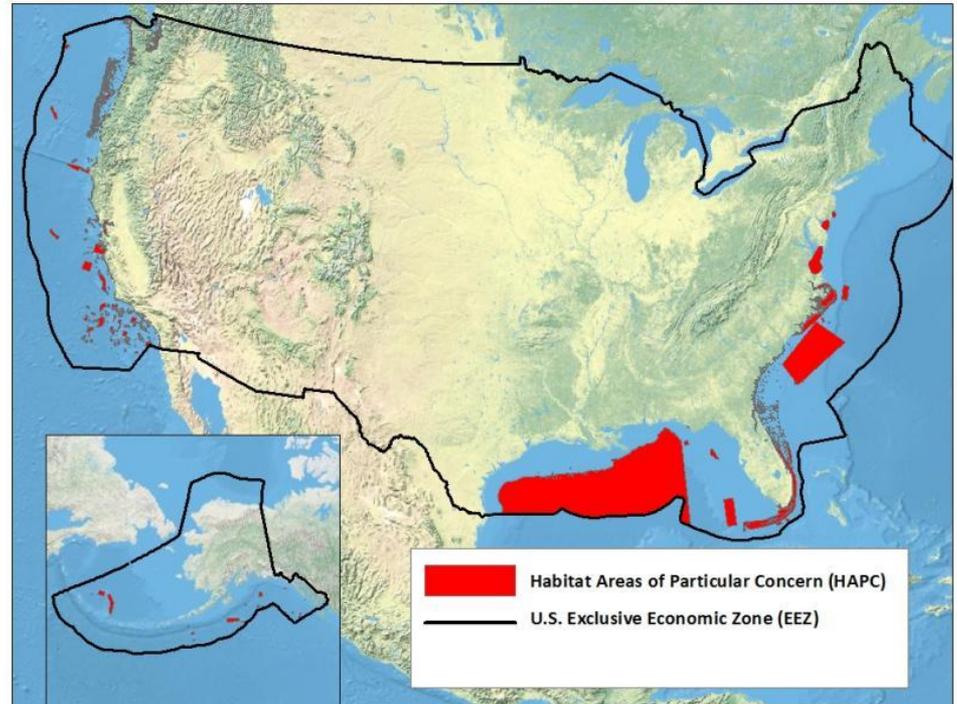
# 2. Strategic HAPCs

## HAPC criteria:

- Ecological function
- Sensitivity to human-induced degradation
- Stress from development
- Rarity

## Options for strategic HAPCs:

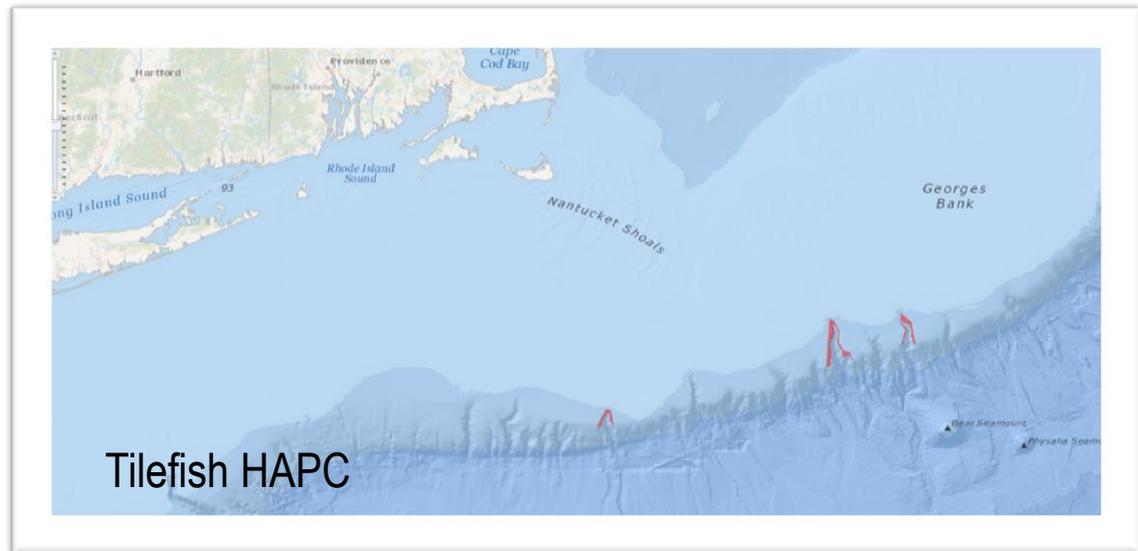
- Multispecies HAPCs
- Identify specific objectives in HAPCs



# Proposed next steps: Mid-Atlantic Pilot



**MID-ATLANTIC** FISHERY  
MANAGEMENT  
COUNCIL



# 3. Cross-Council Coordination

# 3. Sharing habitat strategies across Councils



- Currently few opportunities to coordinate on habitat issues.
- No collective national story on council efforts to conserve habitat.
- Options for continued collaboration?
  - National SSC workshops.
  - Informal working group.
  - Others?

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