Habitat Considerations in ecosystem approaches to fisheries management

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Topics covered today:

- Habitat themes from MONF3 and the East Coast Forum
- National efforts to connect habitat conservation activities to sustainable fishery outcomes
Key habitat themes from MONF3, ECF

- NMFS should invest in habitat research that connects habitat quality and quantity to stock productivity.
- Councils are interested in increasing their engagement on non-fishing impacts to habitat.
- NMFS and Councils should set clear objectives and establish metrics.
- NMFS should provide guidance to implement EBFM.
National efforts to integrate habitat conservation with sustainable fisheries outcomes

- Fill gaps in habitat science
- Implement a more strategic approach to habitat conservation
- Integrate habitat conservation into fishery management decisions
- Share habitat and ecosystem strategies across fishery management councils
Fill gaps in habitat science

- Implement HAIP
- Prioritize fish stocks for habitat assessments
Implement strategic approach to habitat conservation

- Identify habitat-dependent stocks
- Work with interested Councils to establish clear goals and objectives
- Target habitat conservation activities towards achieving those goals
Strategic approach to habitat conservation (cont...)

- Habitat objectives don’t exist in many FMPs.
- Where they do, relatively weak or procedural:
  - “Contribute to the protection of biodiversity and ecosystem structure”. (Mid-Atlantic Bluefish)
  - “To provide adequate protection for spawning herring and prevent damage to herring egg beds”. (New-England Herring FMP)
Integrate habitat conservation into fishery management decisions

• Use habitat tools to aid the rebuilding of depleted stocks

• Consider changes to MSA to:
  • Prioritize habitat activities
  • Move towards EBFM
Share habitat strategies across Councils

• Currently few opportunities to coordinate on habitat issues

• No collective national story on council efforts to conserve habitat

• **Upcoming opportunities:**
  • February ‘14 CCC meeting
  • National SSC workshops?
Thanks!