



NOAA's Habitat Blueprint

Improving fisheries, marine life, and coastal communities through habitat conservation

June 28th, 2013

WHY DO WE NEED A HABITAT BLUEPRINT?

ECOLOGICAL CHALLENGES:

- Widespread habitat loss and degradation
 - **111,000 acres of estuarine wetlands lost between 2004-2007**
 - **45% increase in coastal watershed county population from 1970 to 2010**



WHY DO WE NEED A HABITAT BLUEPRINT?

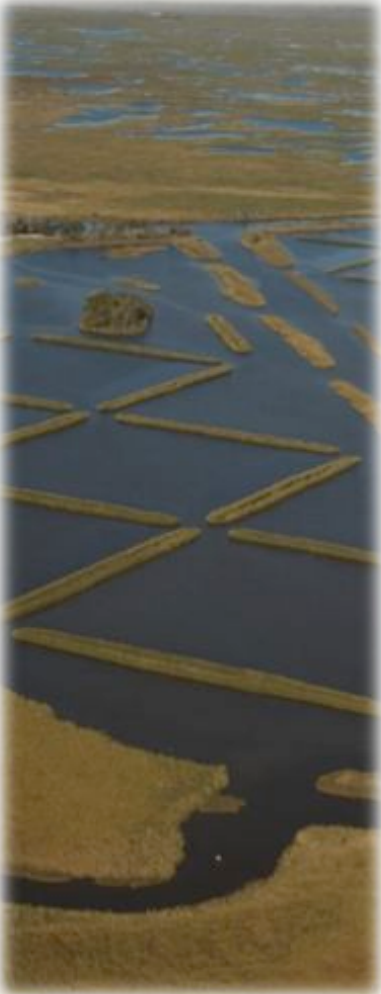


ORGANIZATIONAL DRIVERS:

- Need to be more efficient with limited resources
- Small-scale conservation activities have limited impact
- Charge to coordinate habitat activities across NOAA



NOAA'S STRATEGY: THE HABITAT BLUEPRINT

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- **A *framework* to improve habitat for fisheries, marine life, and coastal communities**
 - **Improving the way we do business**
 - **Built around Guiding Principles**
 - **Implemented through key approaches**

BLUEPRINT GUIDING PRINCIPLES



- **Prioritize resources and activities across NOAA** to improve habitat conditions
- **Make decisions in an ecosystem context** and consider competing priorities
- **Foster and leverage partnerships**
- **Improve delivery of habitat science** to facilitate decision-making

BLUEPRINT KEY APPROACHES



- 1) Implement a Systematic and Strategic Approach to **Habitat Science**
- 2) Strengthen **Policy and Legislation**
- 3) Establish long-term **Habitat Focus Areas**

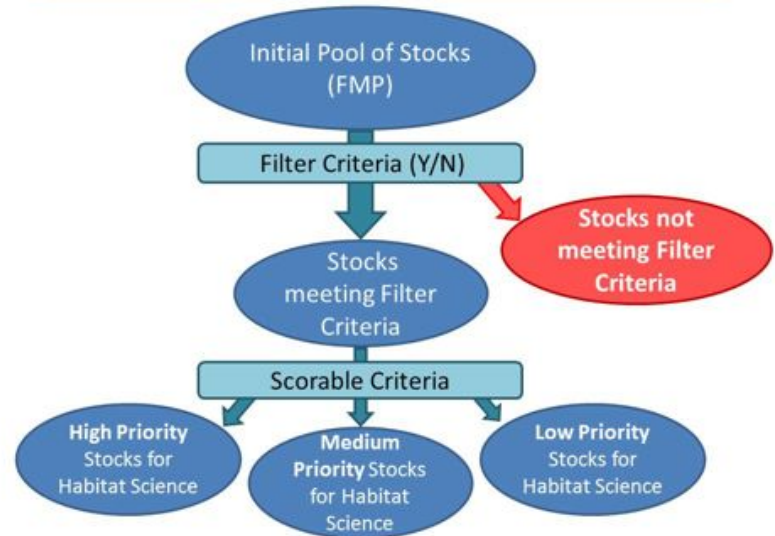
1) HABITAT SCIENCE

Prioritizing fish stocks for habitat assessments

Will help NOAA and the Councils

- Fill gaps in habitat science
- Clarify objectives for habitat-dependent fish stocks
- Target habitat conservation activities

Summary of Prioritization Process



2) POLICY & LEGISLATION

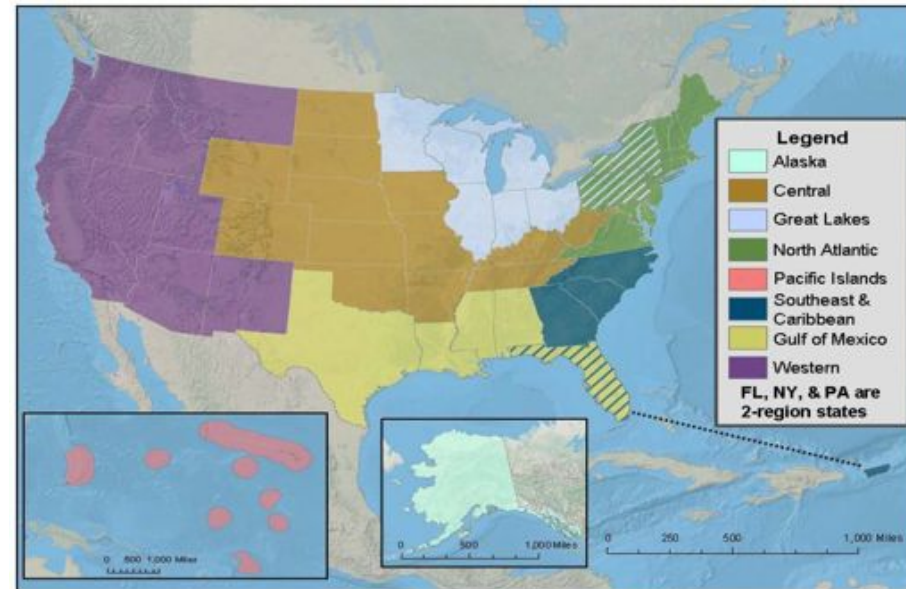


- Use habitat conservation to maintain and rebuild sustainable fisheries
 - Clarify habitat objectives for fish stocks
 - Address bycatch impacts on biogenic habitats
 - Integrate habitat conservation measures into rebuilding plans
 - Engage fishery management councils in habitat conservation



3) HABITAT FOCUS AREAS

- Prioritize long-term habitat science and conservation efforts
- Achieve measurable benefits for NOAA's multiple habitat objectives and mandates:
 - ◆ Sustainable fisheries
 - ◆ Protected species
 - ◆ Protected coastal and marine areas
 - ◆ Resilient coastal communities
 - ◆ Coastal and ocean recreation
- Maximize our investments



RECAP—WHY THE BLUEPRINT?



- **Increasing need to be even more effective with our habitat programs:**
 - Continued habitat loss and degradation
 - Limited funding
- **Blueprint principles = our strategy to be even stronger**
 - Prioritize resources and activities
 - Make decisions in an ecosystem context
 - Link science to decision-making
 - Achieve measurable objectives
 - Leverage partnerships



OPPORTUNITIES FOR COUNCILS



Set habitat objectives for priority fish stocks

Integrate habitat considerations into fishery management decisions

Protect habitats from non-fishing impacts

Provide input to Habitat Focus Area selection and implementation planning



FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit:

www.noaa.gov/habitatblueprint.html

and

www.habitat.noaa.gov

