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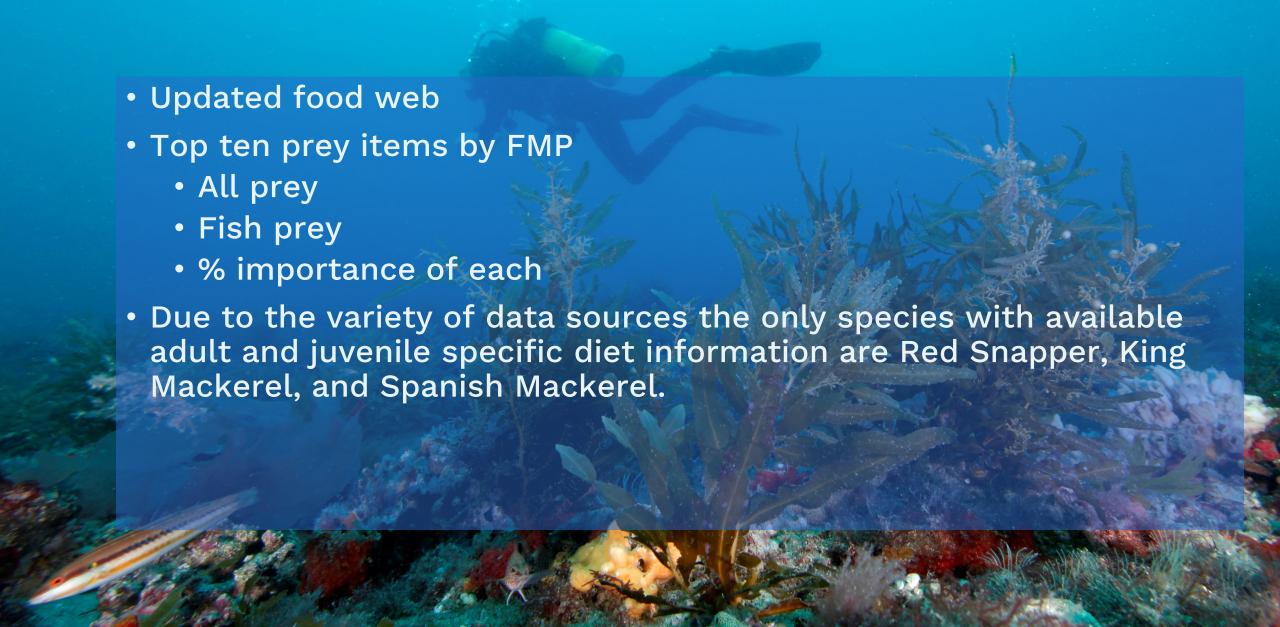
Integration of Revised Food Webs and Connectivity Policy Information into EFH designations

# Food Web and Connectivity Policy Revisions



- The HEAP received a presentation on the revised policy in October 2024 and agreed to the changes:
  - Update the food web map
  - Update diet information
  - Define prey abundance
  - Update references
  - Integrate a new appendix identifying the top 5 prey items per FMP
- Presented to Council at the March 2025 meeting

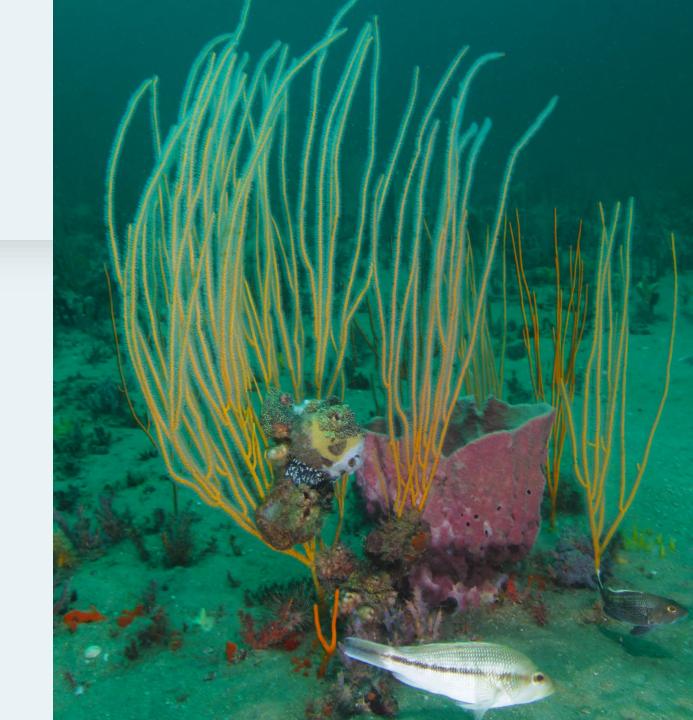
## New information added to the Policy



# How do we integrate food web information into EFH designations?

The working group looked at other councils' methods for integrating prey information into EFH designations.

- Ecosystem component species?
- Identifying top prey and designating them as EFH?
- Identifying the habitat of top prey and identifying that as EFH?
- Describing it in the FMP as part of the life history summary?



#### **Potential Concerns**

Add a prey dependence definition in the user guide (ex. Gulf EFH amendment)

#### Concerns:

- If we do species-specific analyses, it may be lengthy, but guild-level analyses may miss specialists.
- Add in life history stages?
- When to separate specialists?
- Need to determine prey habitat use.
- How many top prey to include?
- Identifying prey habitats that are outside of where the predator resides.



- Identify very different (life history wise) species
- Identify information of importance
  - Top prey by species
  - Habitat use of prey by life stage
  - Habitat use by predator by life stage
  - Identify areas that don't overlap
  - Draft a prey dependency paragraph for each
- Develop best practices/lessons learned
- Bring those to the next HEAP meeting

### **Example Species**



- Gray Triggerfish nest builder, pelagic larval stage, hard bottom adult stage
- Red Snapper Lots of information, general predator, not a specialist
- Dolphinfish Large pelagic predator
- Golden Crab Benthic predator
- Tomtate low trophic level, hard bottom juvenile and adult stage
- Gag Grouper estuarine larval stage, hard bottom adult stage, lots of juvenile data available

Feedback on Chosen Species? Volunteers by species?

Work completion goal December 2029