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THE SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

Habitat Blueprint Update

Outreach and Communications Advisory Panel – October 2023



Background

The Council developed a Habitat Program Evaluation and Blueprint (Blueprint) to:

- define the goals and objectives of its habitat program,
- ensure MSA requirements are addressed by Council FMPs, and
- provide guidance and direction for habitat program activities.



The background of the slide is a vibrant underwater photograph of a coral reef. In the foreground, there are large, rounded, brownish-orange coral structures. To the left, there are tall, feathery, reddish-brown coral. To the right, there are more complex, branching corals in shades of purple and pink. Numerous small, blue fish are swimming throughout the scene. The water is clear, and sunlight filters down from the surface, creating a shimmering effect. A small, dark, horizontal bar is visible in the top left corner.

Habitat Program Purpose Statement

To support the identification, monitoring, and protection of the habitats required by the species managed by the South Atlantic Council to preserve their ecosystem function and ensure their long-term sustainable use.

Goal 1. Comply with habitat mandates of the MSA and its amendments

1. Describe and identify essential fish habitat (EFH) for the fishery as required in Council Fishery Management Plans (FMP).
2. Provide information for use in FMP development to minimize, to the extent practicable, adverse effects on such habitat caused by fishing.
3. Identify other actions to encourage the conservation and enhancement of such habitat.
4. **Provide information to support the Council's role in mandatory EFH reviews.**
5. **Provide information to support Council comments on activities by Federal or State agencies that may impact the habitat of the resources managed by the Council.**

Goal 2. Provide information to support Council communication on habitat issues

1. Provide habitat research needs for consideration in Council Research and Monitoring Plans.
2. Provide habitat research needs and Council habitat priorities to inform regional planning and research efforts.
3. **Provide information to support Council responses to habitat related requests for information.**
4. **Provide information to support Council outreach activities on habitat issues.**

Blueprint Contents

- EFH Designations
- EFH Review
- Advisory Panel
 - Revisions to purpose, name, structure, membership, charge, etc.
- EFH Consultation and Council Comment
 - Comment development process
 - Comment follow up and tracking
- EFH Policies
 - Policy development process
- Information products developed to support Habitat Program
- Habitat partnerships
- **Outreach and communication strategy**
- Habitat Program Workplan
- Evaluation



The background of the slide features a close-up, slightly blurred image of a person's hand pointing at a map. The map shows various colored lines (blue, red, green) representing roads or transit routes. A white rectangular text box with a torn-edge effect is positioned on the left side of the image, containing the title and a list of recommendations. The title 'OC AP Recommendations' is in a large, bold, dark blue font. Below it is a bulleted list of seven recommendations in a smaller, dark blue font. The overall aesthetic is professional and informative.

OC AP Recommendations

- Use the website and story maps to increase awareness of the Council's role in habitat protection;
- Consider other Councils' websites and presentation of EFH;
- Highlight habitat protection work separately from ecosystem-based management work;
- Develop a short video on what the Council can and cannot do relevant to habitat;
- Make a general connection between healthy habitat and healthy fisheries;
- Use an infographic to illustrate the role of the Council.



Current Habitat Webpage

- <https://safmc.net/fishery-management-plans/habitat/>

Next Steps

- Communication goal and objectives
- Target audience(s)
- Intended outcome
- Key messages
- Communication channel(s) and tools

