

EFH in the Magnuson-Stevens Act

Purpose: to promote the protection of essential fish habitat in the review of projects conducted under Federal permits, licenses, or other authorities that affect or have the potential to affect such habitat."

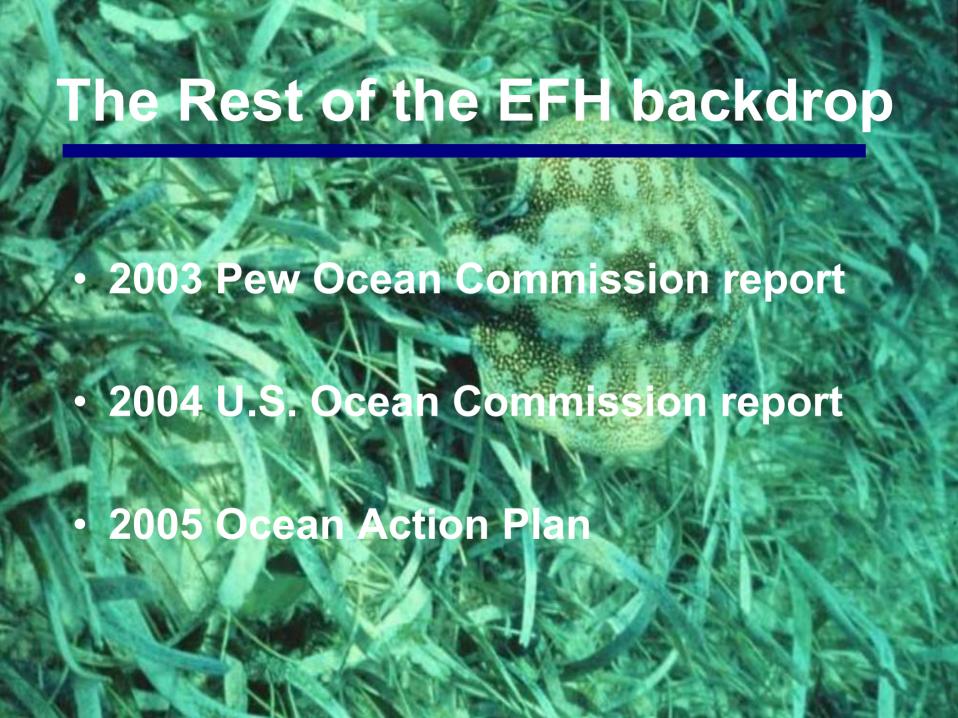
<u>Definition</u>: "Essential fish habitat means those waters and substrate <u>necessary</u> to fish for spawning, breeding, feeding, or growth to maturity." - -

Three Key Elements of EFH Mandate

- Describe and identify EFH.
- Minimize to the extent practicable adverse effects of fishing and identify other actions for the conservation of such habitat.
- Provides for a consultation process for actions that may adversely affect EFH.



- HAPCs are subsets of EFH that merit particular conservation focus.
- HAPCs are valuable tools for focusing management actions on specific areas.



How does EFH help?

- Placed greater emphasis on habitat in the context of fishery management – ecosystem approach.
- Mandate spurred synthesis of diverse science for EFH conservation purposes.
- Consultation requirement encouraged greater agency communication and consideration of fish habitat.

Successful examples

 Alaska's new HAPCs: proactive conservation that fishing and environmental interests support.

 New England Habitat closures that protect cod habitat permanently and minimize impacts to fishermen.



Plan for 2005 and beyond

- Will not revise regulations at this time.
- Will make targeted changes to technical guidance to refine EFH and improve the way we address adverse impacts to EFH.
- Will continue to push for basic science and mapping for habitat distribution, species/habitat relationships, and impacts.

