

# NOAA FISHERIES SERVICE

## ***The National Fish Habitat Action Plan***

*The National Fish Habitat Action Plan is a bold new initiative to protect, restore, and maintain America's aquatic ecosystems.*

The National Fish Habitat Action Plan is a nationwide, partnership-based investment strategy to increase the return on fish habitat conservation efforts. The Action Plan encourages collaboration between public agencies, private organizations, and citizens to provide ecosystem-wide results. With a network of regional partnerships setting priorities based on scientific assessment and strategic planning, the Action Plan provides a framework for collaborative action to conserve habitats vital to coastal and marine fisheries, which contribute over \$70 billion annually to the U.S. economy. NOAA provides leadership in implementing the Action Plan to help sustain these valuable habitats and the communities that depend on them.

### **Benefits to NOAA**

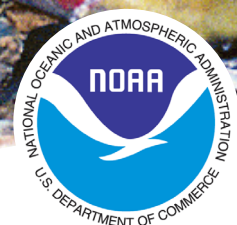
- The Action Plan offers an unprecedented opportunity to pursue cooperative, proactive fish habitat conservation goals at multiple geographic scales.
- The Action Plan provides increased support for NOAA mandates through conservation of Essential Fish Habitat for harvested species, Critical Habitat for protected species, and other important habitats.
- National fish habitat assessments, conducted every five years, will inform science based strategic priorities and planning, and provide a nationally standardized source of data for use across regions and partnerships. Partnership-based monitoring documents the success of NOAA's conservation programs.

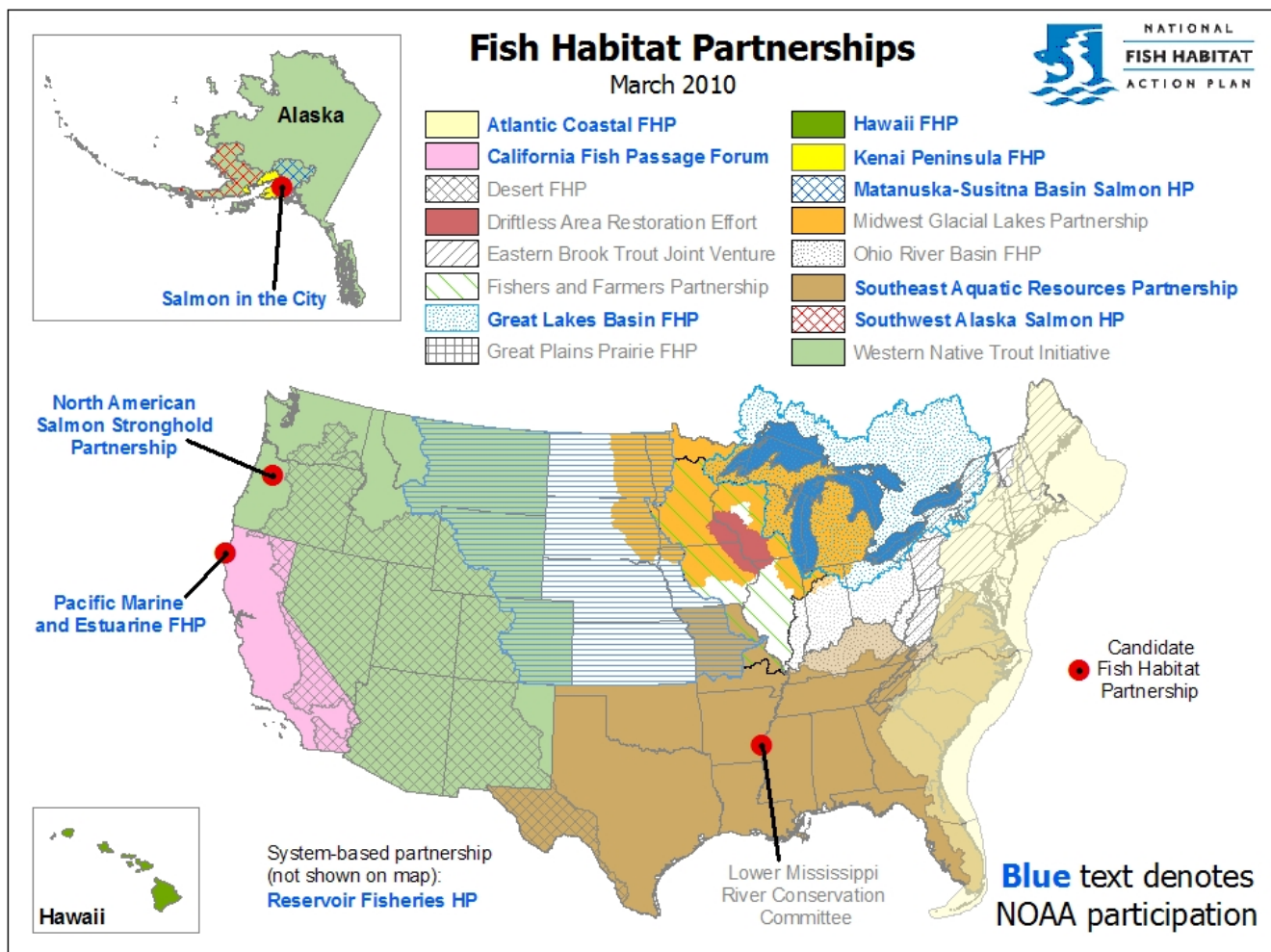
### **NOAA Roles and Activities**

NOAA provides leadership and staff support at the national level, while also lending technical support and strategic guidance to individual fish habitat partnerships. The national assessment of fish habitat is a key Action Plan science product, and NOAA has taken the lead in developing the coastal and marine components of this effort.

### **The National Fish Habitat Action Plan is:**

- Voluntary
- Locally and regionally based
- Built on collaborative effort
- Focused on habitat conservation
- Science based and action oriented
- Sustainable and accountable, providing long-term investments and demonstrable results





NOAA's involvement with the National Fish Habitat Action Plan focuses on achieving measurable gains in coastal and marine habitat quantity and quality, with an emphasis on the services provided by healthy ecosystems. Examples of NOAA's participation include:

- **Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership:** NOAA has contributed to a major restoration of nearshore oyster reefs and native vegetation, thereby reducing wave energy, stabilizing shorelines, and improving marine habitat diversity at Florida's MacDill Air Force Base. On the Pascagoula River in Mississippi, NOAA is working with partners to restore tidal marsh habitat affected by Hurricane Katrina and urban development, benefiting multiple species of fish and shrimp.
- **Mat-Su Basin Salmon Habitat Partnership:** NOAA has helped to, develop a strategic plan and to implement projects restoring degraded stream reaches. Removal of more than three dozen problem culverts on the Little Susitna River has opened fish passage for the basin's thriving salmon populations.
- **Southwest Alaska Salmon Habitat Partnership:** NOAA's Coastal and Estuarine Lands Conservation Program is part of a partnership working to secure a conservation agreement protecting more than 21,000 acres on the Agulowak River, one of the salmon-rich jewels of southwest Alaska. The Agulowak River provides spawning habitat for 200,000 sockeye salmon and passes an additional 1.2 million sockeye and other salmon species to spawning grounds higher in the drainage.
- **Hawaii Fish Habitat Partnership:** NOAA is working with partners to increase the protection and restoration of streams, estuaries, and nearshore marine habitats in Hawaii. The "ridge to reef" approach of this partnership will benefit numerous habitats and aquatic species.
- **Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership:** NOAA has played a key leadership role in helping to develop this partnership, which stretches from the rocky shores of Maine to the Florida Keys. NOAA's expertise is supporting the development of an Atlantic coastal habitat assessment, which will be used to set protection and restoration priorities for this partnership.

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