

# FREQUENT QUESTIONS



**NOAA Coastal Services Center**  
LINKING PEOPLE, INFORMATION, AND TECHNOLOGY

## Habitat Priority Planner

**June 2012**

NOAA Coastal Services Center  
(843) 740-1200  
[www.csc.noaa.gov](http://www.csc.noaa.gov)

---

### **What version of GIS software does the Habitat Priority Planner (HPP) require?**

HPP operates on ESRI's ArcView 10, 9.3, or 9.2.

### **Does Spatial Analyst have to be installed on my computer in order for me to use HPP?**

Yes, Spatial Analyst must be installed on your computer for the Habitat Classification module of HPP to function properly. The Data Explorer module of HPP can be used without Spatial Analyst.

### **Can I run HPP on a GIS platform other than ESRI?**

No, it will run only on ESRI's ArcGIS products.

### **Can I operate the tool on a Macintosh computer?**

HPP will function if the Mac can operate ESRI software.

### **Will my old files work in the new version of the tool?**

No, you must rerun the old analyses if you want to use them in the new version of the tool.

### **What types of base data can I use for the Habitat Classification module?**

The Habitat Classification module is very flexible, allowing users to incorporate nearly any data that best represent the habitat in their study area. Examples include land cover, soils, benthic coverage or sediments, parcels, or topography. Some data may require the addition of a necessary field, and in these cases HPP will provide step-by-step guidance. The following datasets are commonly used: the NOAA Coastal Services Center's Coastal Change Analysis Program (C-CAP) land cover data; the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Wetlands Inventory; or the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Soil Survey Geographic Database.

**What types of input can I use to perform custom metrics in HPP?**

Point, line, and polygon data are compatible with the custom metrics in the Habitat Analysis module of the tool. Raster files are not compatible.

**Does the tool generate metadata?**

Yes, the tool does generate basic metadata related to the analysis.

**Do I have to perform all ecological metrics?**

No, these metrics are optional ecological parameters that aid in setting land use priorities.

**What is the purpose of the ecological metrics?**

The ecological metrics available in HPP are some of the most commonly used measures to assess habitat connectivity and quality. Selections were based on literature reviews. Explanations on the use of these metrics are available in the “Help” document.

**If I have already run Habitat Analysis, can I add metrics to that data file, or do I have to start over?**

It is **not** necessary to start over—the user can use the “append existing results” or “overwrite an analysis” options. If the user chooses to append or overwrite, the new report that is produced will provide information only on the current metrics that are run. The information from the previous analysis will be in the old report.

**Can I use the Data Explorer module of HPP with non-HPP files?**

Yes, users may use the Data Explorer with other GIS files. The Data Explorer is a collaborative GIS tool that can be useful in engaging stakeholders in a decision-making process.

**HPP is described as a screening-level tool. What does “screening-level” mean?**

HPP can provide guidance or a starting point for habitat prioritization. It does not provide definitive answers and is not meant to replace accurate, on-the-ground information.

**Does the HPP tool set priorities for me or my project?**

No, it does not, although the tool is a priority-setting aid. It helps users to identify areas that best fit project goals based on user-defined inputs.

**Can ArcGIS perform the same functions as the HPP?**

Yes, an experienced ArcGIS user can perform the same functions. However, HPP automates and packages these functions to make analysis quicker, more uniform, and easily repeatable.

**How reliable are the HPP results?**

As with any ArcGIS tool, the reliability of the outputs depends on the accuracy of the data that are used.

**How much time does it take to run HPP?**

As with any ArcGIS tool, the run time will vary depending on the data and analyses chosen. Depending on these variables, run times can range from less than a minute to several hours.

**Is training available?**

The Habitat Priority Planner offers two training options: a 1-day, instructor-led training that includes hands-on experience with the tool, and an online, self-guided training that customers can take at any time. For more information, please see the training page at [www.csc.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/training/hpp](http://www.csc.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/training/hpp).

**What technical support is available for HPP?**

Live technical assistance is offered via the Web on Mondays from 3 to 4 p.m. (Eastern time). Customers can log in to the webinar as guests at <https://noaacsc.adobeconnect.com/TechAssist>.

All users can join the HPP list server, which allows for e-mail communication with other users and the HPP development team at the Center. To join, visit [www.csc.noaa.gov/mailman/listinfo/hpp-support](http://www.csc.noaa.gov/mailman/listinfo/hpp-support).

For more information, users can also view the HPP Support tab at [www.csc.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/tools/hpp/support](http://www.csc.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/tools/hpp/support).