

New England Fishery Management Council  
**Collaboration with the Northeast Ocean  
Data Portal**

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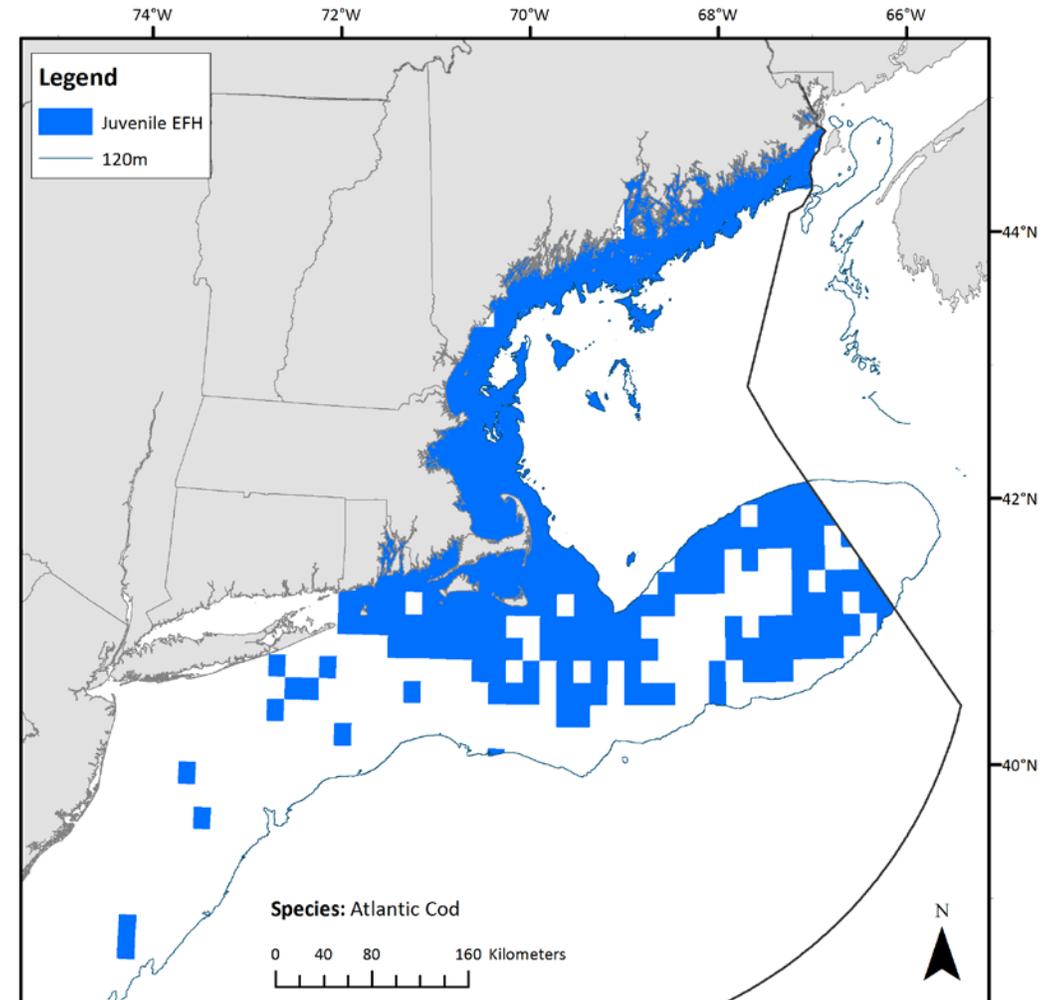
**Northeast Regional Ocean Council  
Ocean Planning Committee  
May 28, 2020**



# NEFMC Responsibilities

Develop fishery management plans, including, among other requirements:

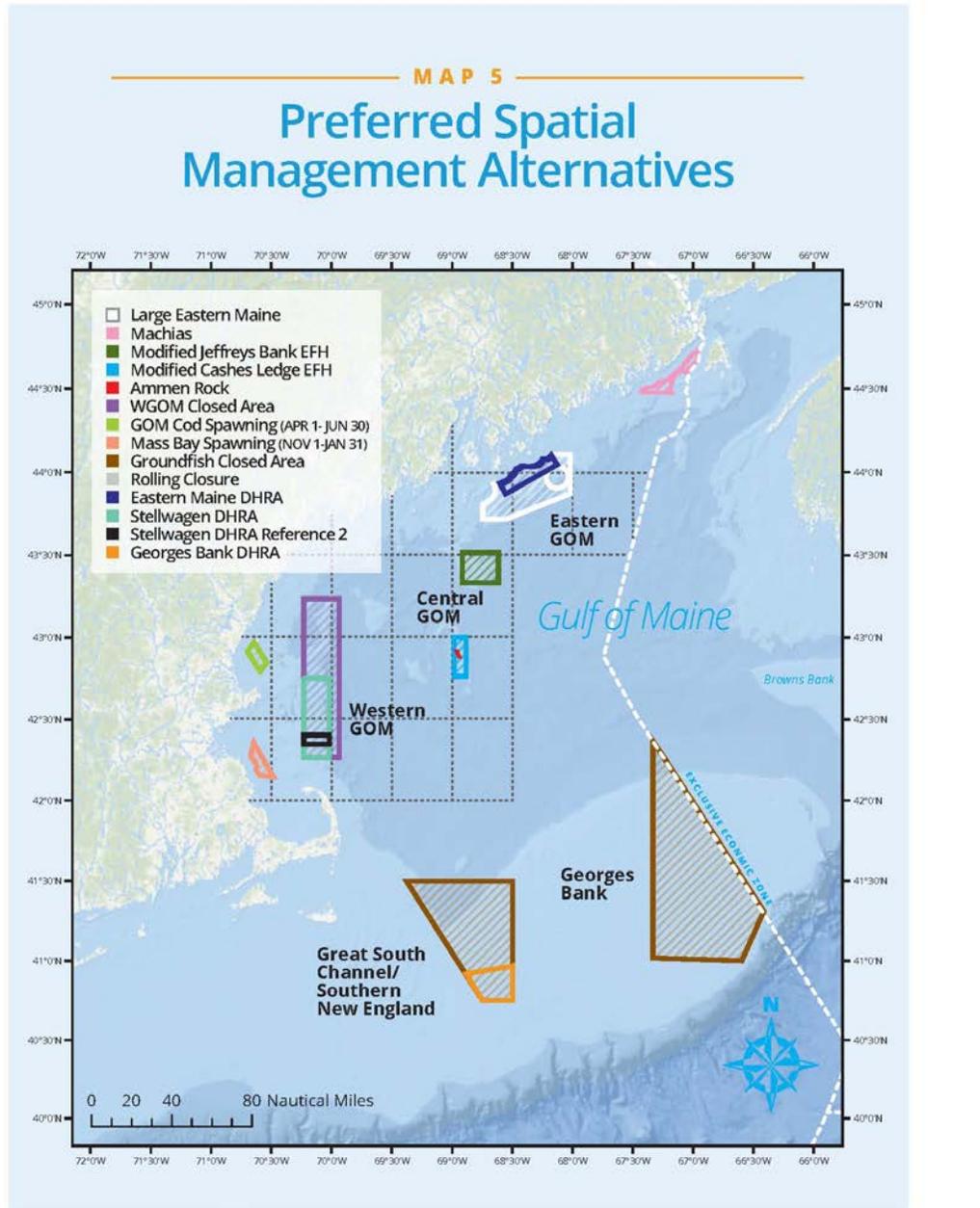
- Designation of essential fish habitat (EFH)
- Minimization of impacts of fishing on EFH
- Identification of non-fishing activities that may affect EFH



*Juveniles: Intertidal and sub-tidal benthic habitats in the Gulf of Maine, southern New England, and on Georges Bank, to a maximum depth of 120 meters, including high salinity zones in designated bays and estuaries. Structurally-complex habitats, including eelgrass, mixed sand and gravel, and rocky habitats (gravel pavements, cobble, and boulder) with and without attached macroalgae and emergent epifauna, are essential habitats for juvenile cod...*

# Omnibus EFH Amendment 2

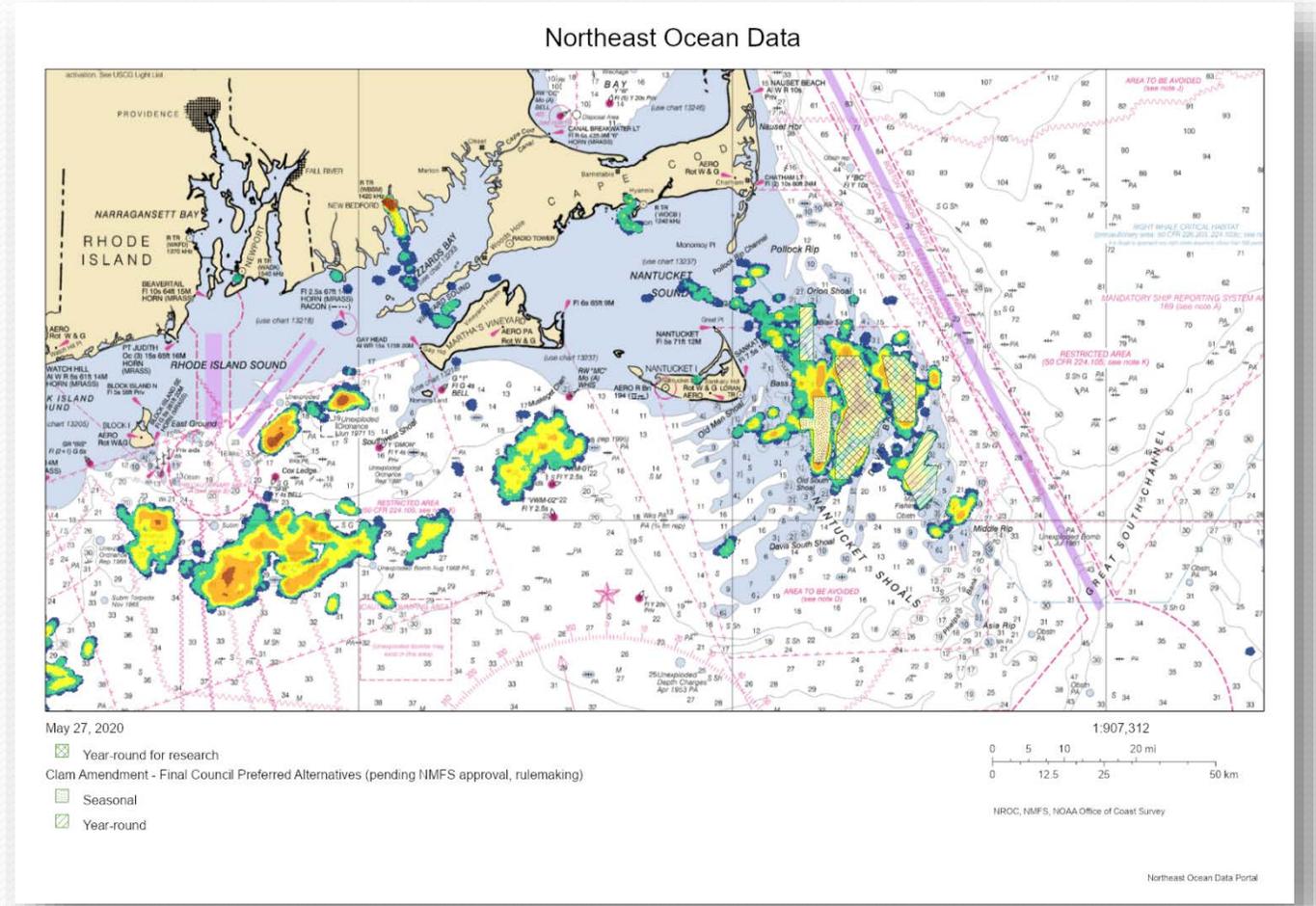
## Effective April 18, 2018

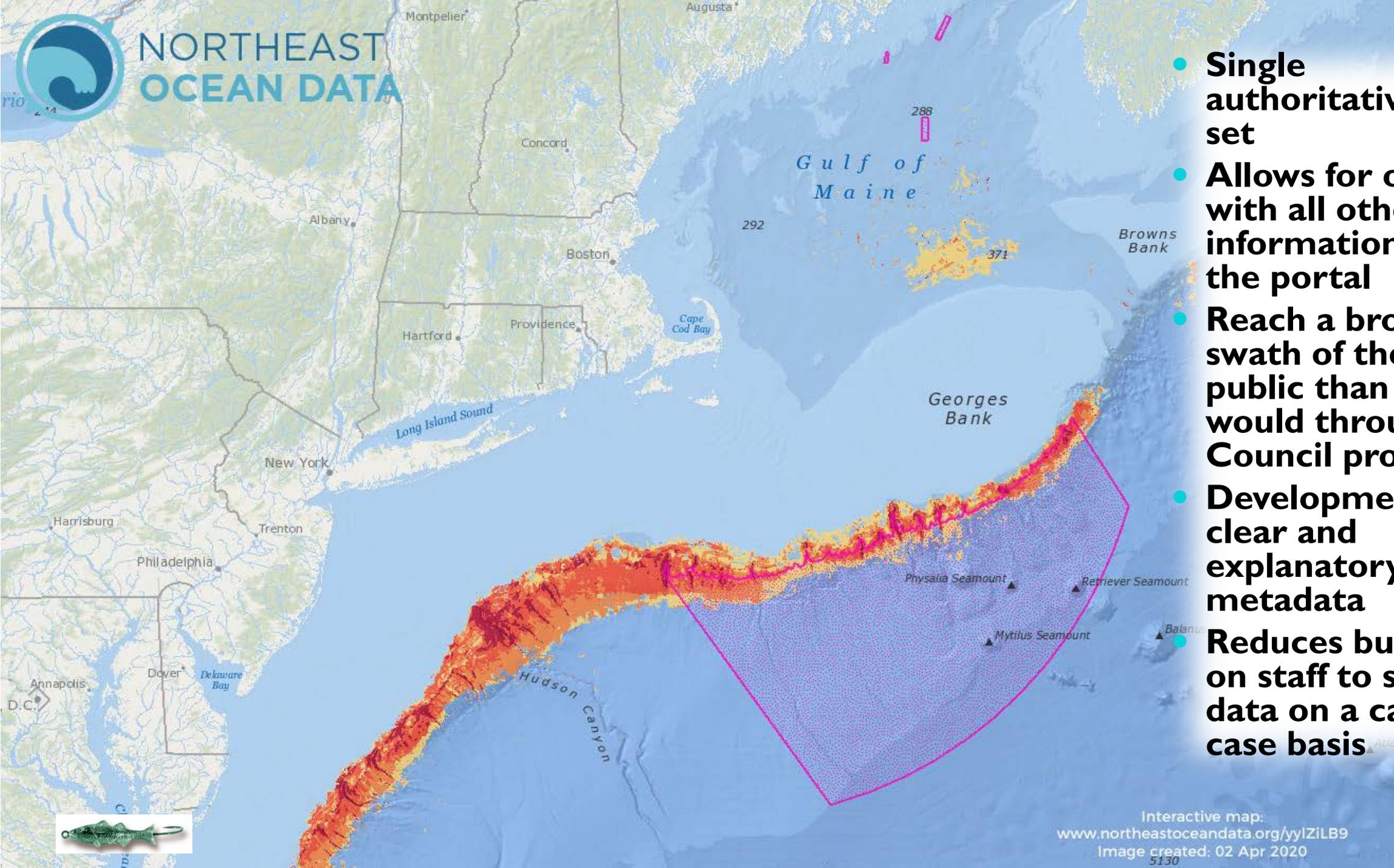


- Updated EFH designations based on survey data, environmental variables (depth, temperature), and other expertise
- Identified vulnerable habitats and assessed relative impacts of different gear types using the Swept Area Seabed Impact Model
- Identified a suite of spatial management areas and gear restrictions to protect EFH; focus on benthic habitats

# Council need: Sharing spatial data with partners

- **EFH Amendment 2** involved frequent sharing of spatial data with partners and interested parties
  - Map platform with **Gulf of Maine Research Institute** for public hearings
- **Deep-Sea Coral Amendment, Clam Dredge Framework**
  - Approached by **Northeast Ocean Data Portal/NROC** about hosting draft management alternatives



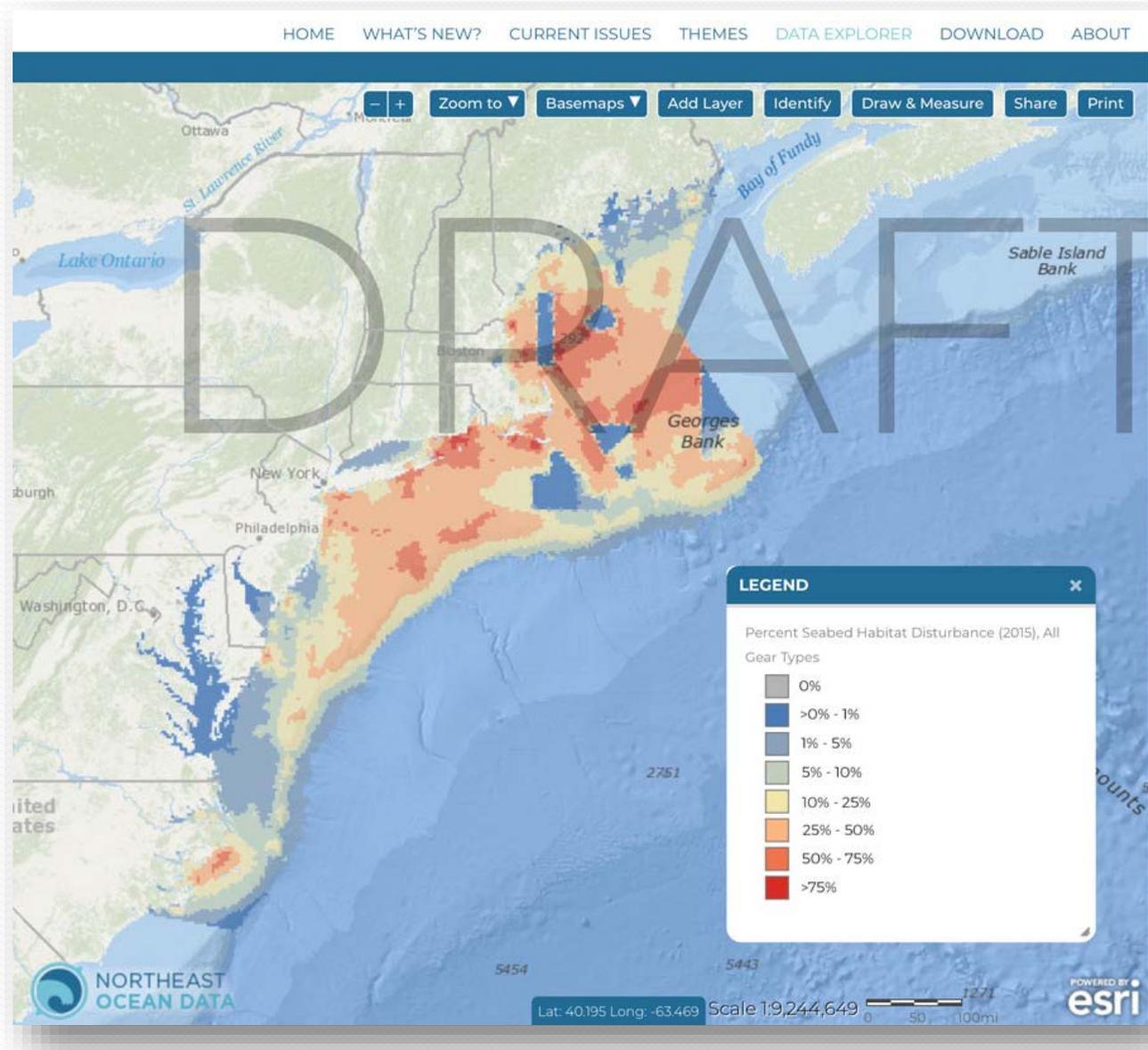


- **Single authoritative data set**
- **Allows for overlay with all other information on the portal**
- **Reach a broader swath of the public than we would through the Council process**
- **Development of clear and explanatory metadata**
- **Reduces burden on staff to share data on a case-by-case basis**

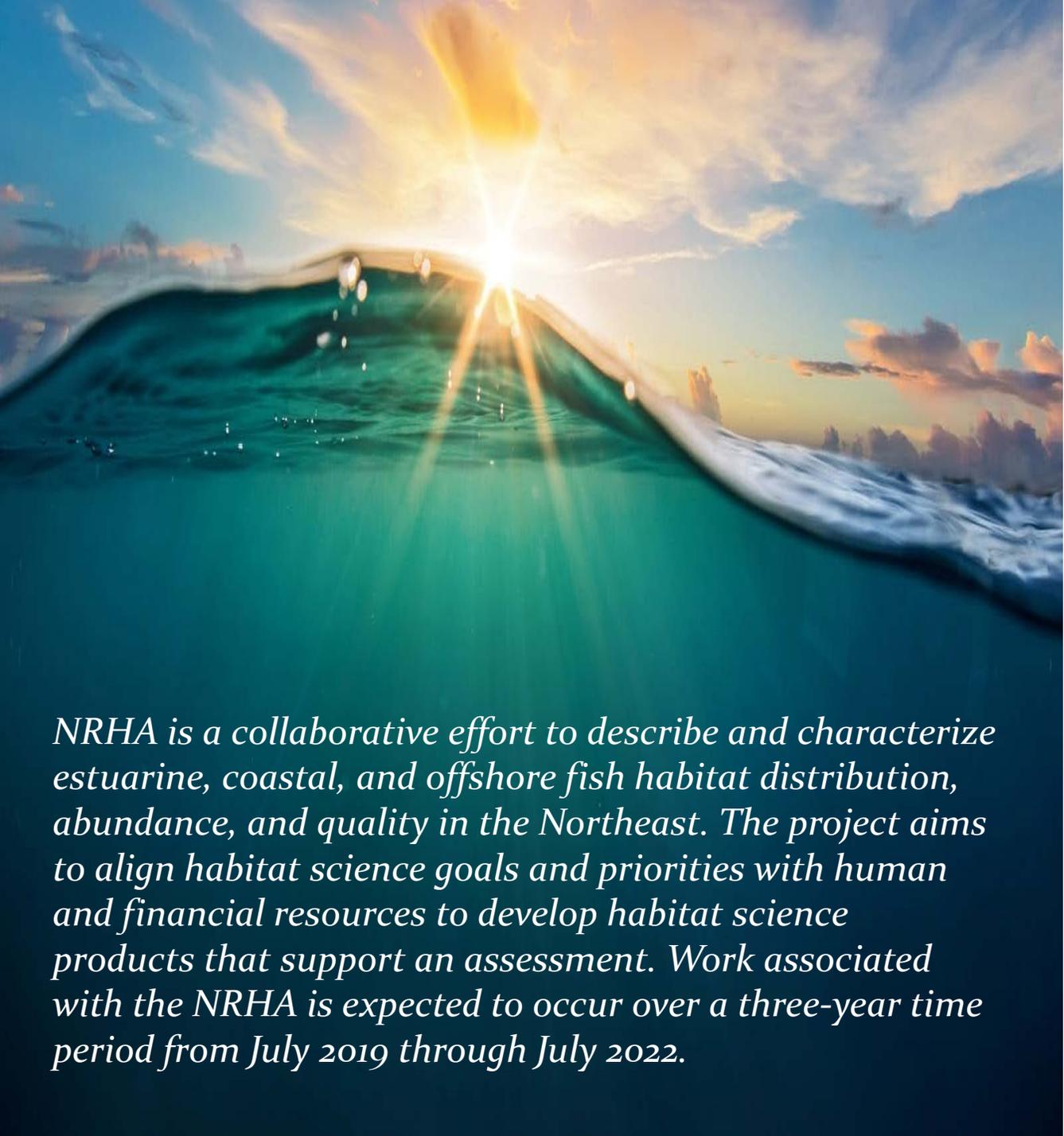


# Fishing Effects Model

- **Next generation of Swept Area Seabed Impact Model – updated methods/data**
- **Fishing Effects combines seafloor data (sediment type, energy regime) with parameters related to the interactions between fishing gear and seafloor habitats to generate habitat disturbance estimates in space and time**
- **Live on data portal June 1**
- **Report and appendices:**  
<https://www.nefmc.org/library/fishing-effects-model>



**Thanks to our partners at Alaska Pacific University, members of the Habitat PDT, and Emily Shumchenia and the portal development team**



*NRHA is a collaborative effort to describe and characterize estuarine, coastal, and offshore fish habitat distribution, abundance, and quality in the Northeast. The project aims to align habitat science goals and priorities with human and financial resources to develop habitat science products that support an assessment. Work associated with the NRHA is expected to occur over a three-year time period from July 2019 through July 2022.*

# Future partnerships

- **Results of the Northeast Regional Marine Fish Habitat Assessment (expected 2022)**
  - **May identify new data sets of interest to post under habitat or marine life**
  - **Results of species distribution models**
  - **Syntheses/regional habitat trends**
- **Other Council management actions that are spatially-focused where comparing/contrasting management options will benefit the public process**

# Habitat policies – non-fishing activities

- **EFH consultation is the process by which NOAA Fisheries works with action agencies to minimize the effects of their actions on fish habitats**
  - **Part of the NEPA process**
  - **Council is also able to comment on these actions**
- **Working to coordinate more closely with both NOAA Fisheries staff and agency partners to communicate Council concerns**
  - **One way to do this is through habitat policies – provide Council perspectives on activity, and identify best management practices**
  - **These help the Council to be informed ahead of time on activities as issues arise, and facilitate faster development of Council comments**



# Habitat policy topics

- **Existing**
  - **Offshore wind energy development**
  - **Oil and gas development**
- **New**
  - **Submarine cables and pipelines (including but not limited to electricity transmission cables)**
  - **Aquaculture**
  - **Floating offshore wind (plus relevant updates since the previous OSW policy was drafted)**
- **These activities all have a spatial planning component and we plan to link to relevant data sources on the portal**



# Thank you!

Questions?

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