

Habitat Committee Report

#1 REVISED

JULIAN GARRISON, MICHELLE BACHMAN, NEFMC STAFF
MELISSA SMITH, HABITAT COMMITTEE CHAIR

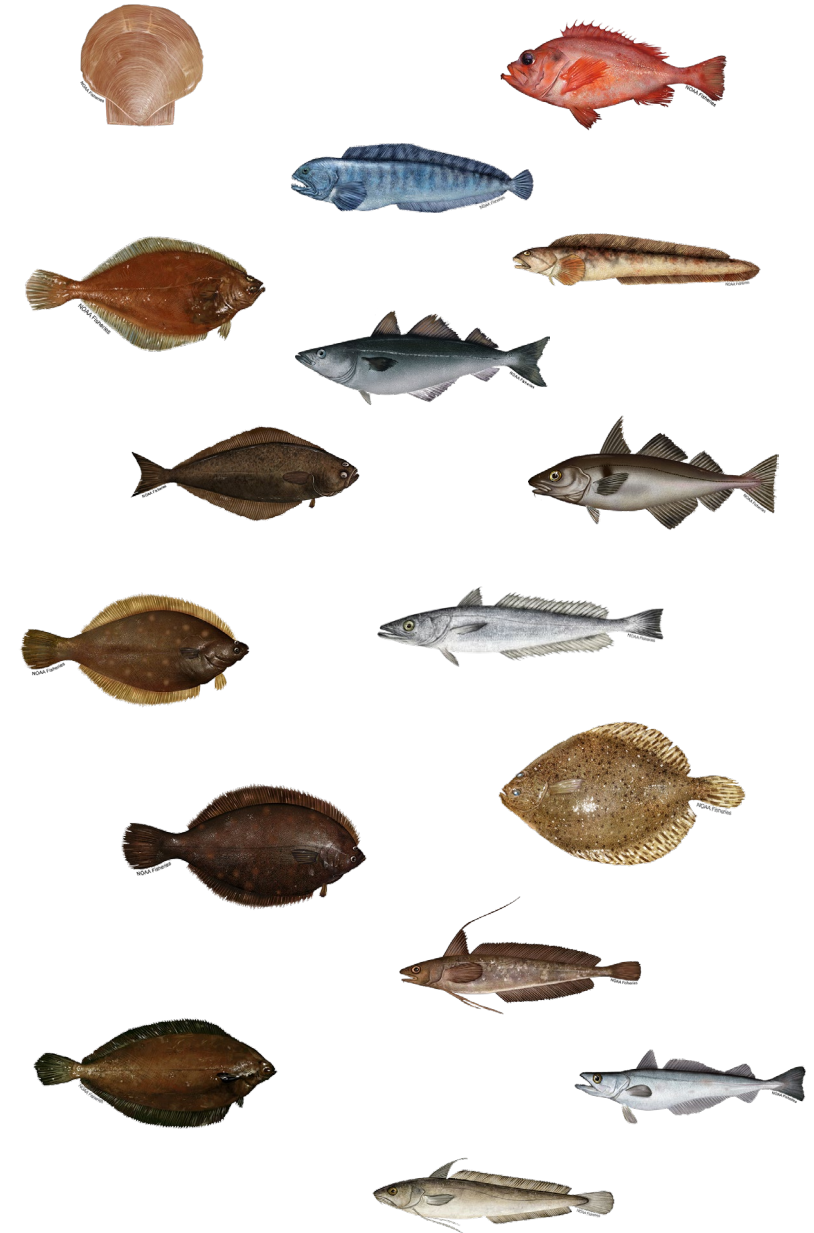
SEPTEMBER 16, 2026
PLYMOUTH, MA AND VIA WEBINAR



New England Fishery
Management Council

2026 EFH DESIGNATION FRAMEWORK

- Review feedback received and adjustments made to maps and text
- Review draft designations, including species with separate species distribution models
- Review draft Framework and recommend a preferred alternative



2026 EFH UPDATES AND TIMELINE: HOW DID WE GET HERE?

Time Period	Action /
2004-2018 (effective 2018)	NEFMC Omnibus Habitat Amendment 2 (OHA2)
2017-2022 (updates ongoing)	Northeast Regional Habitat Assessment (NRHA)
2024-2025	Essential Fish Habitat 5-Year Review – joint review w/ MAFMC
September 2025	Final action on 2025 EFH Designation Framework – 10 species
April 2026	Final action on MAFMC Omnibus EFH Amendment – 14 species
<i>2026 EFH Designation Framework – all remaining NEFMC species (16) except salmon, red crab</i>	
January 2026	Framework Initiation: 2026 EFH Designation Framework
Spring + Summer 2026	2026 EFH Framework development: • Feedback and revisions to draft designations • Development and review of species-specific SDMs
August 20, 2026	Habitat AP and Committee review and recommend preferred alternative
<i>September 16, 2026</i>	<i>Final action on 2026 EFH Designation Framework</i>



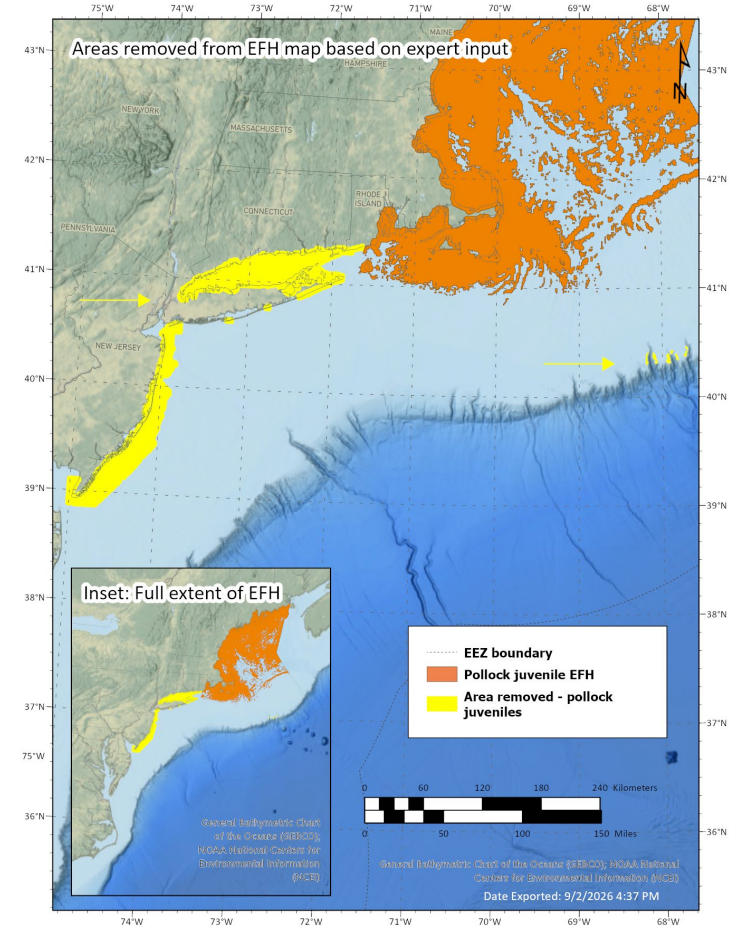
TYPES OF FEEDBACK RECEIVED TO DATE (2026 EFH DESIGNATIONS)

- **Methods**
 - Model inputs and assumptions, size cutoffs, data processing
- **Map Adjustments**
 - North / south extent, inshore zones, banks and ledges, slope and canyon areas, trimming or extending EFH footprint
- **Biology / Life History**
 - Distributions (shifts, regional differences), environmental drivers, seasonal habitat use
- **Information Sources**
 - Additional surveys and commercial catch (groundtruth), literature suggestions, assessments (Research, Management Track), other scientific / industry experts beyond PDTs / APs
- **Presentation / Wording**
 - Map overlays (NOAA nautical charts, SAMS areas), highlight improvements vs previous EFH maps, document ad-hoc adjustments, ensure methods are consistent across species and clearly documented throughout



FEEDBACK WAS IMPLEMENTED CONSISTENTLY ACROSS SPECIES

- Map adjustments accommodated species-specific nuances if supported by data, literature, and/or expert knowledge
 - Otherwise, relied on standardized model-based and inshore analyses
- Leaned more conservative (broader) when data uncertain
- Feedback on biology & life history extremely helpful for revising text descriptions
- Reduced patchiness to improve utility for EFH consultations
- Groundtruthed maps and text using additional surveys, commercial catch
 - May include more directly in future EFH Reviews and updates



Sample map illustrating removed areas from juvenile pollock EFH



HABITAT AP AND COMMITTEE RECOMMENDED CONSISTENCY ACROSS SPECIES, DATA DRIVEN APPROACH TO MAPPING

- Use standard data processing method for adult wolffish → Smaller EFH footprint
- Use a data driven approach for determining the southern extent of winter flounder EFH → Delaware Bay
- Alternative data processing for adult Atlantic halibut given very low estimated encounter rates → Resulting map is more consistent with known habitat areas
- Highlight key fishing grounds in text descriptions



EFH RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES

- ❑ **No action:** Current EFH designations from OHA2 (text and maps) – see Appendix A
 - Relies on inshore and offshore survey data through ~2005
 - Data summarized by estuary / embayment and ten-minute squares
 - Includes adjacent areas with suitable depths, temperatures
 - Includes continental slope depth ranges
- ❑ **Single action alternative** to update EFH designations for each of the 16 species. For each species and life stage (egg, larvae, juvenile, and adult):
 - Designation = specific, mapped locations to be designated as EFH and a text description
 - Juvenile & adult stages
 - Maps based on predictive outputs of species distribution models (SDMs)
 - Separate juvenile and adult maps for all species except scallops
 - Egg & larval stages:
 - Additional time and analyses would be needed to incorporate EcoMon ichthyoplankton data
 - Separate (i.e., new) egg and larval maps NOT developed for species in this framework; where available, information added to text descriptions (feedback, literature)



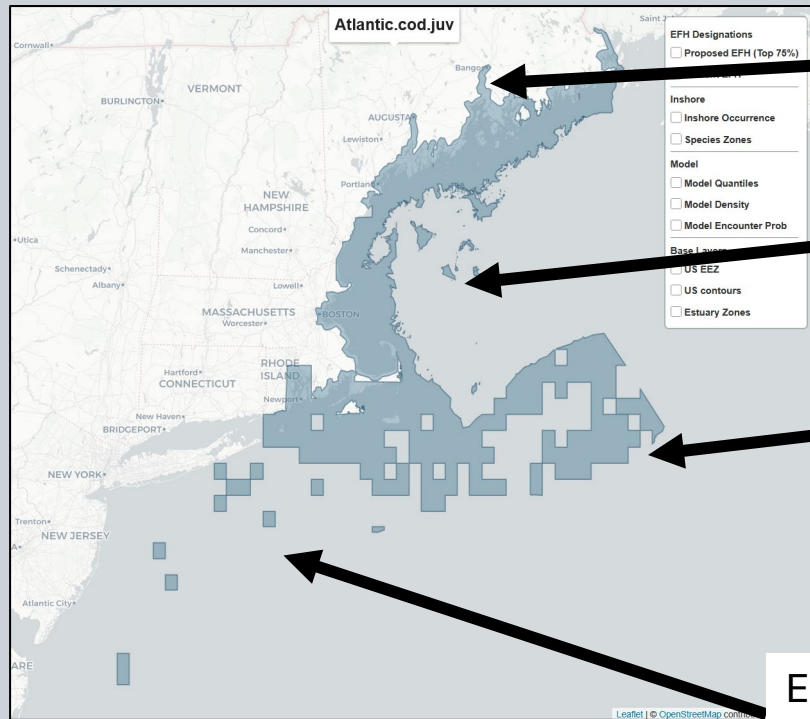
RECAP: UPDATED EFH DESIGNATIONS RELY ON IMPROVED, MORE-RECENT DATA AND METHODS

	No Action (OHA2)	Updated (2025-2027 actions)
Fish abundance data	Federal, state, regional survey data (1968 or earliest available - 2005)	Federal, state, regional survey data, including dredge and longline (2002-2022)
Environmental variables	Depth, temperature; ranges estimated by examining histograms	Depth, temperature, salinity, currents, sediments, rugosity; ranges estimated by summarizing all survey observations (depth / temp / salinity)
Data processing	- Cumulative abundance (75th or 90th percentile) by ten-minute squares (TMS), clipped by depth + inshore TMS with positive tows + whole estuaries. - Multi-step workflow, various layers joined together	- Joint species distribution models (SDMs) + inshore suitable habitat zones; 1-km grid. - Top 75% predicted density, all species - Programming-based, reproducible workflow - Species-specific SDMs where needed
Un-surveyed areas	“Fill” areas added based on professional judgment, procedure for designating un-surveyed TMS if adjacent TMS EFH	SDMs predict (interpolate) density based on environmental covariates, except in low salinity areas; inshore extrapolation uses depth/salinity zones

RECAP: UPDATED EFH DESIGNATIONS RELY ON IMPROVED, MORE-RECENT DATA AND METHODS

- ✓ More consistent across species, more recent data, less patchy, model *relationships* with environment to predict habitat use
- ✓ Ancillary model outputs provide additional information for consultations and other contexts

No Action (OHA2)



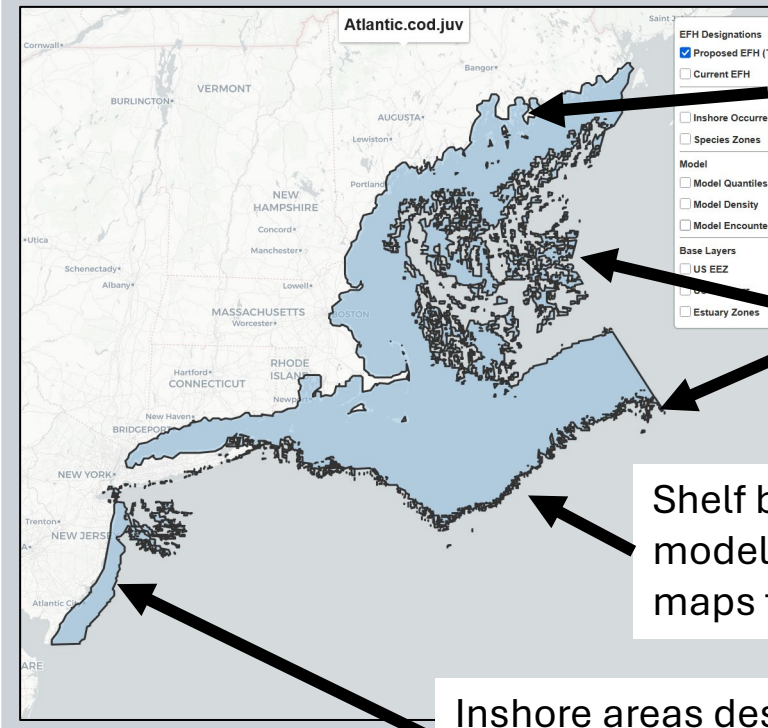
Designations by whole estuaries

TMS clipped by depth contours

Continental slope depths added for some species

Edges of designation show whole TMS

Updated (2025-2027 actions)



Only marine or polyhaline areas of estuaries as appropriate to species

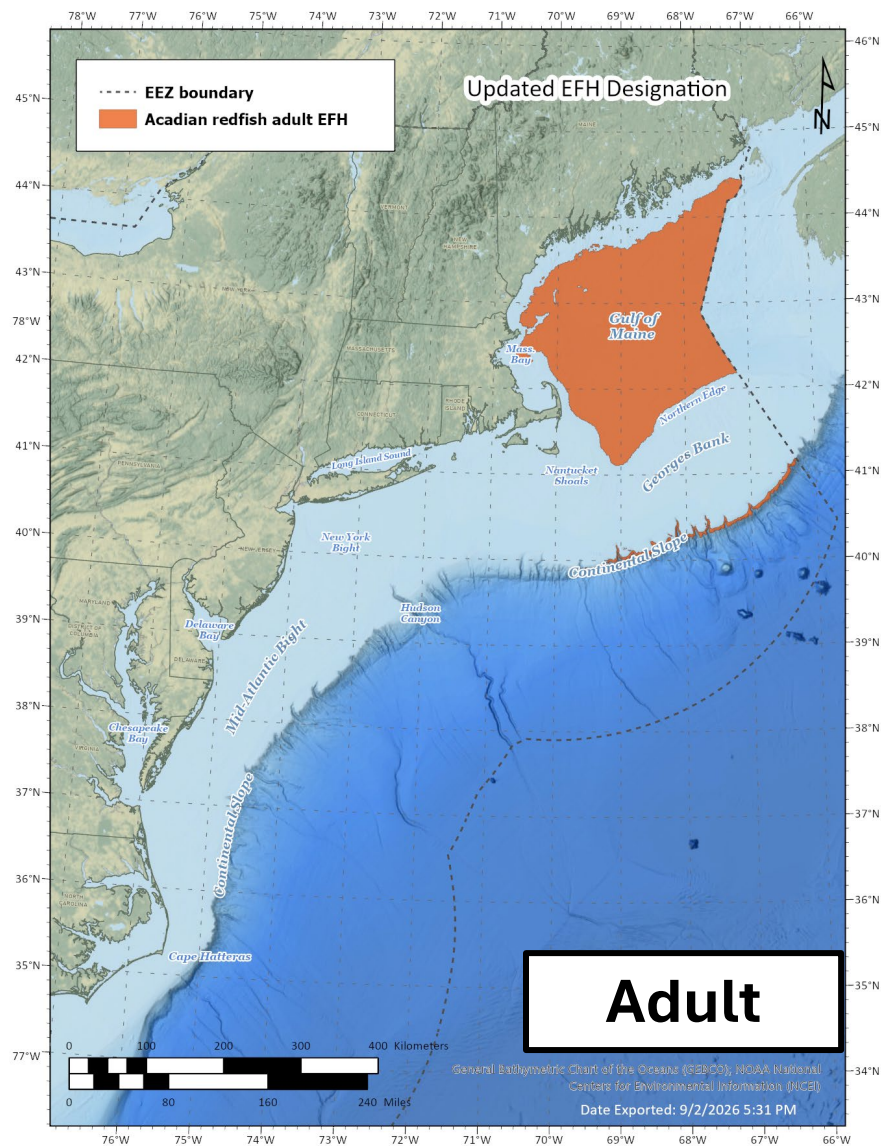
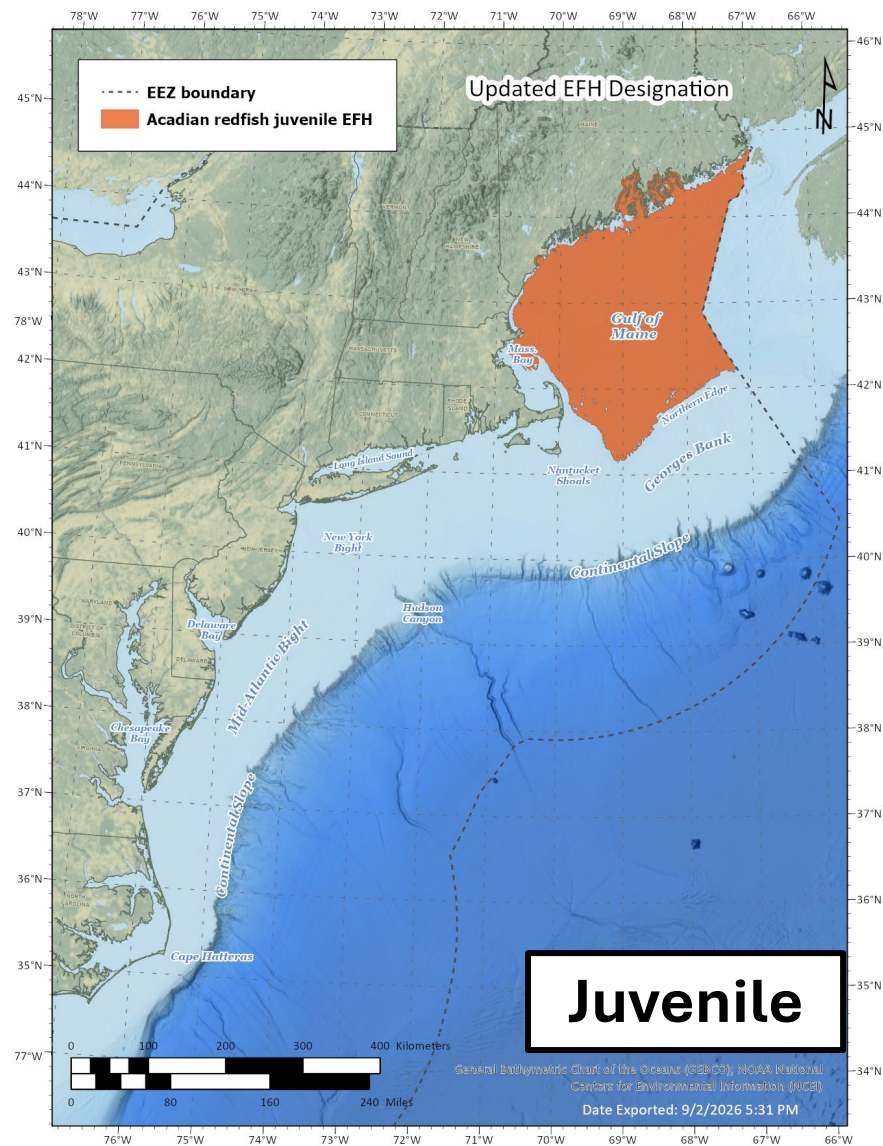
Edges of designation show 1-km grids

Shelf break / upper slope within model domain, included in maps for some species

Inshore areas designated within the geographic range of model outputs

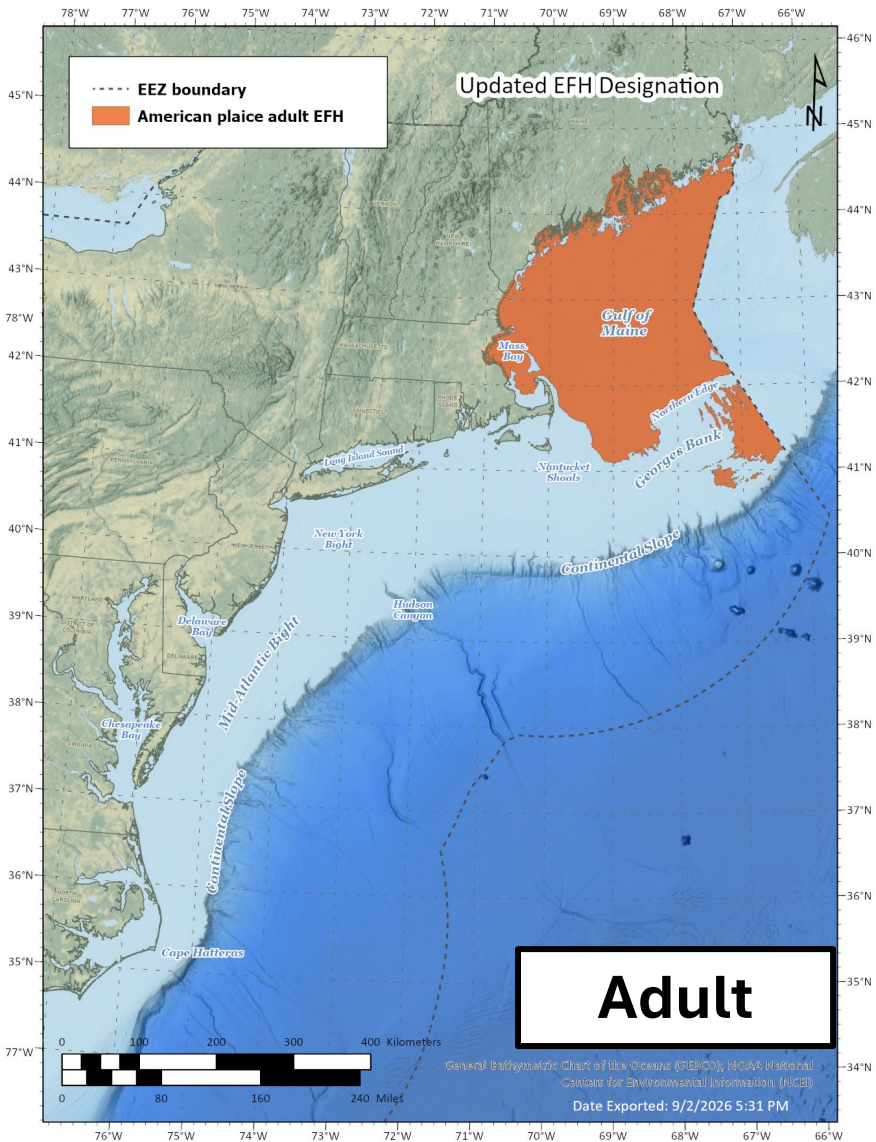
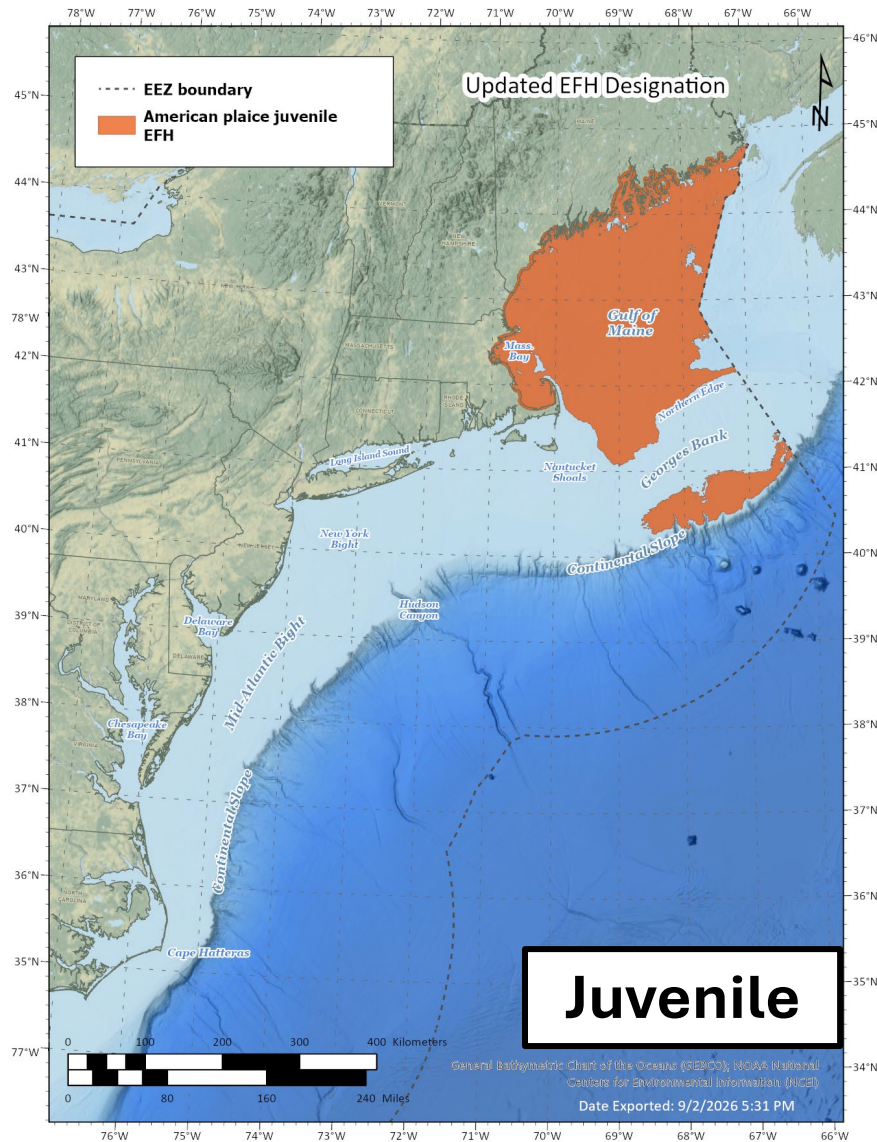
ACADIAN REDFISH

Text descriptions at Section 4.2.1, page 43



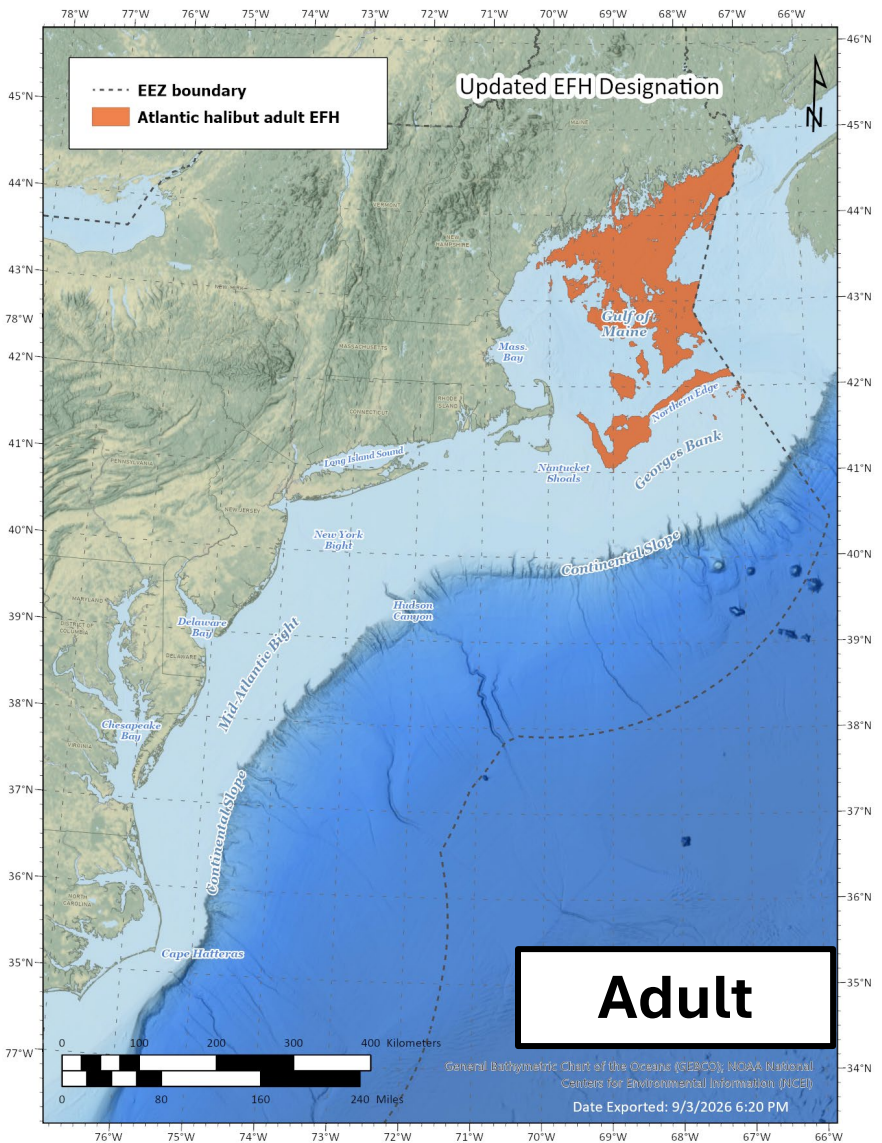
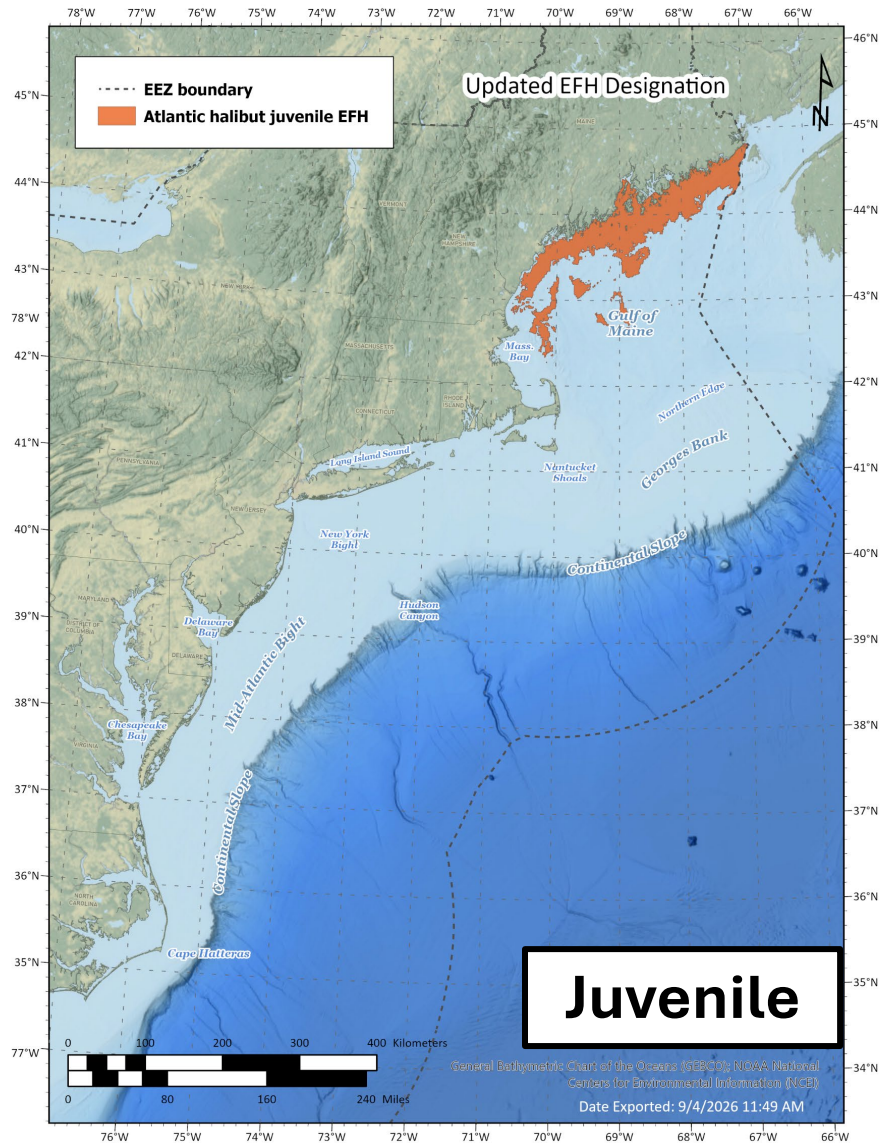
AMERICAN PLAICE

Text descriptions at Section 4.2.2, page 46



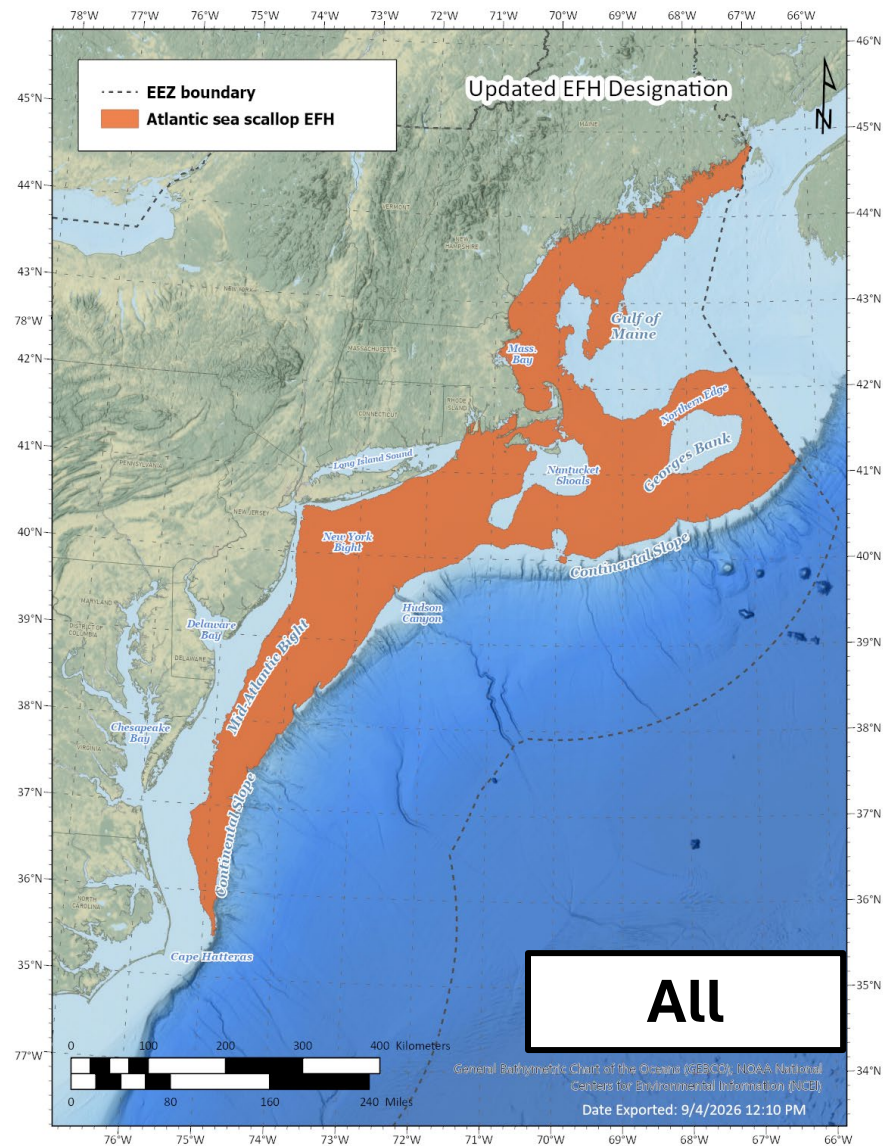
ATLANTIC HALIBUT

Text descriptions at Section 4.2.3, page 49



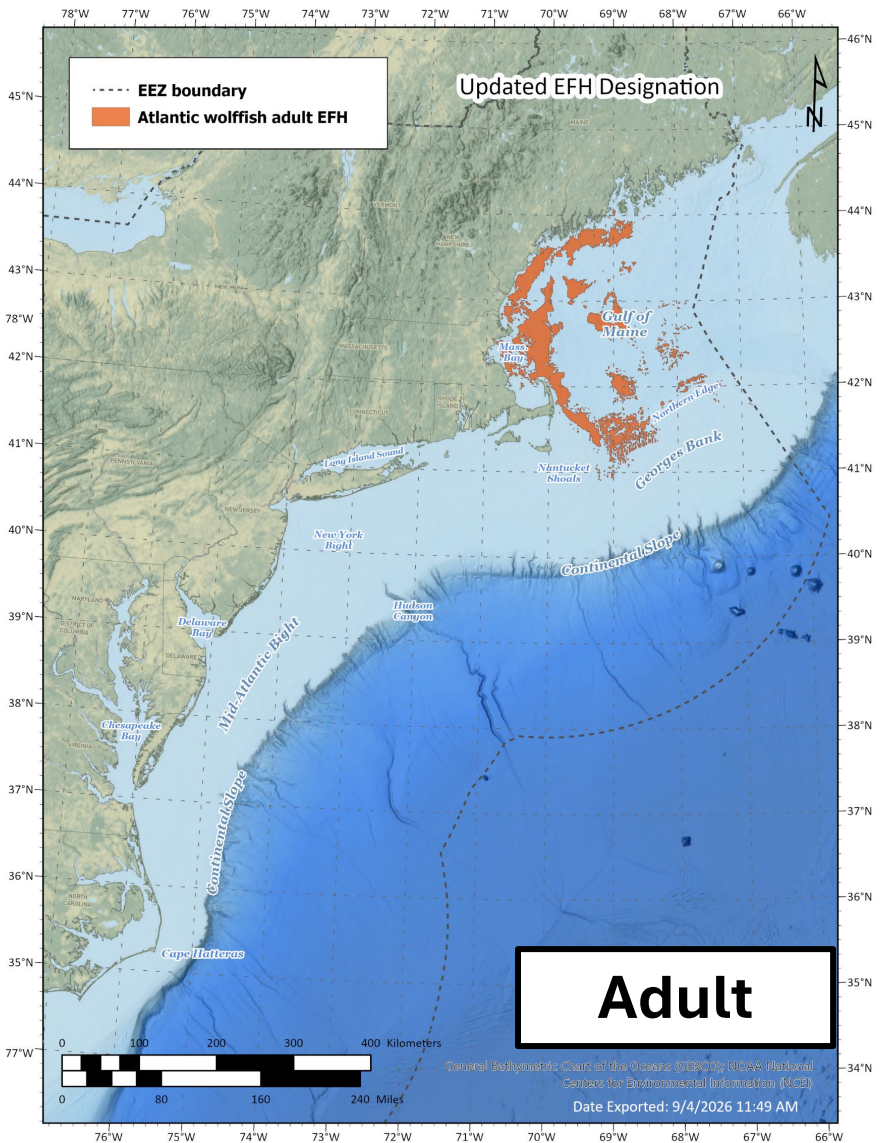
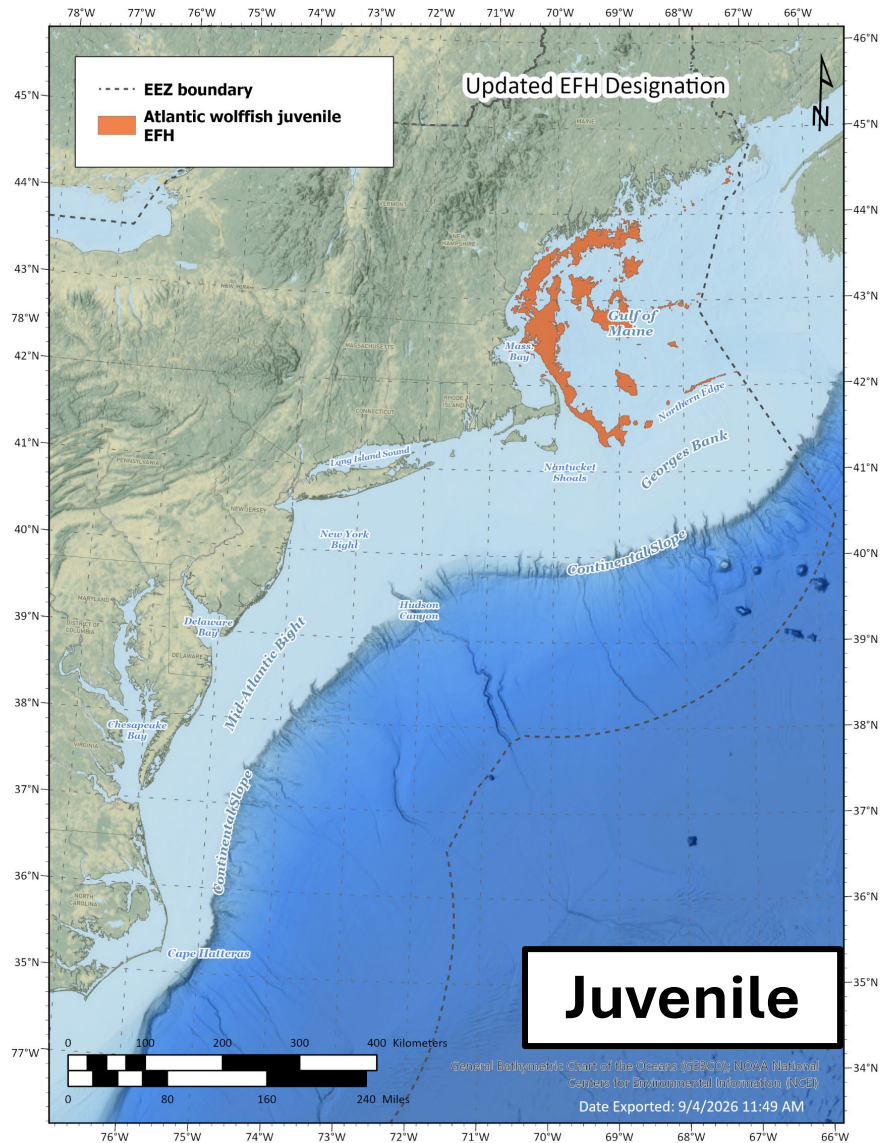
ATLANTIC SEA SCALLOP

Text descriptions at Section 4.2.4, page 53



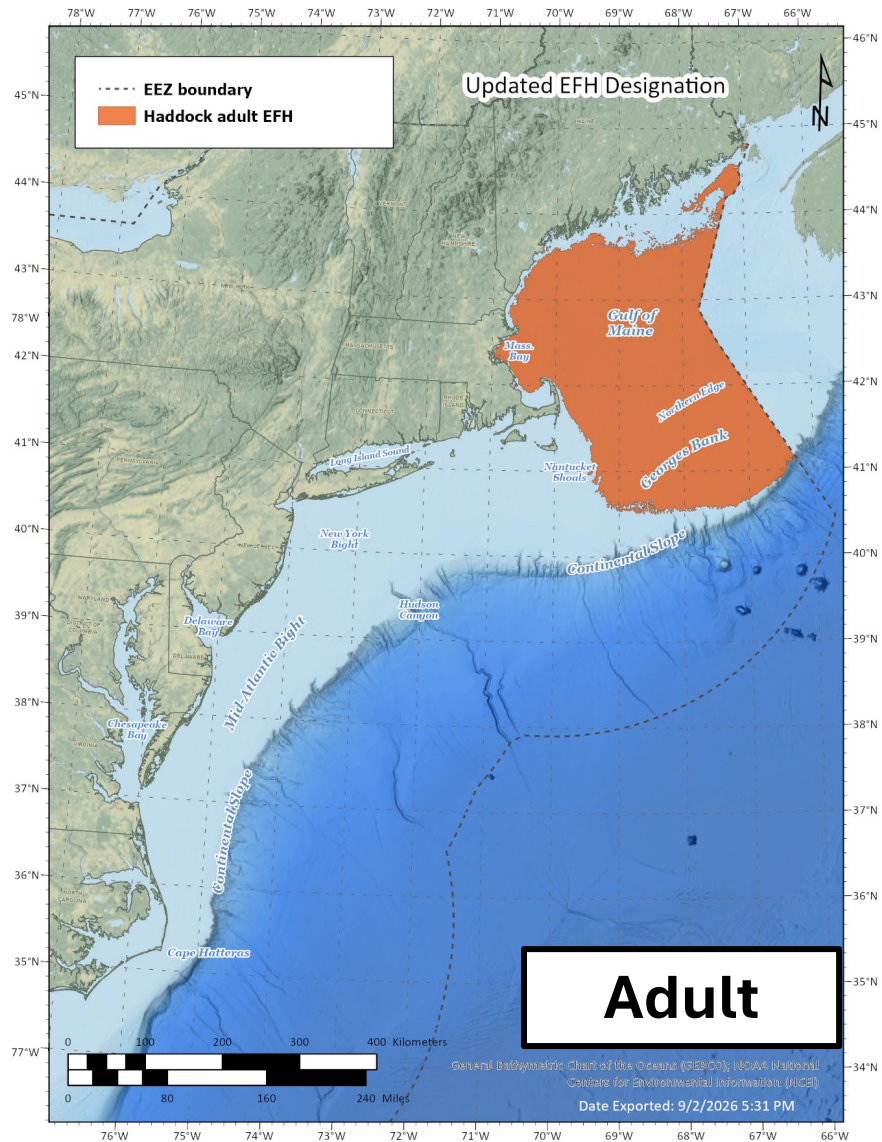
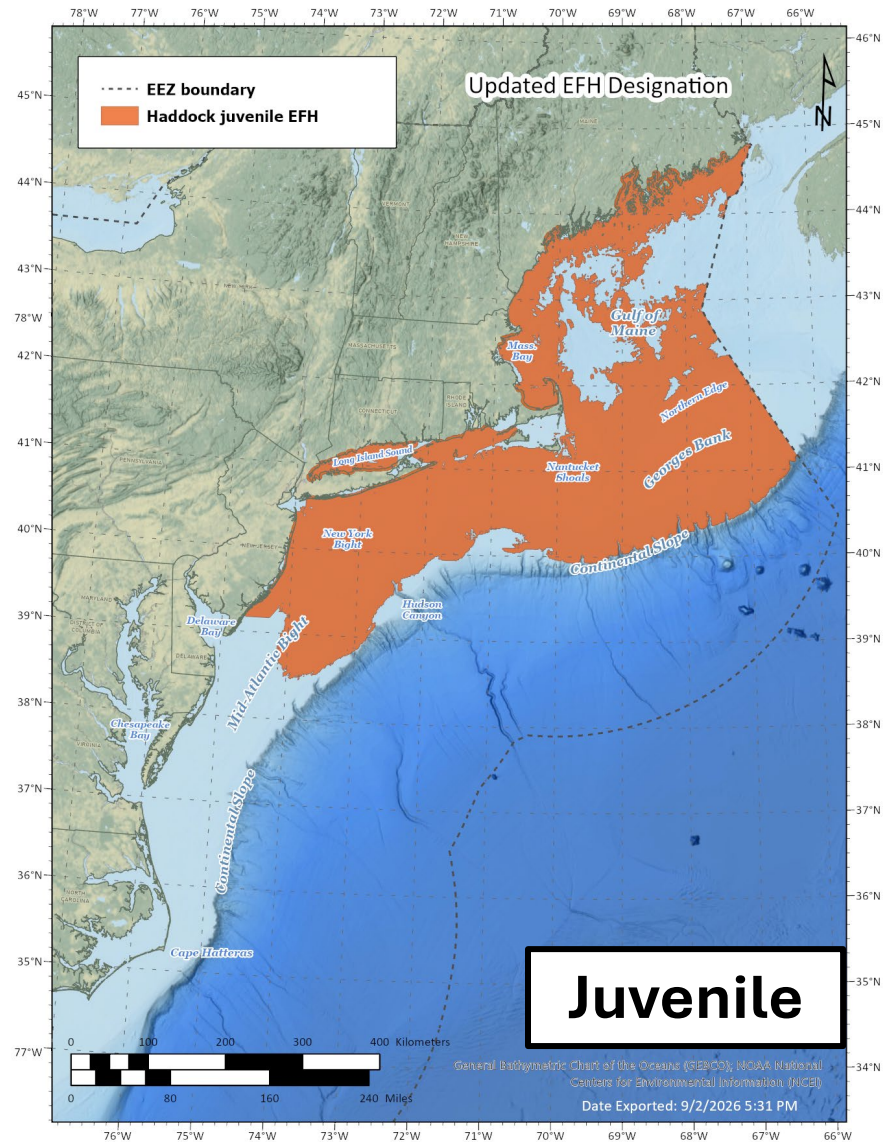
ATLANTIC WOLFFISH

Text descriptions at Section 4.2.5, page 55



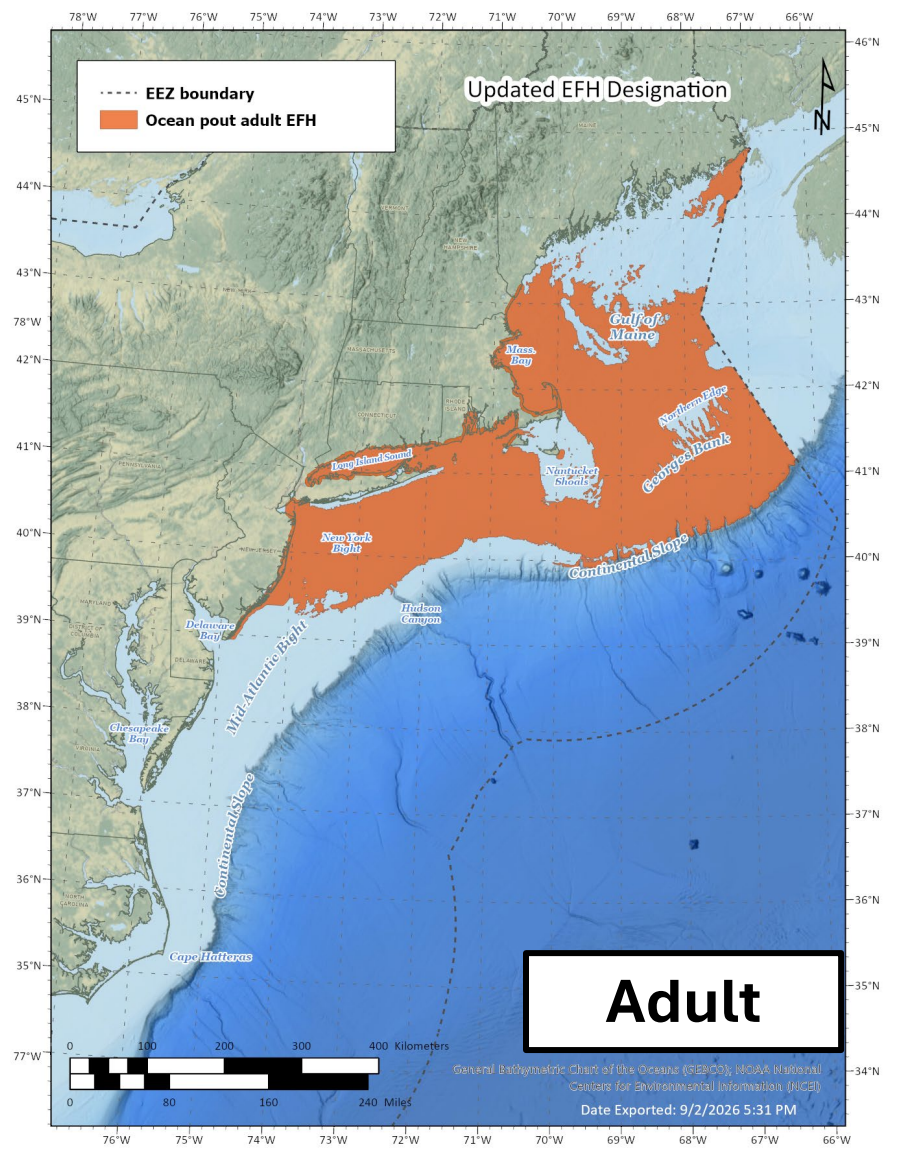
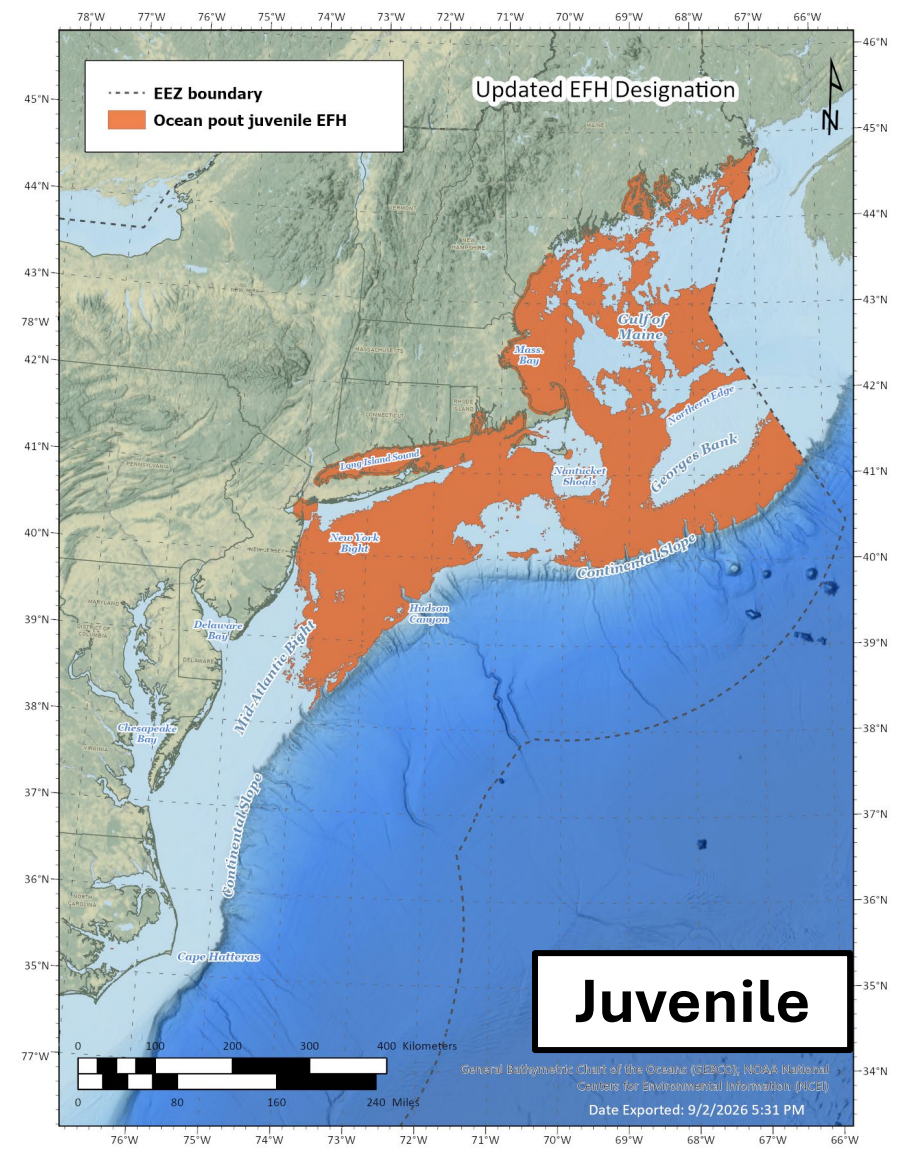
HADDOCK

Text descriptions at Section 4.2.6, page 58



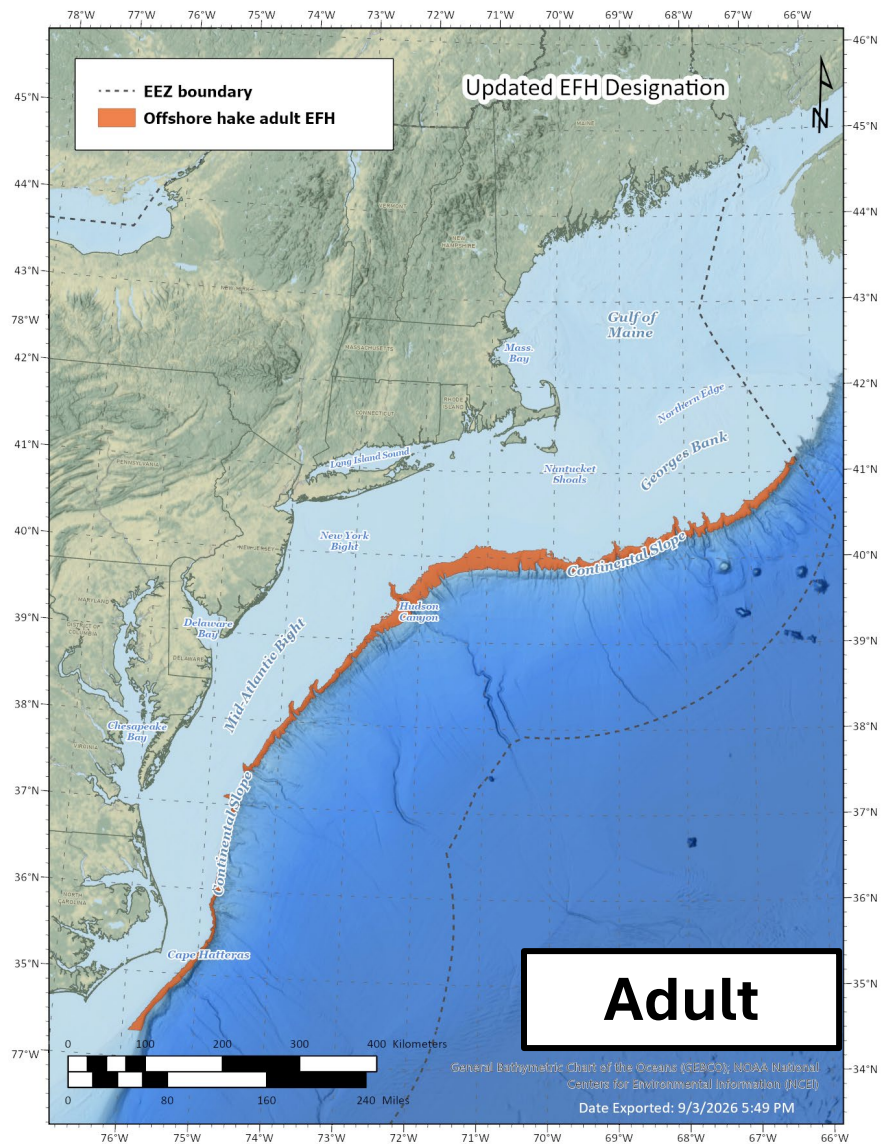
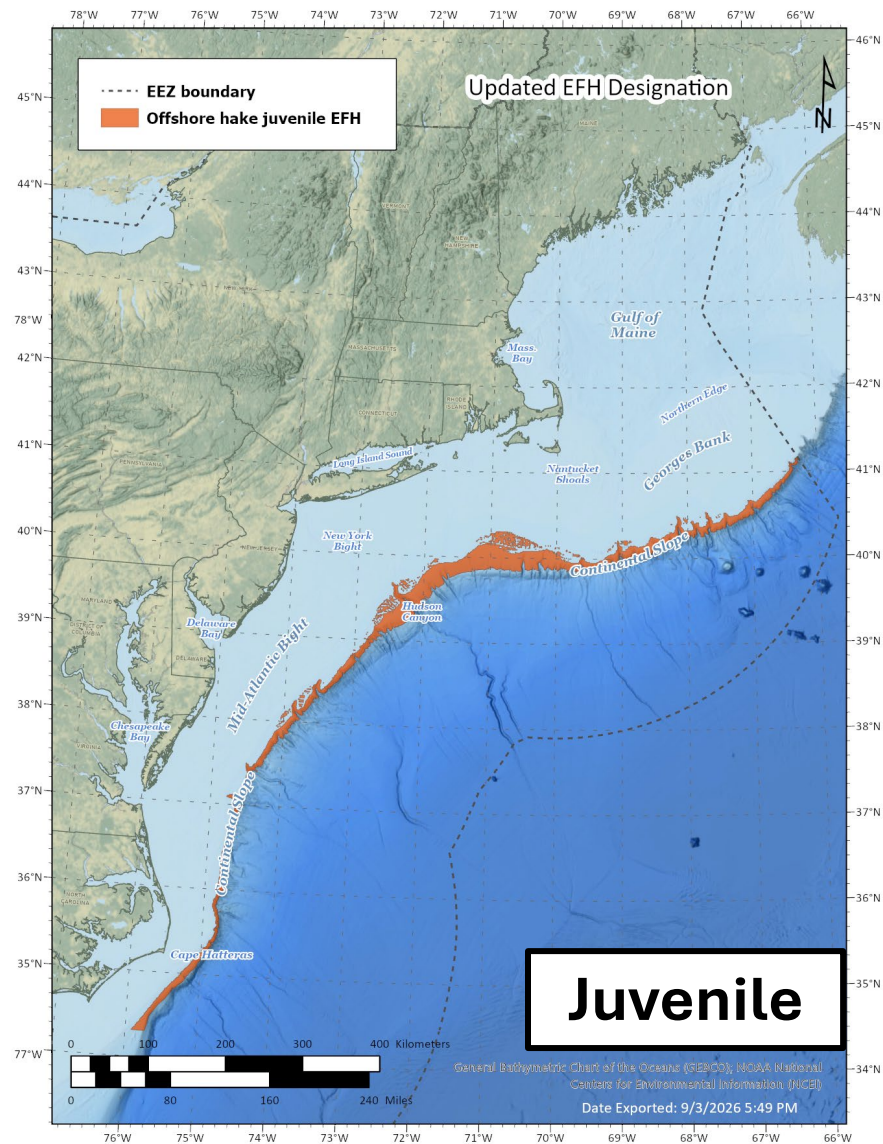
OCEAN POUT

Text descriptions at Section 4.2.7, page 61



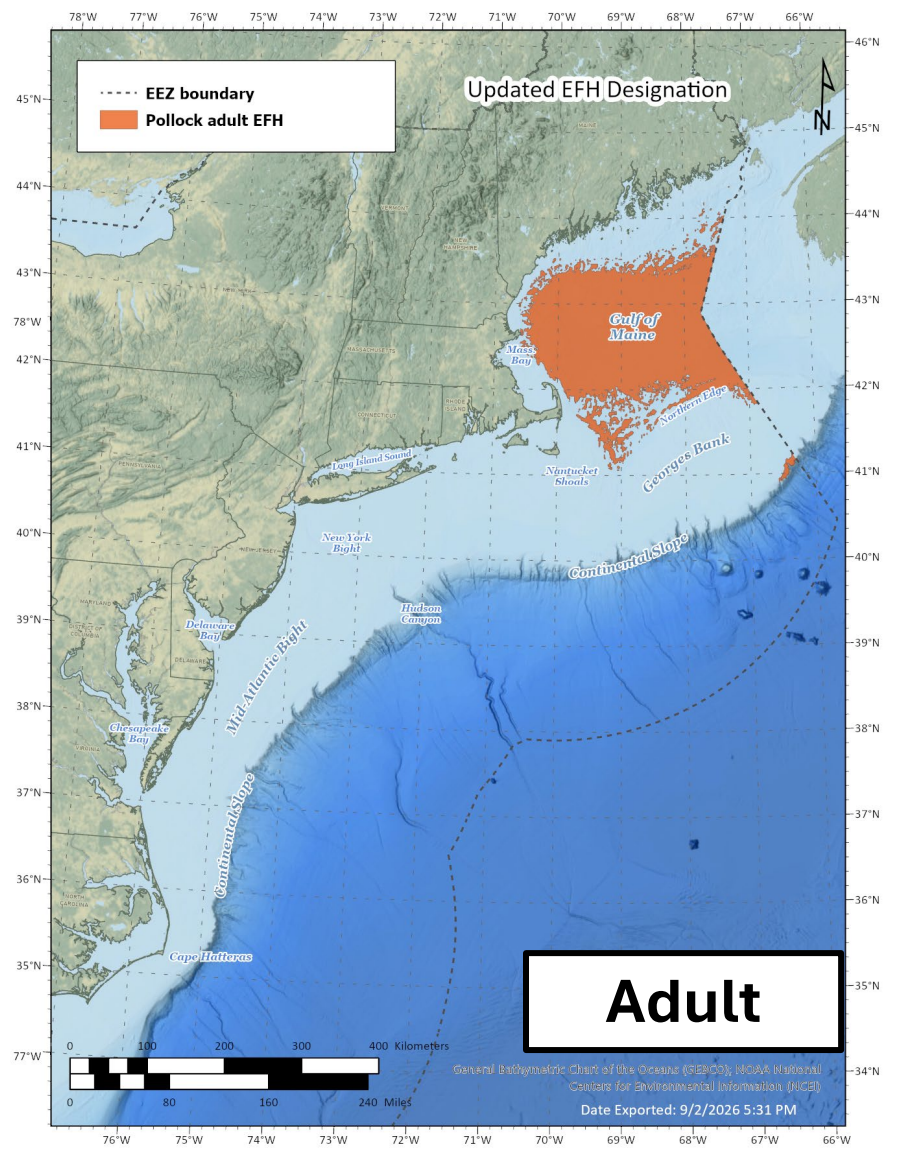
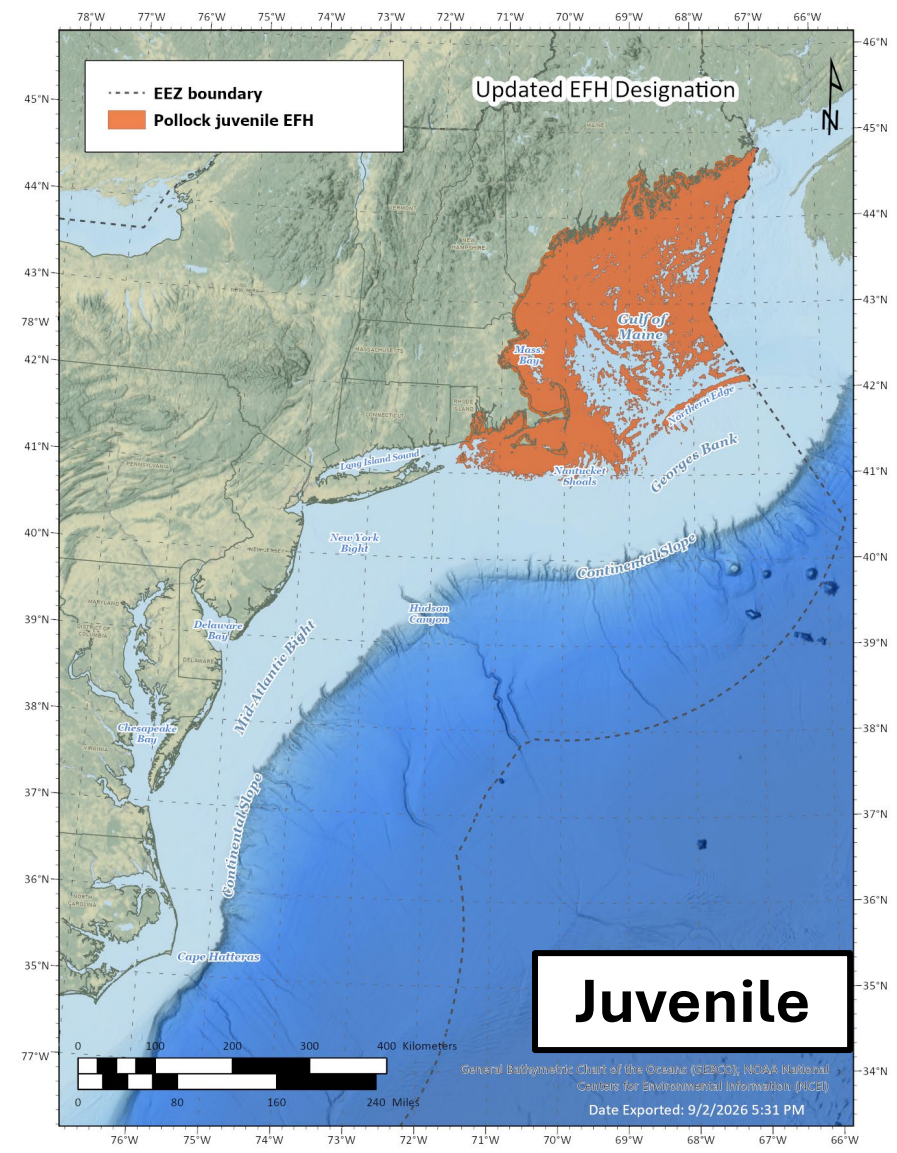
OFFSHORE HAKE

Text descriptions at Section 4.2.8, page 64



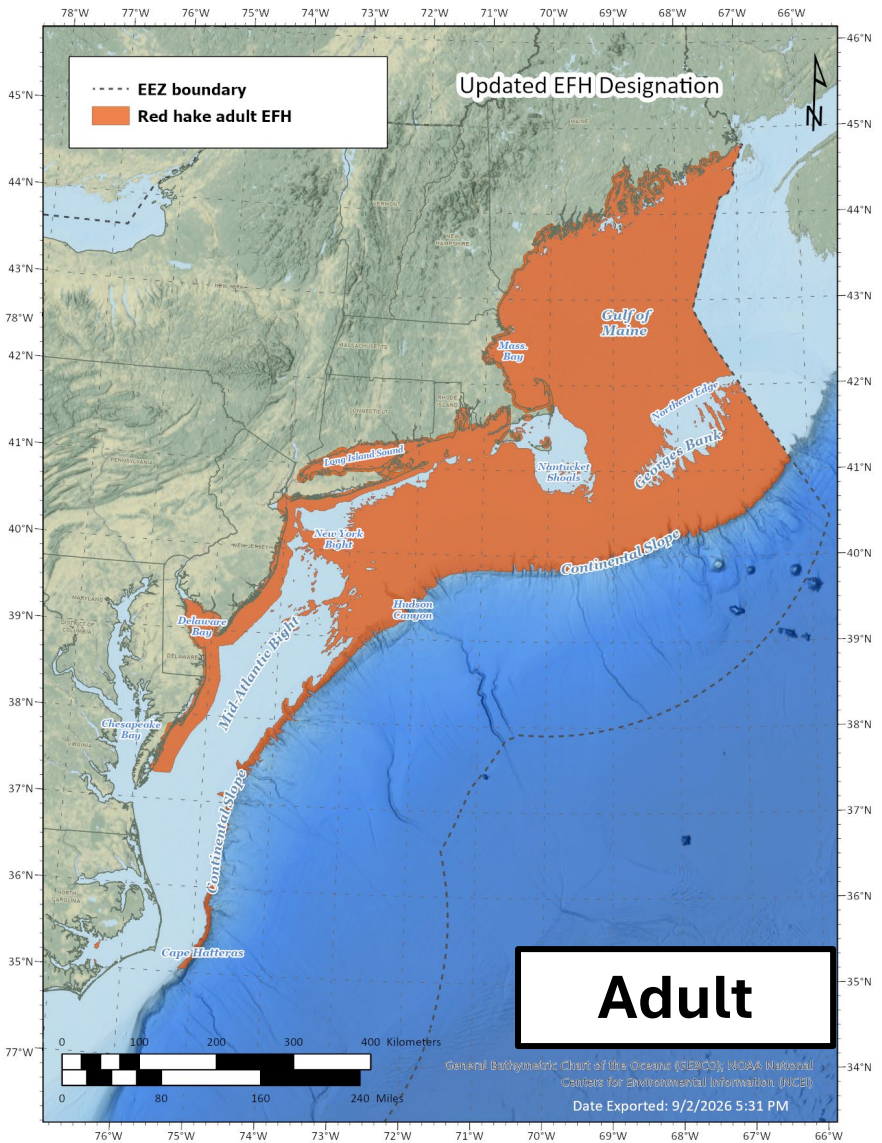
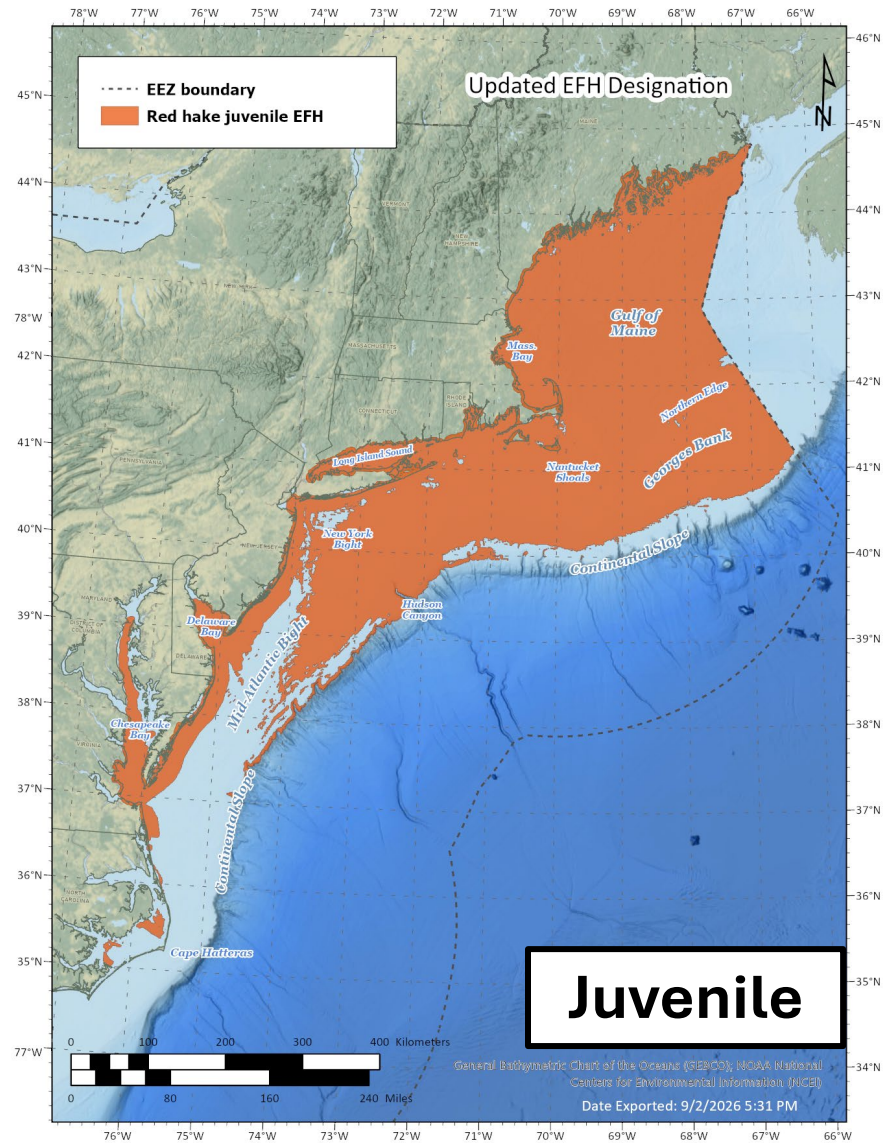
POLLOCK

Text descriptions at Section 4.2.9, page 67



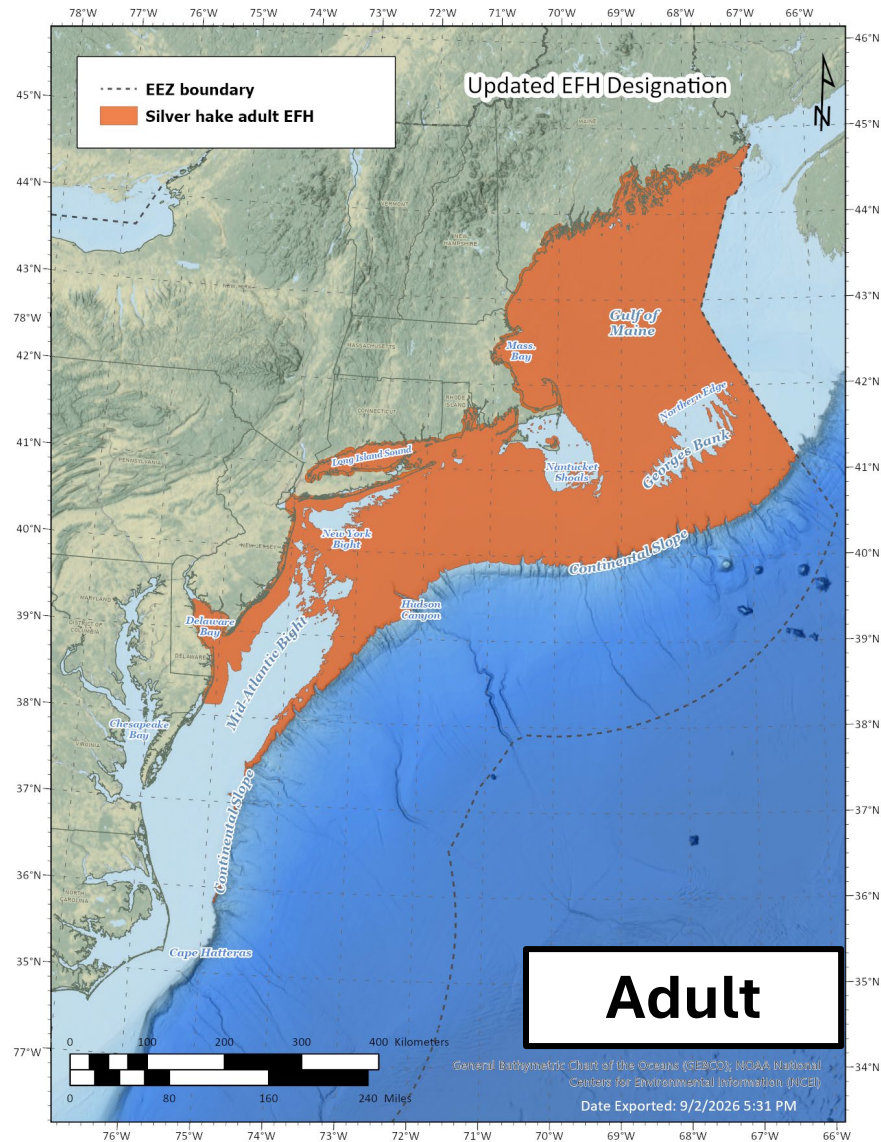
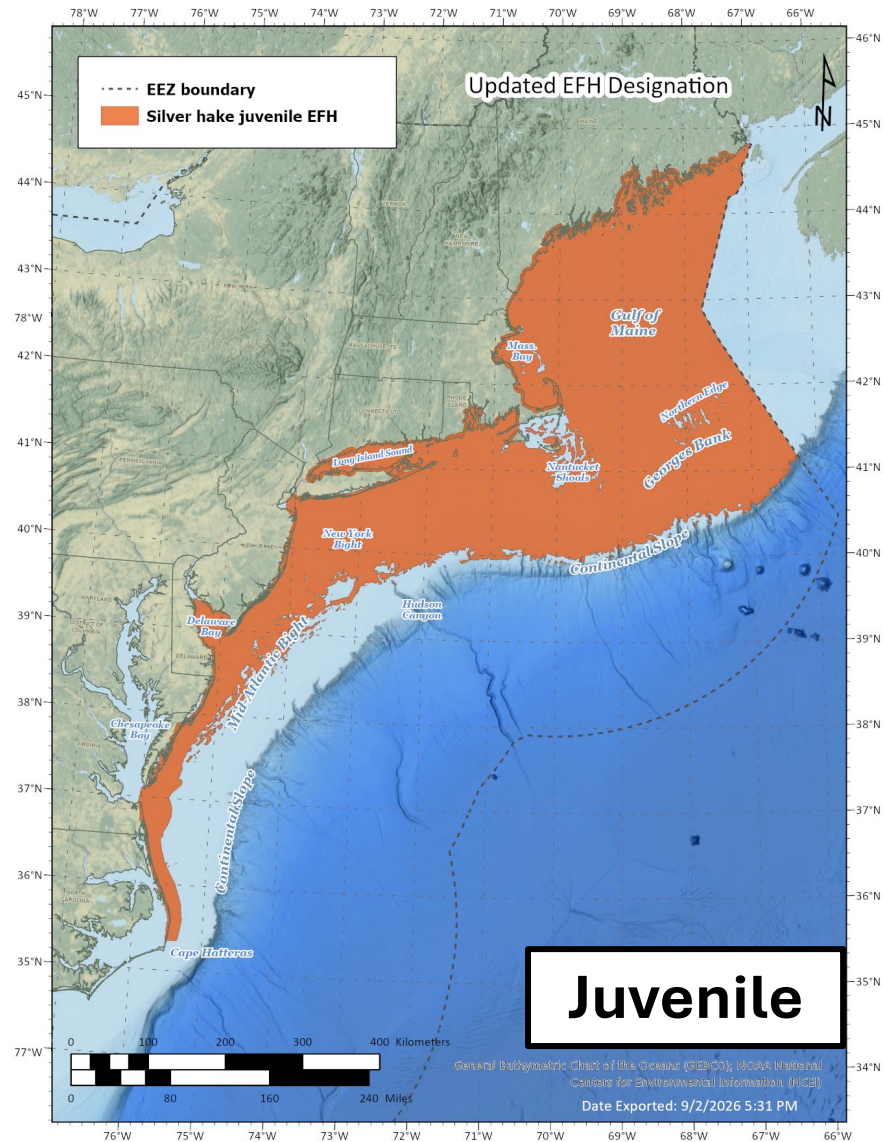
RED HAKE

Text descriptions at Section 4.2.10, page 70



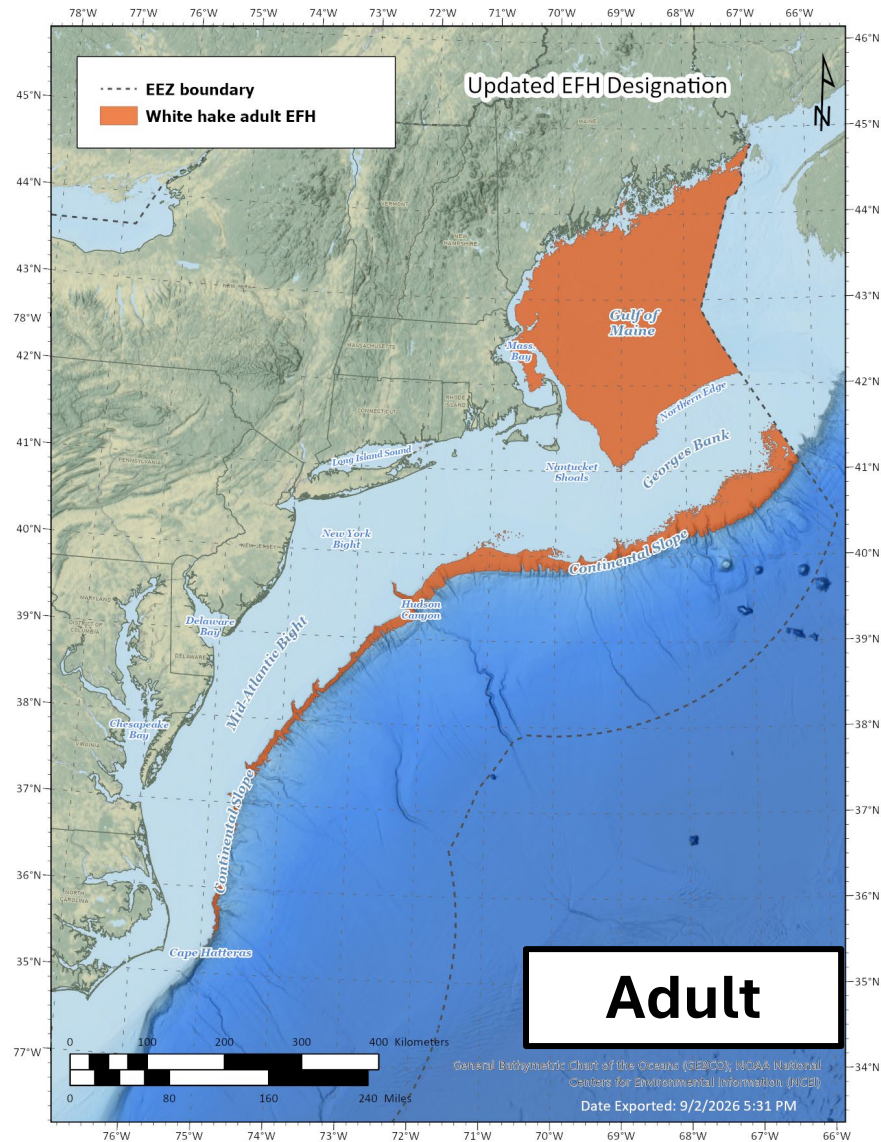
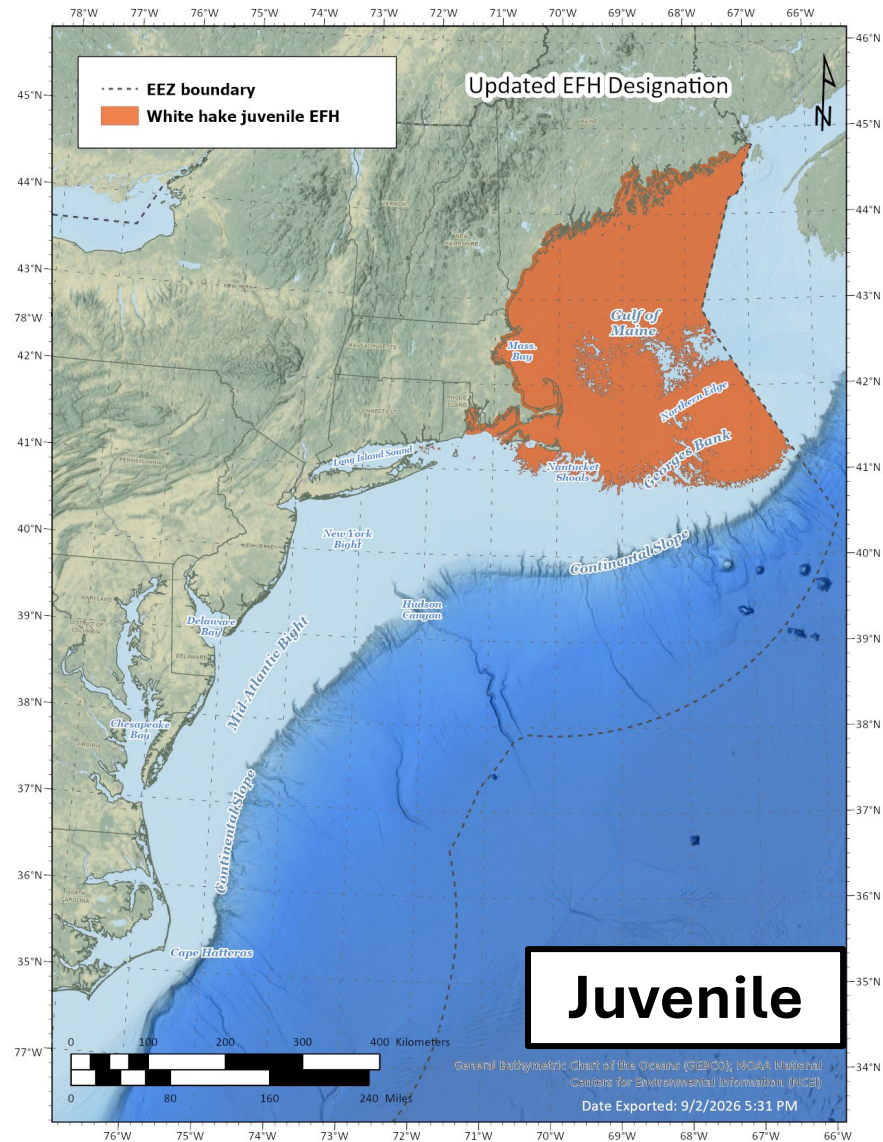
SILVER HAKE

Text descriptions at Section 4.2.11, page 73



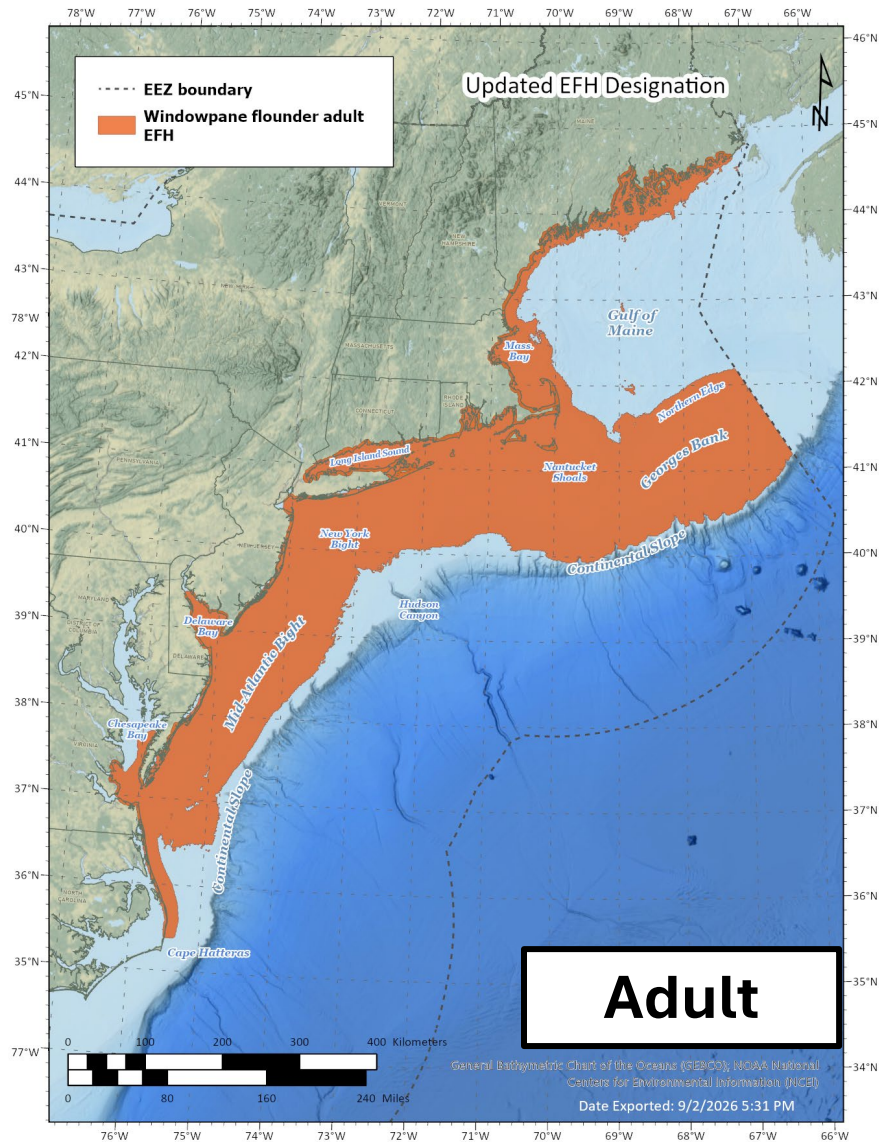
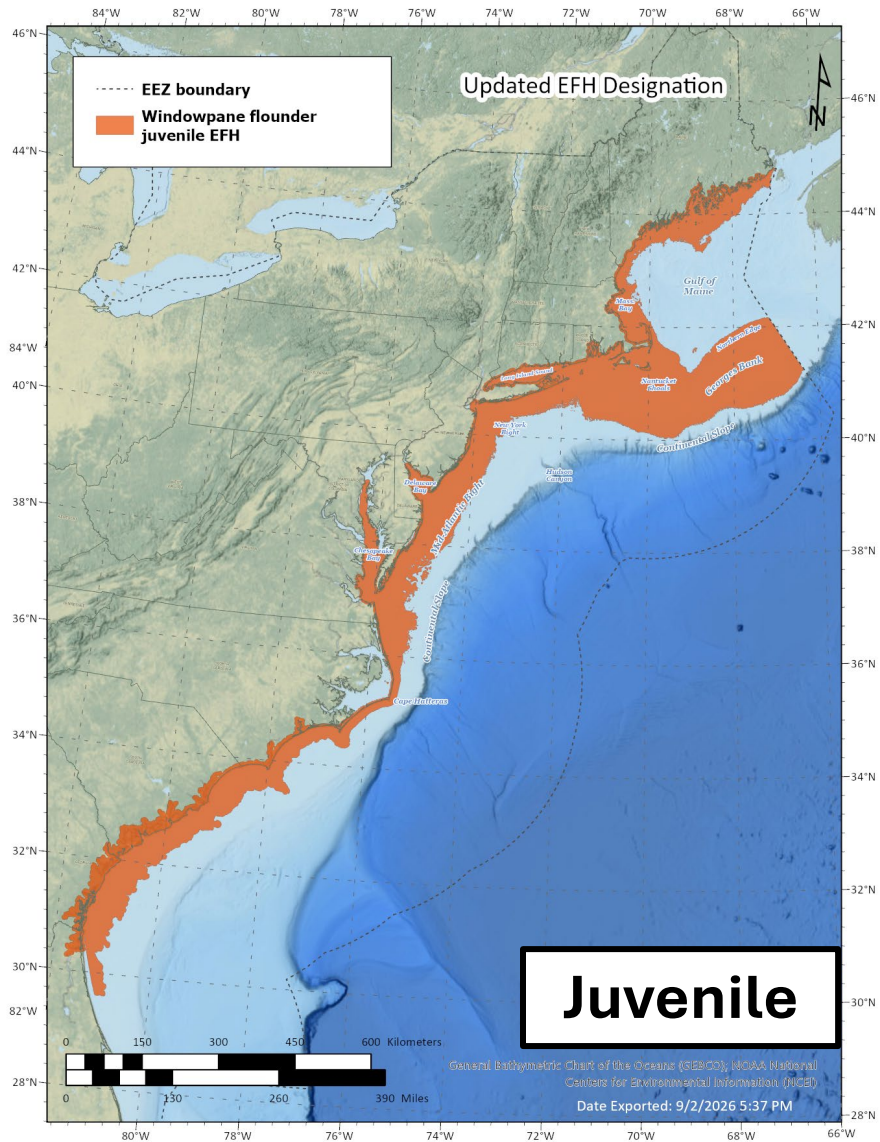
WHITE HAKE

Text descriptions at Section 4.2.12, page 76



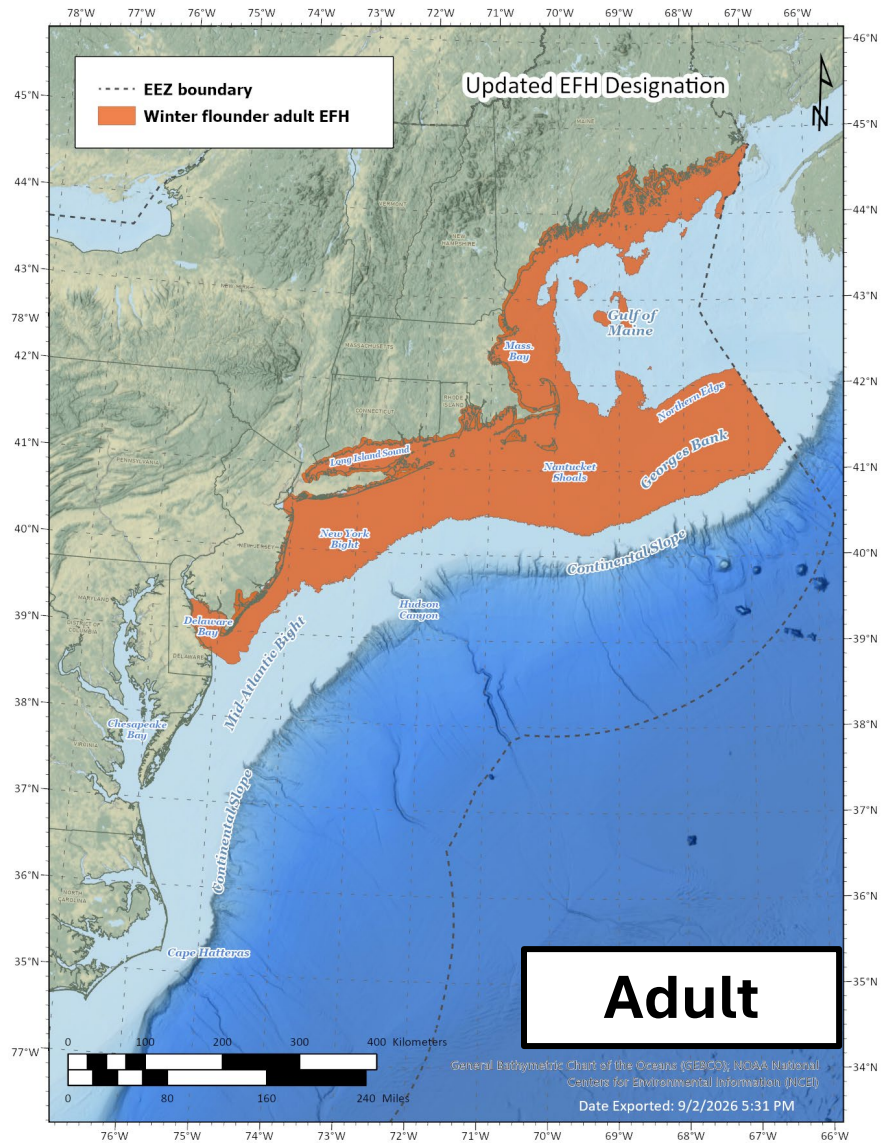
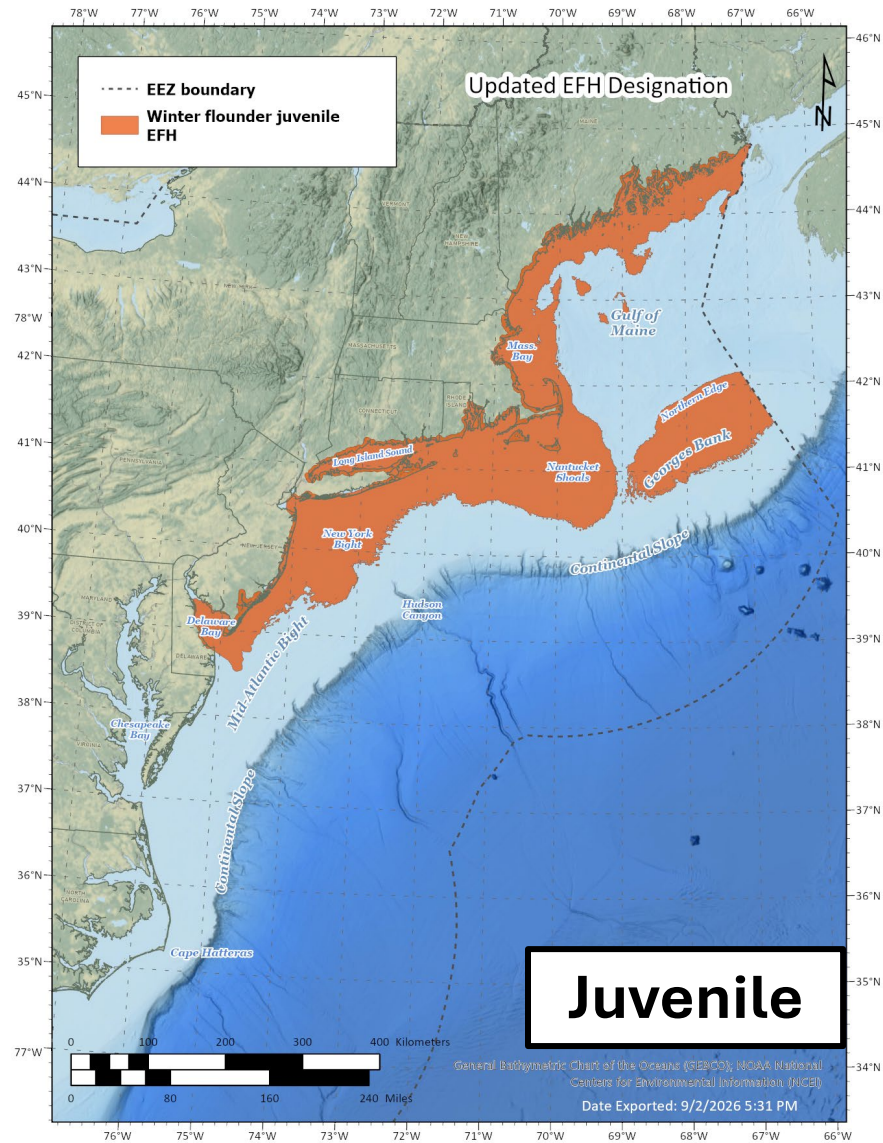
WINDOWPANE FLOUNDER

Text descriptions at Section 4.2.13, page 79



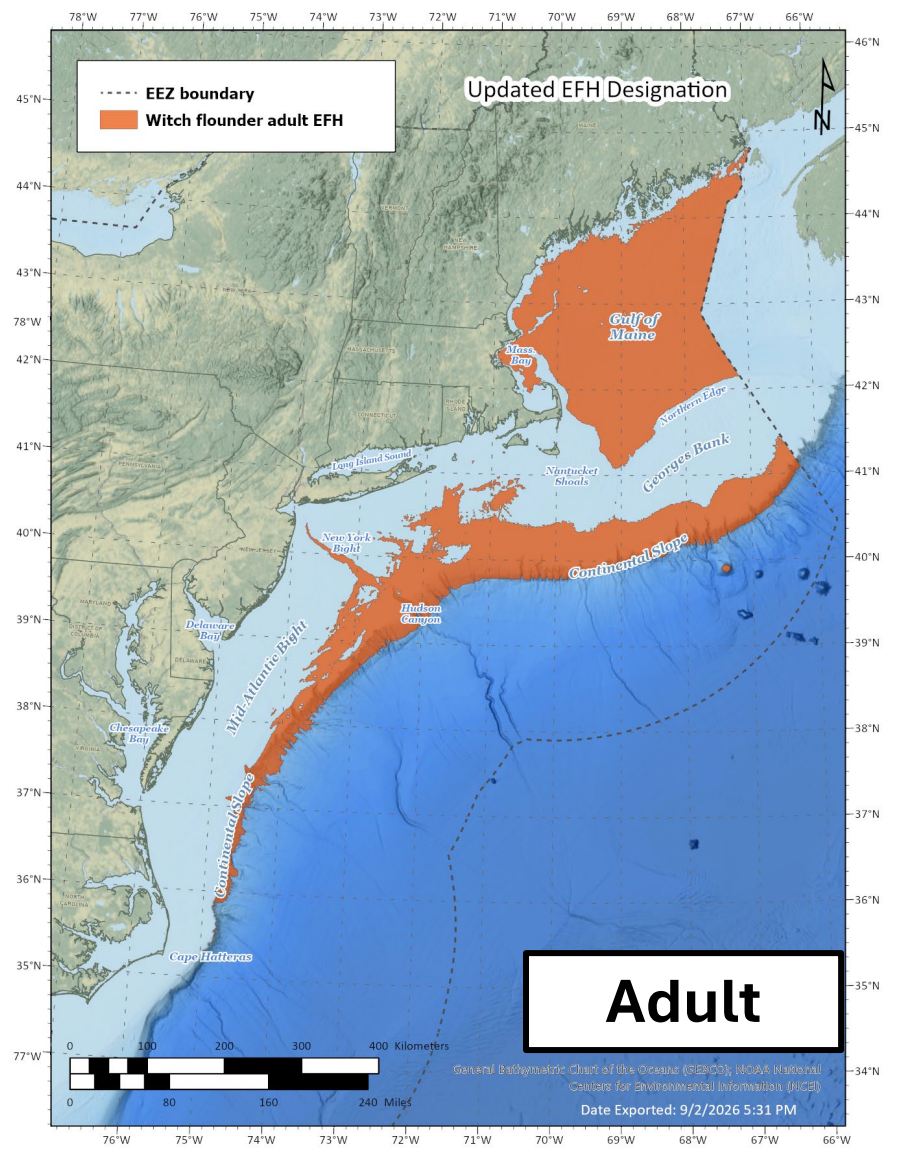
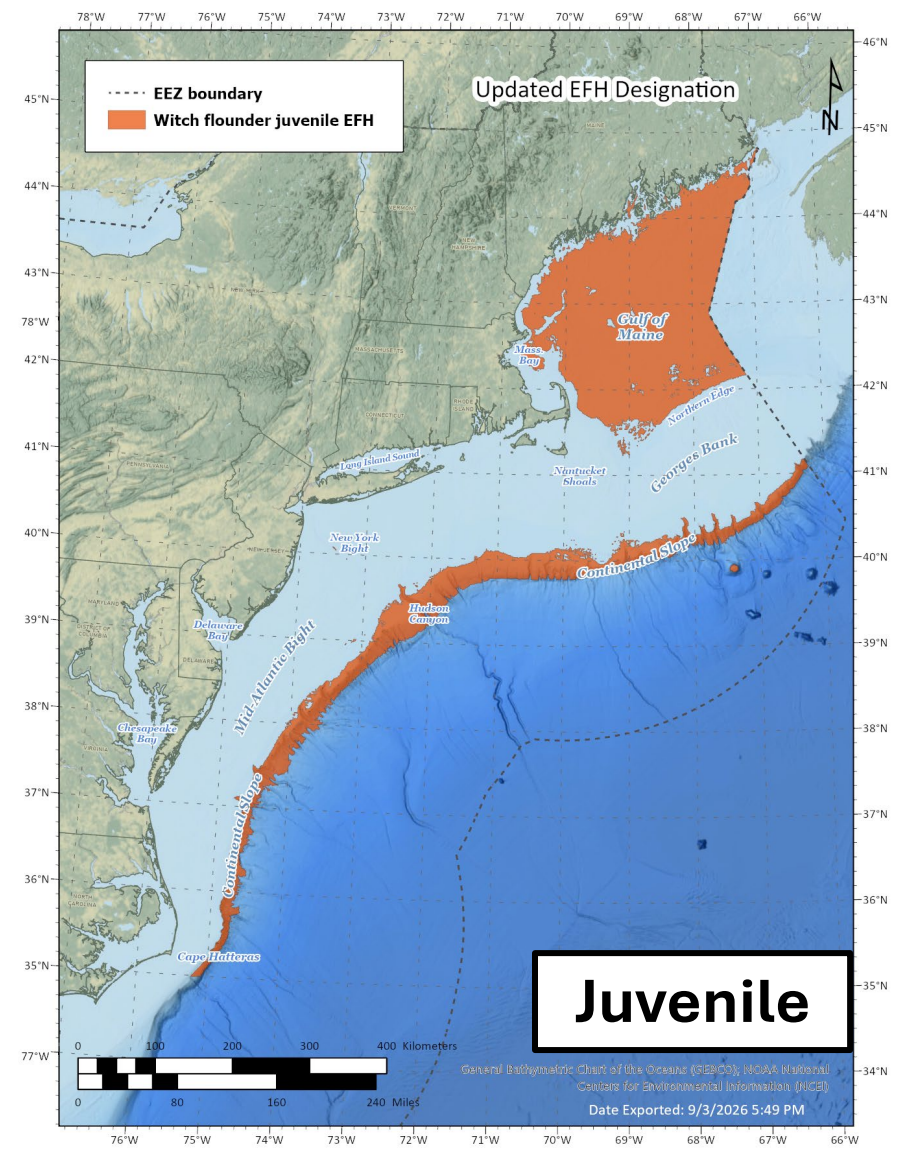
WINTER FLOUNDER

Text descriptions at Section 4.2.14, page 82



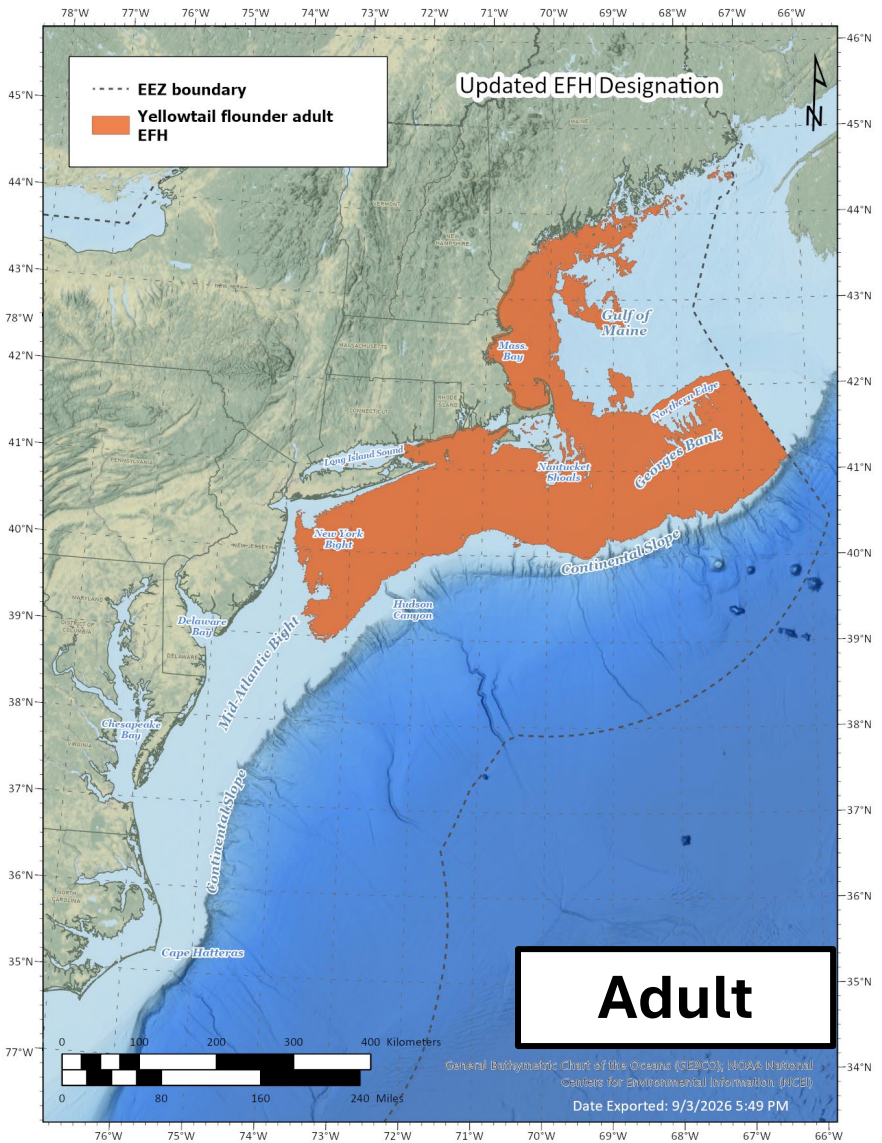
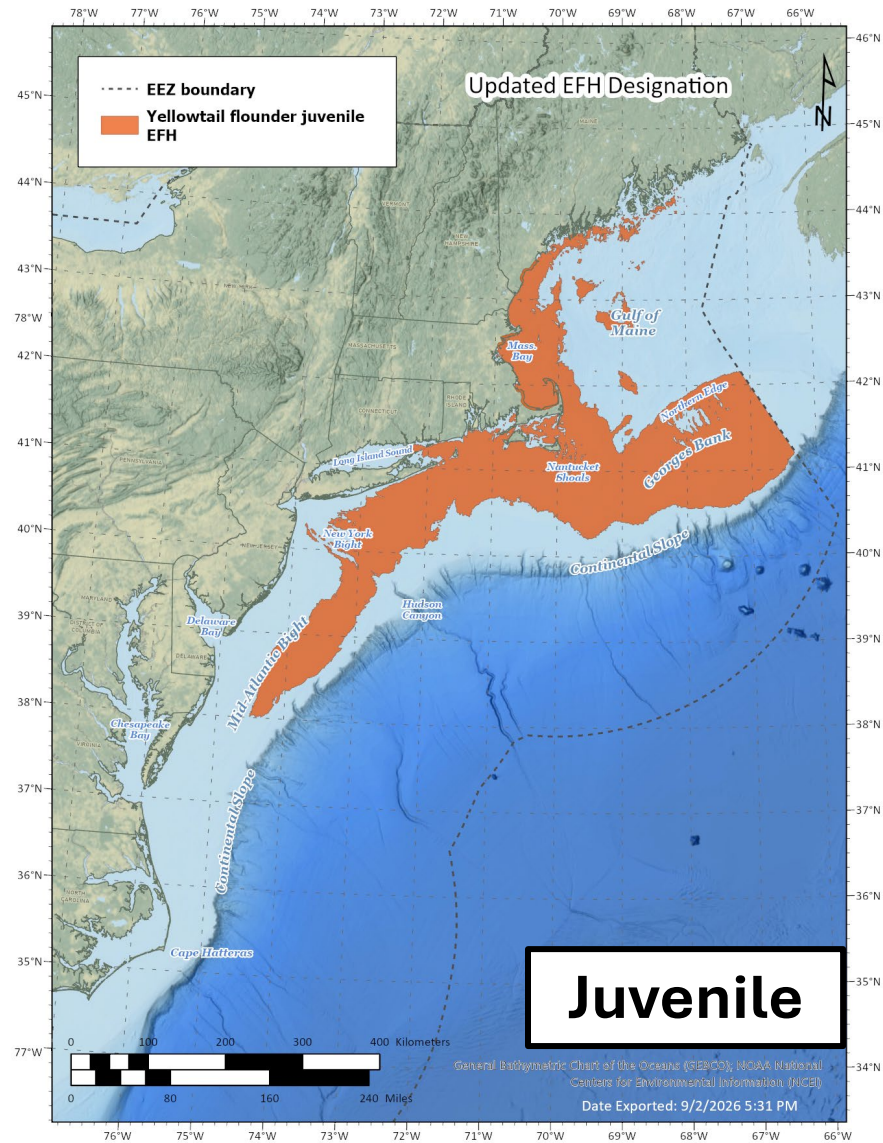
WITCH FLOUNDER

Text descriptions at Section 4.2.15, page 85



YELLOWTAIL FLOUNDER

Text descriptions at Section 4.2.16, page 88



ADDITIONAL HABITAT INFORMATION

Framework Appendices:

- Appendix A – No Action EFH Designations
- Appendix B – Environmental Ranges (derived from survey data) – Depth, Temp, Salinity
- Appendix C – EFH Consultation Process
- Appendix D – Species Distribution Model Outputs [Document 3c]
 - *Model performance* – model performance metrics across all modeled species / life stages
 - *Relationships with environmental variables* – predictor significance, variance partitioning, smooth terms (response curves for individual covariates)
 - *Spatial distribution* – seasonal predicted density, seasonal density quantiles
- Appendix E – Detailed EFH Designation Methods [Document 3d]



HABITAT COMMITTEE AND ADVISORY PANEL RECOMMENDATION

Both the Committee and the Advisory Panel recommend that the Council select ***Alternative 2, Updated EFH Designations***, as the preferred alternative, acknowledging that documentation of GARFO guidance on species-specific map adjustments, implementation and rationale for those adjustments, and map comparisons of unadjusted species distribution model output and recommended designations accompany the framework when it is presented to the Council for final action in September.

Discussion on this alternative was in line with Committee rationale provided for final action on the 2025 EFH Framework:

The updated modeling approach is an advance on the methods used for previous designations and uses best available, up-to-date data. The Committee recognizes that there have been changes in the environment since the previous updates and that this is our best opportunity to address those changes in the EFH designations.



GREAT SOUTH CHANNEL HABITAT MANAGEMENT AREA SURFCLAM EXEMPTION PROGRAM REVIEW

- April 2015: Council recommends designation of Great South Channel HMA – in effect April 2018
- December 2018: Council identified three exemption areas within the Great South Channel HMA for clam dredging – in effect June 2020
- December 2025: Council prioritized review of the program
 - Objective: assess effectiveness of surfclam exemption areas from habitat conservation and fishery perspectives
- ***For today:* Discuss program review report**
- ***For the future:* Consider findings when setting 2027 priorities**



PROGRAM REVIEW BUILDS UPON PRIOR COUNCIL ACTIONS AND RESEARCH PROJECTS

New England Council actions:

- Omnibus Habitat Amendment 2 (2016)
- Clam Dredge Framework (2018)
- SNE HAPC Framework (2023)
- EFH 5-Year Review (2025)
- 2025 EFH Framework
- 2026 EFH Framework

Also, information developed by MAFMC to support Surfclam Ocean Quahog FMP development

Research Projects:

- Exempted Fishing Permits 19066 and 23073 – Coonamessett Farm Foundation
- East of Nantucket Surfclam Survey – Powell, et. al, 2018 and related publications
- Cod spawning, local ecological knowledge – DeCelles, et al. 2017



ADVISORY PANEL AND COMMITTEE RECOMMENDED EVALUATING THE PROGRAM AGAINST ITS OBJECTIVES

1. Minimize, to the extent practicable, the impacts of fishing on essential fish habitats within the Great South Channel HMA.
 - a. Provide protection for spawning cod
 - b. Minimize the disturbance of complex habitats
2. Provide access to areas within the Great South Channel HMA to create fishing opportunities and support achievement of optimum yield in the surfclam fishery.

Information from the report to consider in this evaluation: Fishing Effects Model results, updated EFH designations, substrate stability and natural disturbance findings in EFP 23073 report, and spatially explicit landings and revenues.



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS: HABITAT AND MANAGED SPECIES

- Areas where we have new / improved information:
 - GSC HMA is highly dynamic with notable natural reworking of seafloor, documented in detail for Davis Bank East Area (EFP 23073)
 - Seafloor habitats in the GSC HMA are heterogeneous (EFP 19066, 23073)
 - Multiple NEFMC and MAFMC managed species occur in the HMA, some at high densities; species distributions are shifting (new EFH information)
 - Seabed disturbance due to fishing, as estimated by the Fishing Effects Model, is low, and has declined since 2016 (EFH 5-Year Review)
- Areas of uncertainty:
 - Use of Great South Channel HMA by spawning cod
 - Detailed habitat characteristics of Old South, McBlair, and Fishing Rip Exemption Areas



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS: SURFCLAM FISHERY

- Areas where we have new / improved information:
 - Analysis of fishery dependent data shows a marked decline in effort, landings, and revenues from the Great South Channel HMA
 - Surfclam fishery is well characterized in the research areas where compensation fishing was closely monitored under two EFPs
 - Catch rates (bu/hr) are higher in the two research areas than the coastwide average
- Areas of uncertainty:
 - Distribution of surfclams in the Great South Channel HMA by size and age is uncertain; last survey was about a decade ago and the area is not included in the federal clam survey

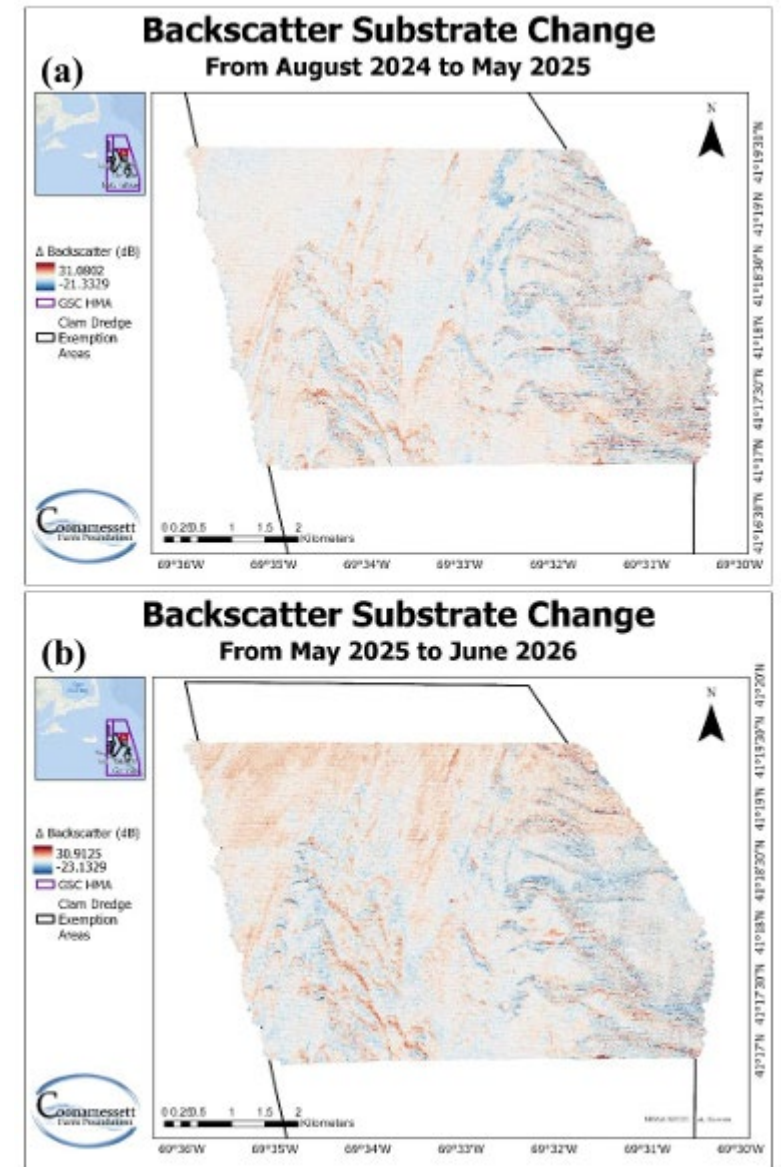


GREAT SOUTH CHANNEL HMA IS A HIGHLY DYNAMIC ENVIRONMENT

- Characterized by high water flows along the seabed, strong currents, and notable sediment transport and reworking due to natural disturbance
- Fishing Effects Model assumes that background levels of natural disturbance influence seabed impact and recovery dynamics
- EFP 23073 demonstrates interannual variability in bedform positions and sediment characteristics within the Davis Bank East research area



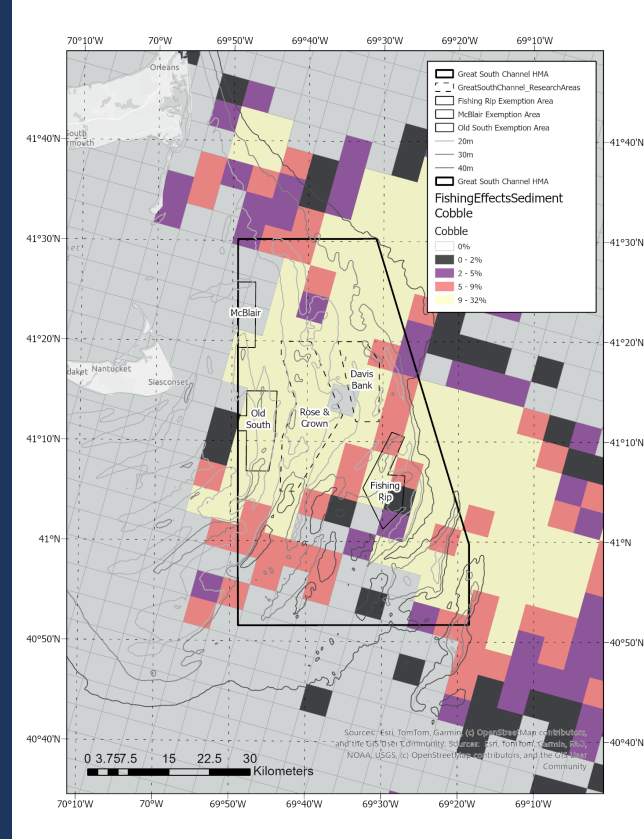
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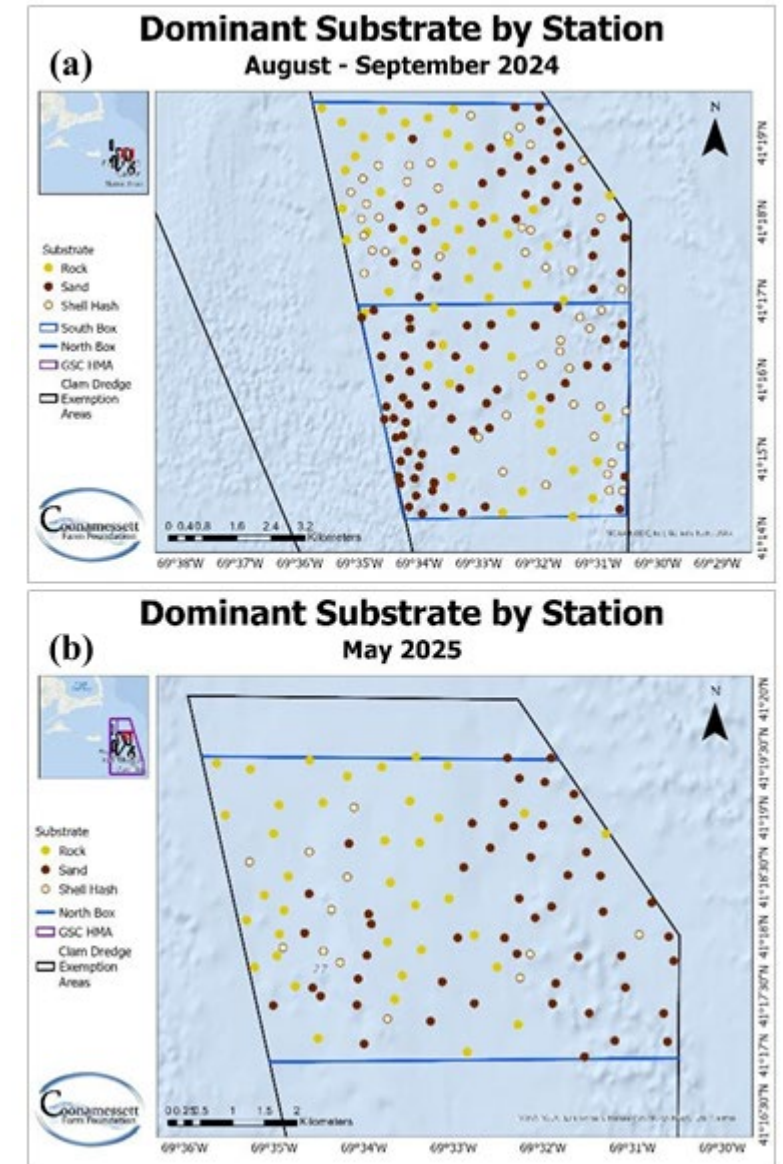
Jennings et al. 2026, Figure 8

SEAFLOOR HABITATS ARE HETEROGENEOUS

- Mix of sediment and epifauna types found throughout GSC HMA
- Different locations dominated by different grain sizes, taxa
- Well-documented in Fishing Effects model, OHA2, Clam Dredge Framework image analysis, East of Nantucket Survey, EFPs 19066 and 23073



Percent cobble by Fishing Effects Model grid cell (lighter color = higher %)



Jennings et al. 2026, Figure 4



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INVESTIGATING FISH AND SHELLFISH DISTRIBUTIONS IN GSC HMA

Question	Information source / metric
Which species (juveniles and/or adults) occur in the GSC HMA / on Nantucket Shoals?	Overlap of the updated EFH designation map for a given species and life stage and the GSC HMA
What is the relative importance of the GSC HMA, as compared to other parts of the Northeast U.S. region?	Top 25% EFH density quantiles and top 25% cumulative density quantiles (i.e., relatively high predicted densities according to SDMs)
Do exemption areas have higher degree of overlap with species distributions vs. other parts of the HMA?	Magnitude of overlap of high species predicted density areas with exemption areas
Are there seasonal differences in habitat use within the HMA?	Differences in species distribution and predicted density between spring and fall seasons
Have there been shifts in species distribution onto/away from the shoals in the last ~10 years?	Products that indicate increase, decrease, or no change in density from 2002-2022 (SDM outputs, etc.)



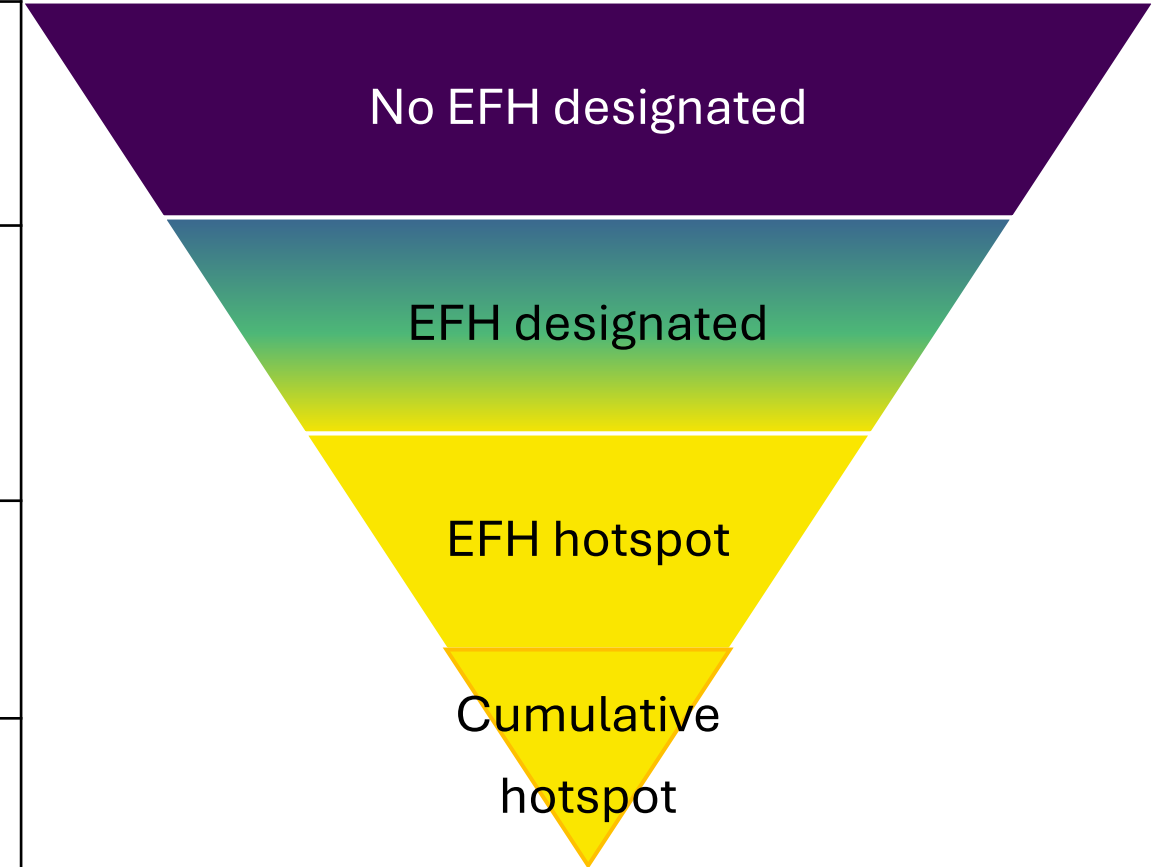
ESTIMATED DENSITIES OF MANAGED SPECIES IN GSC HMA

Acadian redfish, American plaice, Atlantic halibut, Atlantic wolffish, Blueline tilefish, Clearnose skate, Golden tilefish, Monkfish (j), Offshore hake, Pollock (a), Rosette skate, Smooth skate, Summer flounder (j), White hake (a), Witch flounder

Atlantic herring (a), Atlantic mackerel (a), Black sea bass (a), Bluefish (j), Butterfish (a), Haddock (a), Monkfish (a), Ocean pout, Red hake (a), Silver hake, Barndoor skate, Haddock (j), Northern shortfin squid (a), Ocean quahog, Spiny dogfish (j), White hake (j), Yellowtail flounder (a), Atlantic wolffish (j), Summer flounder (a)

Atlantic cod, Black sea bass (j), Longfin squid (a), Northern shortfin squid (j), Pollock (j), Scup (a), Windowpane flounder (j), Winter flounder (j), Yellowtail flounder (j)

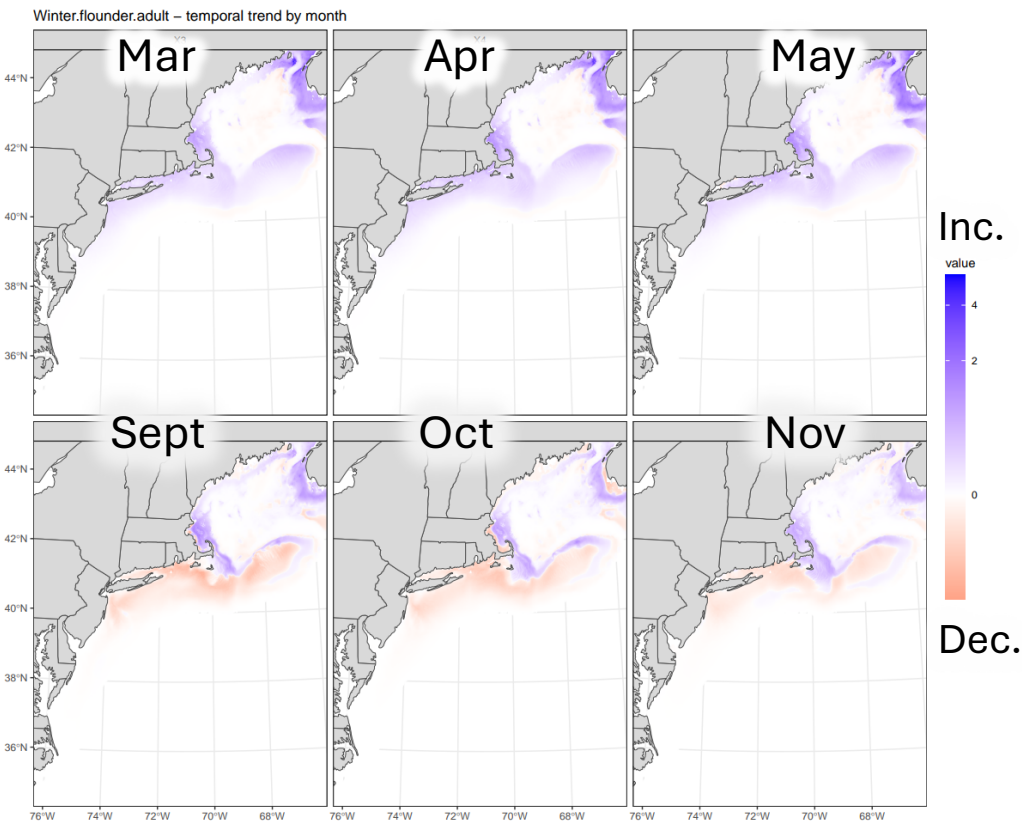
Butterfish (j), Little skate, Longfin squid (j), Red hake (j), Scup (j), Spiny dogfish (a), Windowpane flounder (a), Winter flounder (a), Winter skate



SPECIES DISTRIBUTIONS SHIFT SEASONALLY AND THROUGH TIME

- Seasonal distributions: No differences in species overlap with the HMA across seasons, but some shifts in higher and lower density areas within the HMA
- Shifts, 2002-2022:

Relatively uniform coastwide trend		Mixed trends by location
<i>Increasing trend in most areas coastwide</i>	<i>Decreasing trend in most areas coastwide</i>	Black sea bass (J), Little skate (A), scup (A), Spiny dogfish (A), windowpane flounder (J&A), winter flounder (J&A), winter skate (J&A), yellowtail flounder (J)
Butterfish (J), little skate (J), longfin squid (J&A), red hake (J), shortfin squid (J)	Atlantic cod (J & A), bluefish (A), pollock (J)	

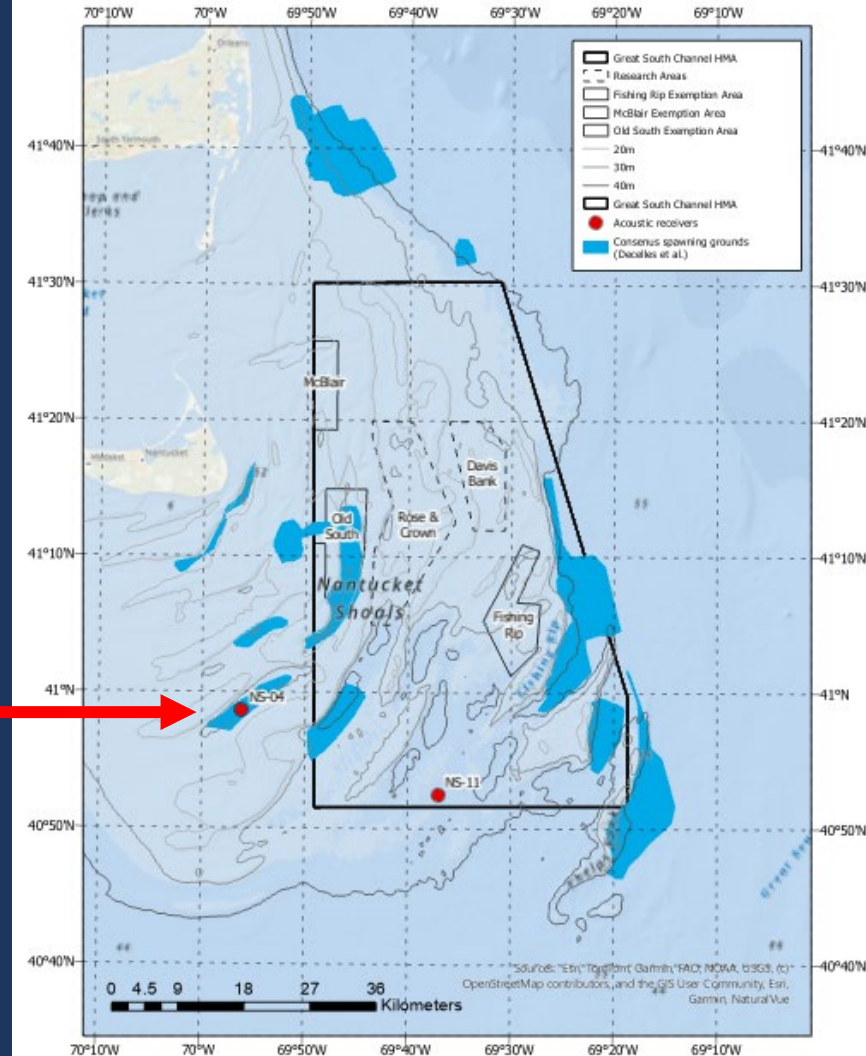


Adult winter flounder trends 2002-2022
(EFH joint species distribution models)



USE OF THE HMA FOR ATLANTIC COD SPAWNING REMAINS UNCERTAIN

- Traditionally, cod spawn in this area during winter
- Trawl surveys do not sample during winter, limited survey coverage in GSC HMA spring or fall
- Acoustic receivers able to hear cod as they are aggregating to spawn – ‘grunts’, but most of the data has been collected west of the GSC HMA
- NEFSC could analyze data from receiver NS-04 near GSC HMA to see if cod were detected during spawning season; detection radius around receiver is small (tens of meters)

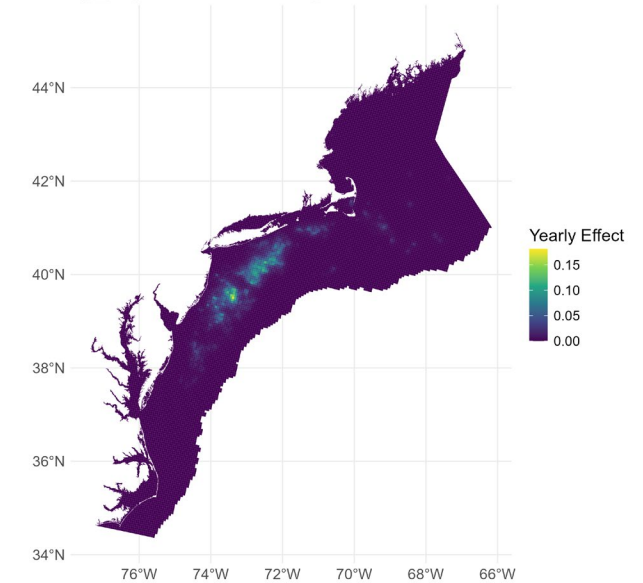


FISHING EFFECTS ON HABITAT

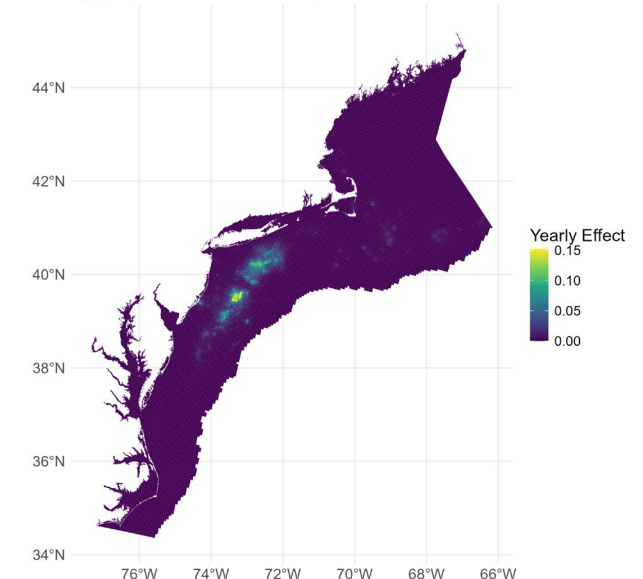
- Estimated using Fishing Effects Model
 - Averaging across grids that overlap GSC HMA, < 1% disturbance, 2013-2022
 - Per-grid disturbance estimates > 3% in some locations, years
 - Coastwide, maximum values 10-15% in some locations during 2022
- EFP 23073 report documented effects of fishing at selected drop camera stations
 - Natural disturbance more important to sediment distribution at stations
 - Some effects of fishing on epifauna noted



hy_drgGear 2016 : Yearly Effect



hy_drgGear 2022 : Yearly Effect



PERCENT DISTURBANCE ESTIMATES ARE LOW ON AVERAGE

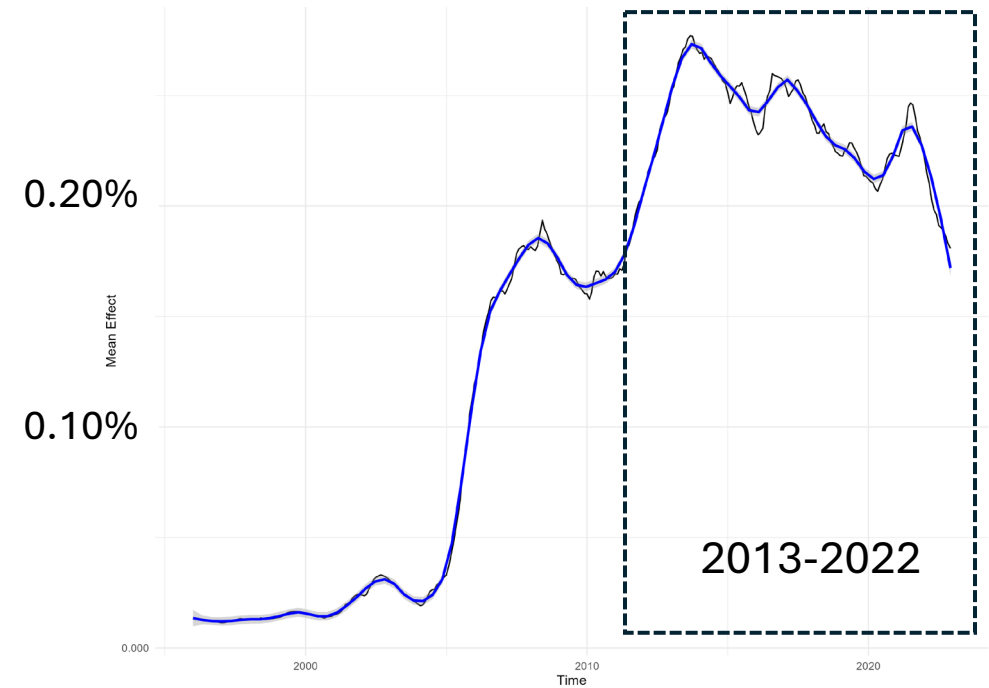
Great South Channel HMA:

Mean percent disturbance due to clam dredges
2013-2022



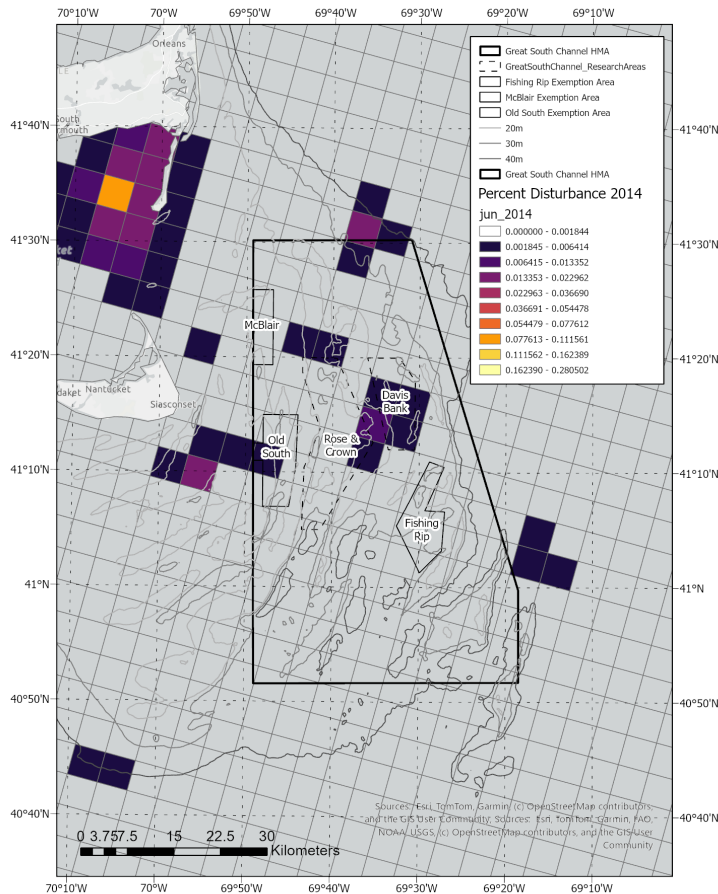
Northeast Region:

Mean percent disturbance due to clam dredges
1996-2022

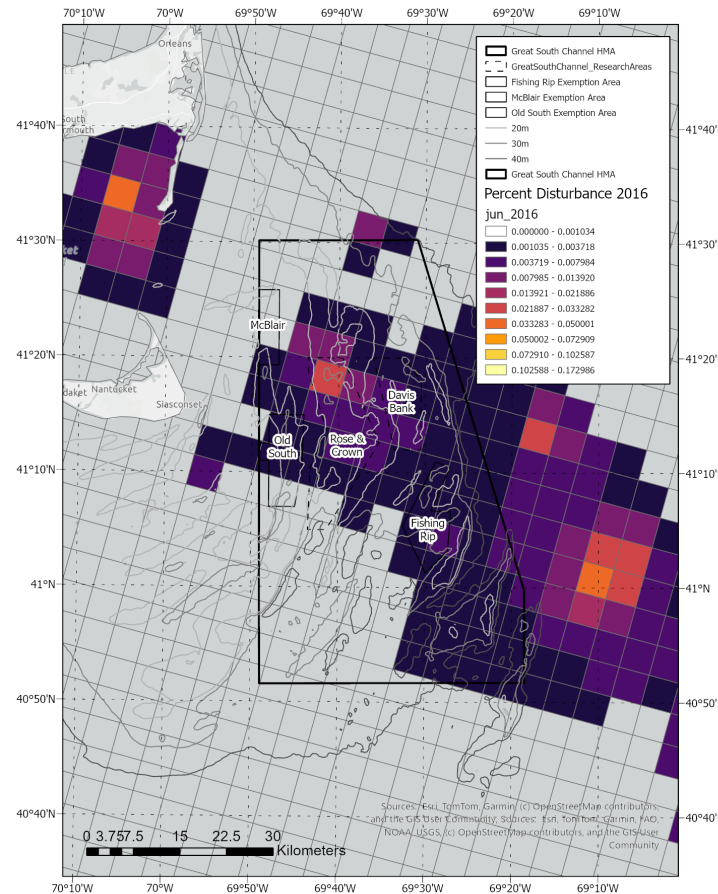


DISTRIBUTION OF DISTURBANCE – CLAM DREDGE GEAR

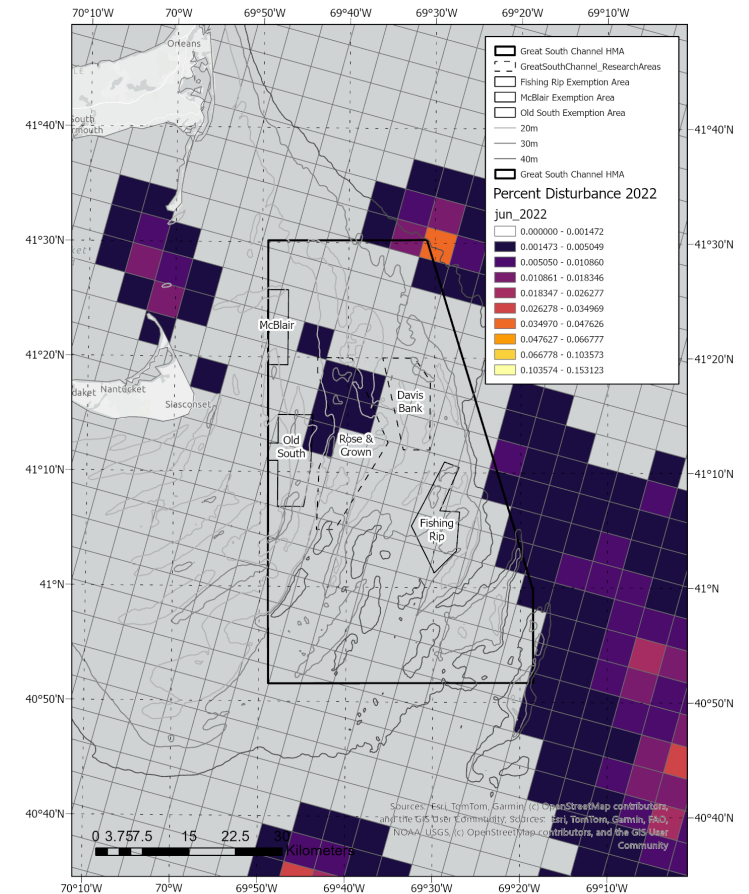
June 2014 – pre-closure



June 2016 – pre-closure, peak year



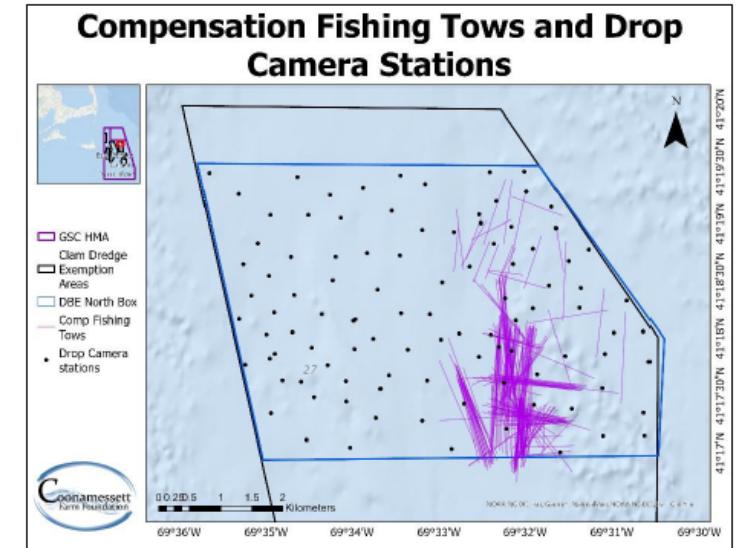
June 2022 – exemption program in effect



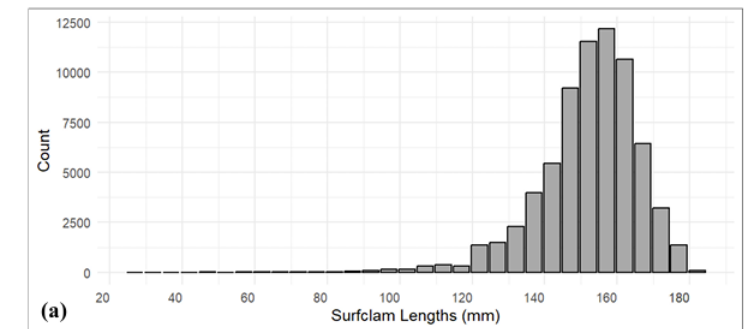
* Scales vary across figures

SURFCLAM DISTRIBUTION HETEROGENEOUS, SOMEWHAT UNCERTAIN

- No federal clam survey in this location
 - Most complete fishery-independent data – East of Nantucket Survey – about a decade old
 - Smaller vs. larger clams in different parts of HMA
- Fishing effort provides information about resource
 - Distribution of effort – EFP tow locations, VMS data (confidential)
 - Size frequency, catch rates (EFPs)
 - Uncertainty in current distribution / relative abundance: fishing areas adjusted during EFP 23073



Jennings et al. 2026, Figure 2 (DBE)



Jennings et al. 2026, Figure 15a (DBE, R&C)



EFFORT, LANDINGS, AND REVENUES LOWER UNDER EXEMPTION PROGRAM

- Between 2013 and 2025, surfclam fishing effort, landings, and revenue declined within the Great South Channel HMA
- Surfclam landings and revenues declined coast-wide over this same period
- Landings and revenue from the Great South Channel HMA currently comprise a smaller fraction of coast-wide revenues than they did prior to the exemption program's enactment
- Not possible to separate effects of changing clam resource from effects of spatial fishing restrictions under exemption program in explaining the decline in landings from the HMA



LANDINGS, REVENUE, AND EFFORT DURING DIFFERENT TIME PERIODS

Mean monthly values of landed bushels, revenue in ex-vessel value (not adjusted for inflation), and effort as days fished for the entire Great South Channel Habitat Management Area for each period from 2013 - 2026. Dealer and permit numbers indicate the total unique number of each reflected in the data set for that period.

Time period	Mean bushels per month	Mean revenue per month	Mean days fished per month	Total number of dealers	Total number of permits
Pre-closure (01/2013-03/2019)	33,463	\$561,619	32.8	15	28
Total closure (04/2019-05/2020)	2,810	\$60,066	1.9	3	7
Exemption program (06/2020-05/2026)	5,050	\$150,294	5.2	7	11



LANDINGS, REVENUE, AND EFFORT FROM GSC HMA 2013-2026

Year	Bushels	Revenue	Days fished	Total number of dealers	Total number of permits
2013	513,770	\$7,223,408	427.5	7	16
2014	519,011	\$7,682,965	475.0	9	16
2015	411,945	\$6,774,191	369.4	8	14
2016	418,501	\$7,435,840	508.1	11	18
2017	316,808	\$6,206,759	383.8	8	15
2018	244,100	\$4,935,444	222.9	4	13
2019**	99,569	\$2,162,305	86.2	3	8
2020**	73,167	\$1,814,967	69.7	3	5
2021	43,436	\$1,211,090	51.0	3	5
2022	*	*	*	*	*
2023	*	*	*	*	*
2024	*	*	*	*	*
2025	52,962	\$1,578,278	66.1	5	6
2026	*	*	*	*	*

** Area closed April 2019, reopened June 2020, EFP fishing throughout that period

* *Confidential*

LANDINGS, REVENUE, AND EFFORT BY TIME PERIOD AND AREA

	Area	Time period	Mean bushels per month	Mean revenue per month	Mean days fished per month	Total number of dealers	Total number of permits
Research	Rose & Crown	Pre-closure	13,638	\$231,399	13.3	13	23
	Rose & Crown	Total-closure	5,243	\$105,164	4.7	3	5
	Rose & Crown	Exemption program	4,569	\$134,110	3.4	3	4
	Davis Bank East	Pre-closure	4,451	\$70,975	4.2	13	19
	Davis Bank East	Total-closure	0	0	0.0	0	0
	Davis Bank East	Exemption program	1,889	\$56,200	2.0	3	3
Exemption							
	Fishing Rip	Pre-closure	4,131	\$58,632	3.5	8	16
	Fishing Rip	Total-closure	0	0	0.0	0	0
	Fishing Rip	Exemption program	3,247	\$97,043	3.7	3	4
	McBlair	Pre-closure	688	\$12,809	0.8	8	21
	McBlair	Total-closure	0	0	0.0	0	4
	McBlair	Exemption program	*	*	*	*	7
	Old South	Pre-closure	5,027	\$87,855	5.1	13	21
	Old South	Total-closure	1,891	\$43,030	1.2	3	4
	Old South	Exemption program	3,457	\$102,792	3.7	4	7

* Confidential

IS THE EXEMPTION PROGRAM MEETING HABITAT OBJECTIVES?

OBJECTIVE: *Minimize, to the extent practicable, the impacts of fishing on essential fish habitats within the Great South Channel HMA (considering complex seafloor habitats and spawning cod)*

- Low percent disturbance estimates during exemption program; adverse effects at the scale of the Great South Channel HMA likely considered minimal
- Disturbance was low pre-closure when area was fully open to dredging
- Old South closed during the cod spawning season, protective of any spawning occurring, but current use of this area and other areas of the HMA for spawning is unknown
- Natural sediment reworking and transport occurs throughout HMA, interacts with fishing effects
- Within Davis Bank East, minimal ability to detect fishing effects beyond background disturbance



IS THE EXEMPTION PROGRAM MEETING THE SURFCLAM YIELD OBJECTIVE?

OBJECTIVE: Provide access to areas within the Great South Channel HMA to create fishing opportunities and support achievement of optimum yield in the surfclam fishery

- Fishery is generating surfclam yield from the Exemption Areas, at lower amounts than pre-closure
- Landings would likely be higher given access to other areas of the HMA, but potential yields are unknown given lack of survey and biomass estimates
- Surfclam yields declining coast-wide; but yields from HMA have decreased more precipitously
- Research Area landings are important to overall yield from HMA
- Research Area compensation fishing lies outside formal exemption program; areas not designated in federal regulations, access requires an EFP



OVERALL FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW

- Much new information available: habitat maps, fishery characterization from EFPs, new EFH and species distribution models
- However, uncertainty remains in some areas: surfclam and habitat distributions, particularly in unsurveyed and unfished areas
 - Future research needs?
- Objectives are being partially met
 - Minimal habitat disturbance, cod spawning protected if occurring on historic grounds
 - Surfclam harvest is occurring, but at lower levels than in the past
- Could consider adjusting management approach to rebalance across habitat and fishery yield considerations

