The Inshore Juvenile Atlantic Cod Habitat Area of Particular Concern

A new addition to the coastal shallows protection toolbox, courtesy NEFMC

Below are maps and other information about this habitat conservation plan of the New England Fishery Management Council, (NEFMC) and background on HAPCs generally.

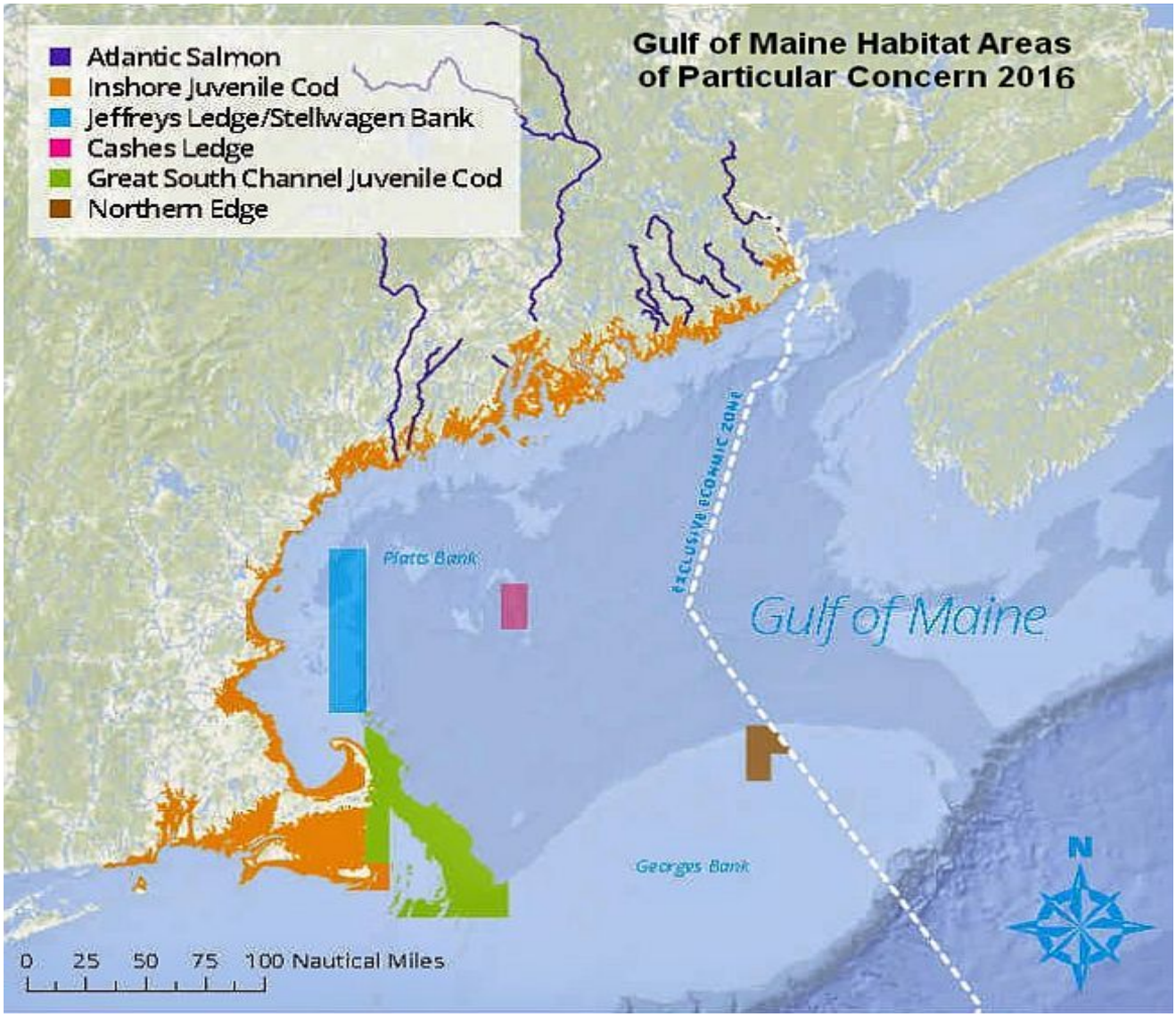
NEFMC's EIS summary of the Inshore juvenile Atlantic cod Habitat Area of Particular Concern
See also Conserving inshore juvenile Atlantic cod habitat

Chief challenges with implementing the Inshore Juvenile Atlantic Cod Habitat Area of Particular Concern HAPC,

(1) Along with the Atlantic Salmon HAPC, **it is entirely in state waters**.

(2) Its focus is chiefly on **land-based non-fishing impacts to inshore habitats(pdf).**

Existing Atlantic Salmon HAPC & projects under review to establish HAPCs in the Gulf of Maine region.



The Inshore Juvenile Atlantic Cod HAPC follows the shores of Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Maine, from mean low water to the 20 meter depth contour.

In the June 2015 Regional HAPC Report – The Council summarized the inshore cod HAPC

***"The proposed Inshore Juvenile Cod HAPC** is notable for its spatial extent and deliberate focus on non-fishing activities. This HAPC was initially approved by the Council in 1999 for inclusion in a subsequent amendment. Defined as **inshore areas paralleling New England's shores, from Mean Low Water to the 20 meters depth contour**, this represents a nearly continuous stretch of inshore waters from Maine to Rhode Island.*

"This HAPC is ecologically important and was designated primarily due to the sensitivity and ongoing exposure of nearshore areas to a wide range of anthropogenic stressors posing chemical, physical, and biological threats."

WHAT GOOD IS IT?
While the Inshore Juvenile Atlantic Cod HAPC designation does not grant any direct protection to these shallow environments, it DOES mandate that federal fish habitat conservation staff at NOAA be queried by the state of stakeholders when a question of impact to this HAPC arises in the course of reviewing a coastal development project.

SALMON EXAMPLE In the case of an existing Atlantic Salmon HAPC, when we raised concerns that a development on coastal Ducktrap Mountain was apparently sending eroding silt into the HAPC'd Ducktrap River, we notified the federal fish conservation staff in Gloucester. They directed Maine DEP to inspect the site for the alleged violation. DEP did; it turned out NOT to be a problem. If it had been, then the federal agency would have elevated the review to the federal level, to ensure this endangered species is not impacted.

WHAT ABOUT JUVENILE COD HABITAT?
Once the inshore juvenile cod HAPC is finalized in the federal register, then potential impacts to hatchling cod and to their prey and physical habitat will need to be considered during the course of all coastal development applications in Rhode Island Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Maine.

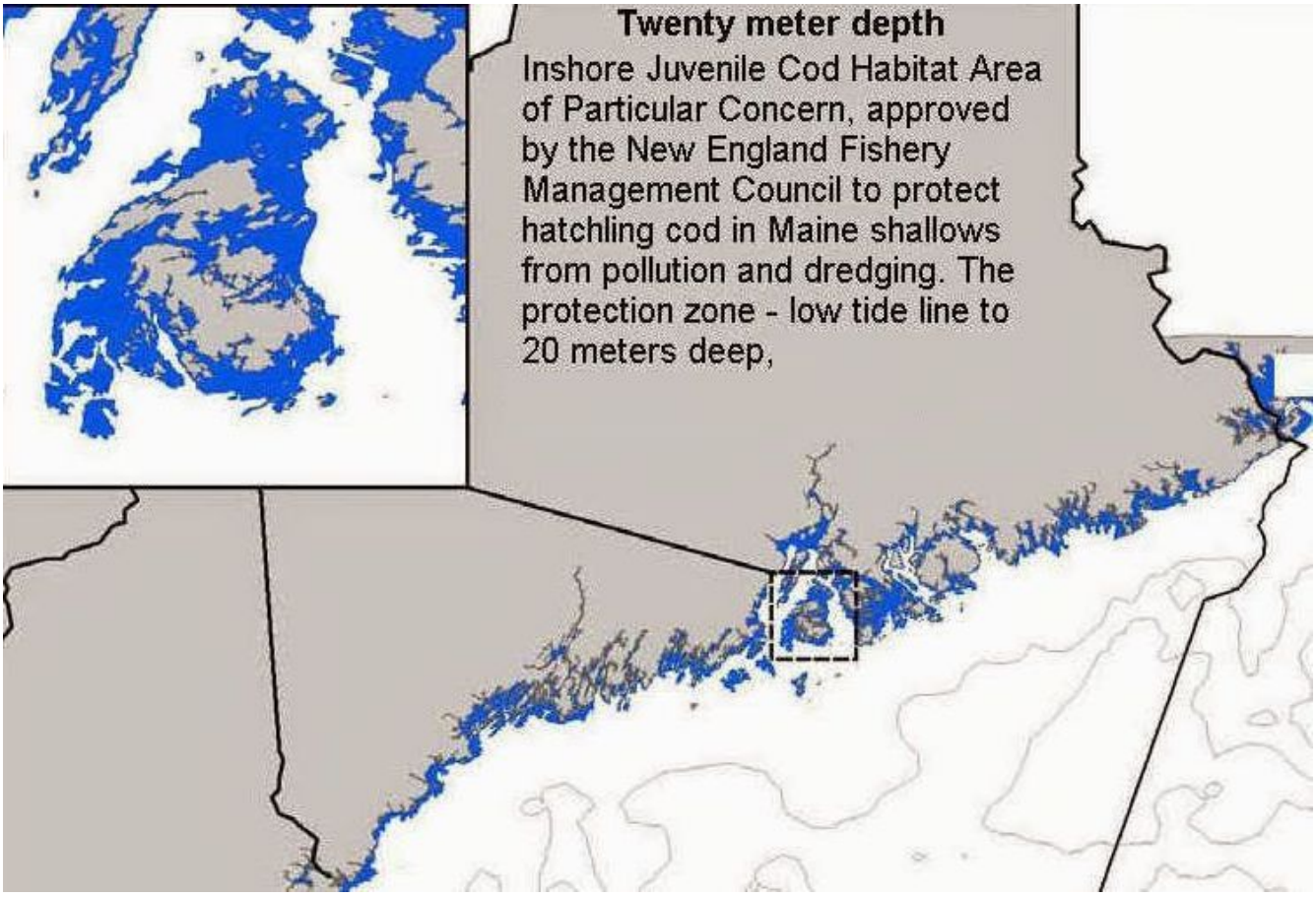
In its 2015 Regional HAPC Report the Council summarized the inshore cod HAPC

"The proposed Inshore Juvenile Cod HAPC is notable for its spatial extent and deliberate focus on non-fishing activities. This HAPC was initially approved by the Council in 1999 for inclusion in a subsequent amendment. Defined as inshore areas paralleling New England's shores, from Mean Low Water to the 20 meters depth contour, this represents a nearly continuous stretch of inshore waters from Maine to Rhode Island.

This HAPC is ecologically important and was designated primarily due to the sensitivity and ongoing exposure of nearshore areas to a wide range of anthropogenic stressors posing chemical, physical, and biological threats."

WHAT NEEDS DOING NOW?
- Acquainting state and town officials with the Inshore Juvenile Atlantic Cod HAPC
- Compiling lists of existing impacts (runoff, spills etc to this habitat area
- Documentatingof the habitat quality within this HAPC – underwater videography
- Making these available during reviews of development or waste discharge applications
- Contacting relevant federal officials when applications warrant HAPC review

This is a vast area, surveys need to do a representative sampling, in each reach of this coast,



Inshore Juvenile Cod HAPC meets enough criteria for designation

The NEFMC has concluded that the shallow waters of New England from mean low water to the 20 meter depth contour, **meet all of the criteria except (4) Rarity of the habitat type**.

Our New England shallows

1a&b. Have well documented historic and current ecological functions for juvenile atlantic cod and their ecological partners.

2. Are sensitive to anthropogenic stresses, such as dredging, wastewater discharges, pesticide runoff.

3. Are under stress from development, with more development pressures anticipated.

4. Rarity of habitat types.

Background

Original 1999 proposal

* 1999 NEFMC version of the inshore juvenile atlantic Cod HAPC
    - Proposal for a Habitat Area of Particular Concern for Juvenile Atlantic Cod (Gadus morhua) in the Nearshore Waters of the Gulf of Maine from NEFMC's 1999 Habitat Annual Review Report
    -

Research relevant to the inshore Juvenile Atlantic cod HAPC

* NEFMC 2000 Study of the Inshore Juvenile Atlantic Cod HAPC describes juvenile cod behaviors and experiences in this zone

* List of landbased threats to inshore juvenile atlantic cod Text version of list

* HAPC guidance on Human Activities that Impact Fish Habitat.- MidAtlantic Fishery Mgmt Council

* Impacts to Marine Fisheries Habitat from Non-fishing activities in the NE US

* NEFMC 2005-2006 HAPC review re Inshore Cod\ HAPC

* NEFMC 2006 version of Inshore juv cod HAPC

* Discussion/review of inshore juvenile cod HAPC 2006

* 2.2.1.3 Inshore Juvenile cod HAPC unedited scan from pdf

* Hatchling cod need soft microplankton for first food GLOBEC 1998
* Text version Scott M. Gallager, Jeff Van Keuren and Phillip Alatalo. Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute.1998

* Spatial Distribution of Ages 0 and 1 Atlantic Cod (Gadus morhua) off the Eastern Massachusetts Coast, 1978-1999, Relative to 'Habitat Area of Special Concern' (based on inshore trawl surveys)