Enhancing Coordination with NOAA Fisheries Science Centers on EFH

Goal: Promote understanding and discussion between the CCC Habitat Workgroup (CCC-HWG) and NOAA Fisheries Science Centers (FSCs), with help from Regional Offices (ROs), to enhance coordination around essential fish habitat (EFH).

Objectives:
- Clearly communicate Council management needs to strengthen the connection between FSC research and the Councils' fishery management applications, with coordination through the ROs.
- Focus the information provided by FSCs to support management needs for EFH designations, conservation and policy development, and consultations.
- Give Council staff a better understanding of available tools and research being developed by the FSCs that may aid fish habitat conservation and management.

We intend to initially focus on climate-based management questions and applicable research and/or tools. Example outcomes include the following:
- Increased dialogue between FSCs and their RO and Council counterparts, and across FSCs, including sharing examples of research and tools (e.g., climate-related triggers, spatial management tools) to inform habitat management activities such as EFH designation and consultations within regions.
- National comparison of FSC research approaches and/or tools regarding climate impacts on fish habitats.
- Increased applicability of FSC research to address management needs.
- An EFH designation or consultation example that uses the research presented.

Participants: CCC-HWG, Representatives from the FSCs and ROs

Tentative Plan:
- Plan one two-hour national webinar to (1) receive updates of regional progress on climate science research and capability development, (2) hear how managers are using such research and/or tools, and (3) begin discussions on how FSC research, tools, and/or products can better inform EFH designations, conservation and policy development, and consultations.
- Following the initial webinar, develop an engagement plan, including input from FSCs, for national and regional levels.
- Identify methods that are being used already in one or more regions, and could be applied in others.