

Omnibus Essential Fish Habitat Amendment Update

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Goals

1. Redefine, refine or update the identification and description of all EFH for those species of finfish and mollusks managed by the Council, including the consideration of HAPCs;
2. Identify, review and update the major fishing activities (MSA and non-MSA) that may adversely affect the EFH of those species managed by the Council;
3. Identify, review and update the major non-fishing activities that may adversely affect the EFH of those species managed by the Council;
4. Identify and implement mechanisms to protect, conserve, and enhance the EFH of those species managed by the Council to the extent practicable;

Goals, continued

5. Define metrics for achieving the requirements to minimize adverse impacts to the extent practicable;
6. Integrate and optimize measures to minimize the adverse impacts to EFH across all Council managed FMPs;
7. Update research and information needs;
8. Review and update prey species information;
9. Protect deep-sea corals and their habitats throughout the Northeast Region from fishing impacts.*

**Item in red was added to the Amendment after original goals and objectives were approved.*

Objectives – work completed

- A. Identify new data sources and assimilate into the process to meet goals (state, federal and other data sources);
- B. Implement review of existing HAPCs and consider modified or additional HAPCs (Goal 1);
- C. Review EFH designations and refine or redefine where appropriate as improved data and analyses become available (Goal 1);
- D. Develop analytical tools for designation of EFH, minimization of adverse impacts, and monitoring the effectiveness of measures designed to protect habitat (Goal 1, Goal 3 and Goal 5);

Alternatives and/or documentation to meet these goals are already developed

Objectives – work in progress

- E. Modify fishing methods and create incentives to reduce the impacts on habitat associated with fishing (Goal 4);
- I. Develop criteria for establishing and implementing dedicated habitat research areas (Goal 7);
- J. Design a system for monitoring and evaluating the benefits of EFH management actions including dedicated habitat research areas (Goal 7);
- K. Consider modifications to groundfish rebuilding closures (Goal 6)*;
- L. Using the discretionary provisions established via the 2007 MSA reauthorization, develop deep-sea coral protection zones using the best available data on corals and coral habitats, and implement fishing restrictions in those zones as necessary to minimize fishing impacts (Goal 9)*.

Work is in progress to meet these goals.

****Items in red were added to the Amendment after original goals and objectives were approved.***

Other objectives

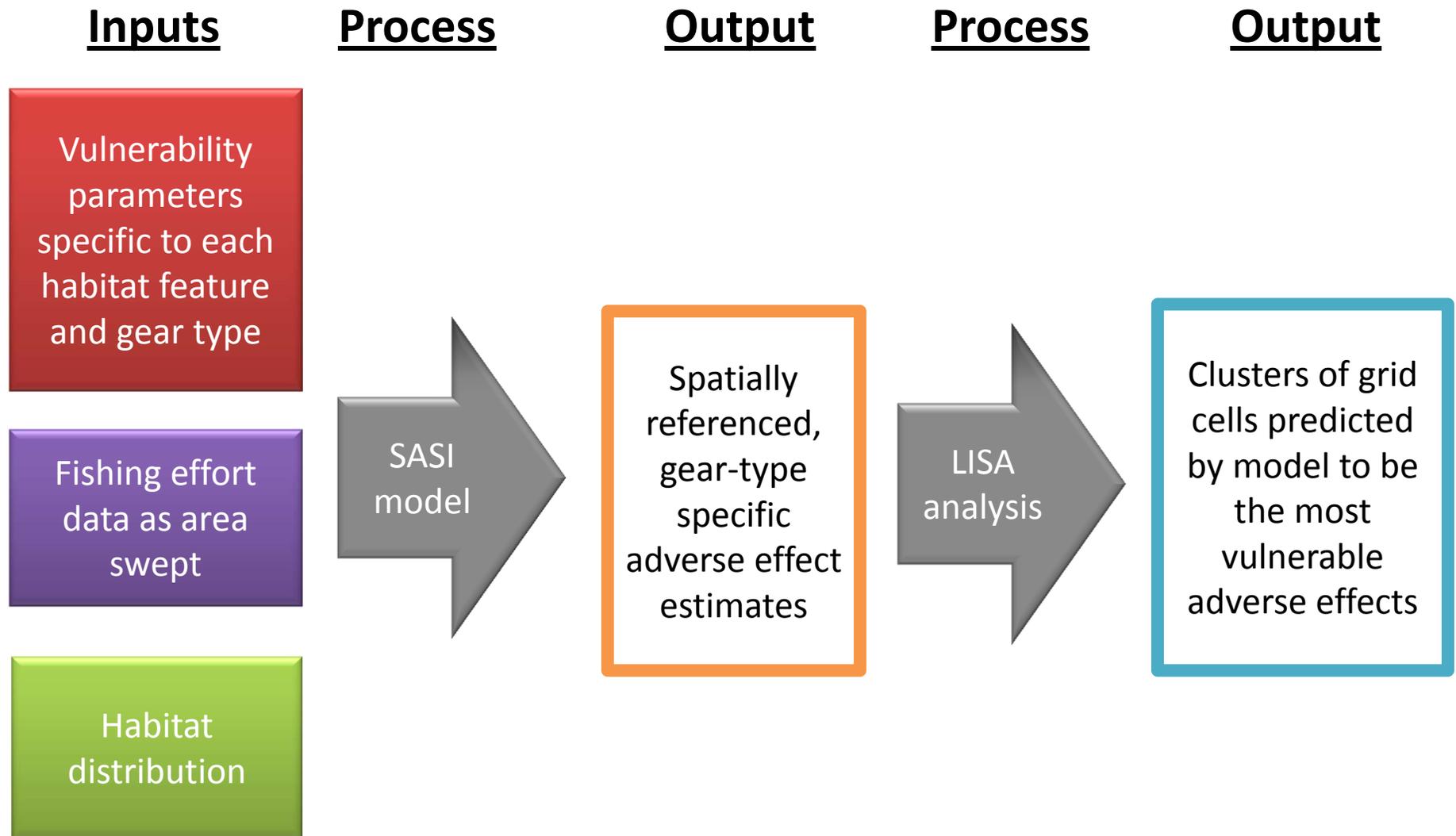
- F. Support restoration and rehabilitation of fish habitat which have already been degraded (by fishing and non-fishing activities) (Goal 4);
- G. Support creation and development of fish habitat where appropriate and when increased fishery resources would benefit society (Goal 4);
- H. Develop a strategy for prioritizing habitat protection (Goal 4);

SASI – basis for developing adverse effects alternatives

The Swept Area Seabed Impact approach includes:

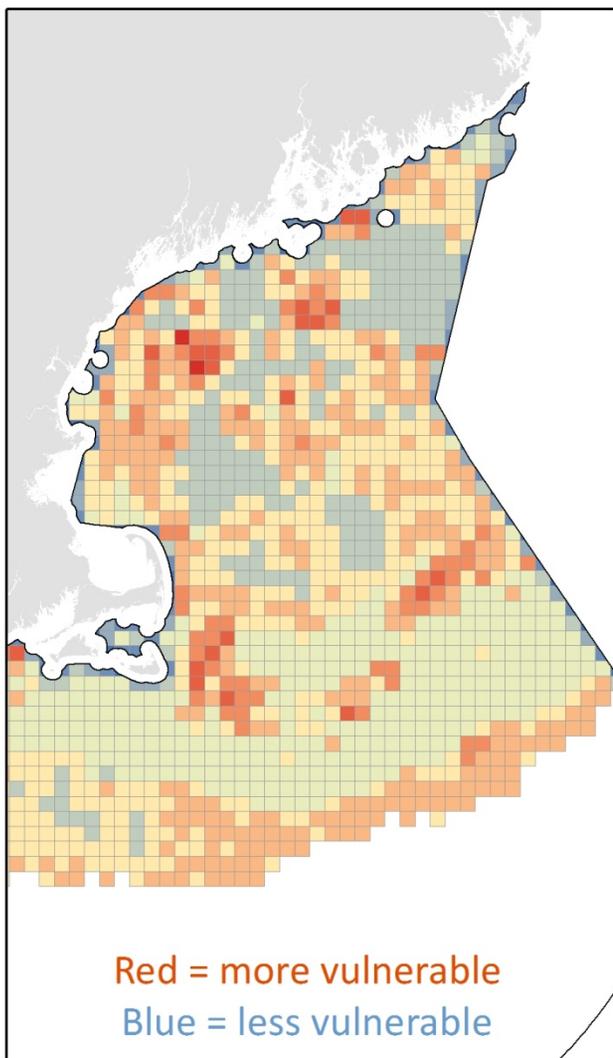
- **Vulnerability assessment of different habitat types to different fishing gear types**
- **Spatially-referenced habitat (substrate/energy) distributions**
- **Spatially-referenced fishing effort data summarized as seabed area swept**
- A model that combines these three aspects to produce **adverse effect estimates for each gear type**
 - These estimates were then evaluated using a clustering analysis called **Local Indicators of Spatial Association, or LISA**
- **Using the clusters as a starting point, a set of vulnerable habitat areas was developed by the PDT**

SASI schematic

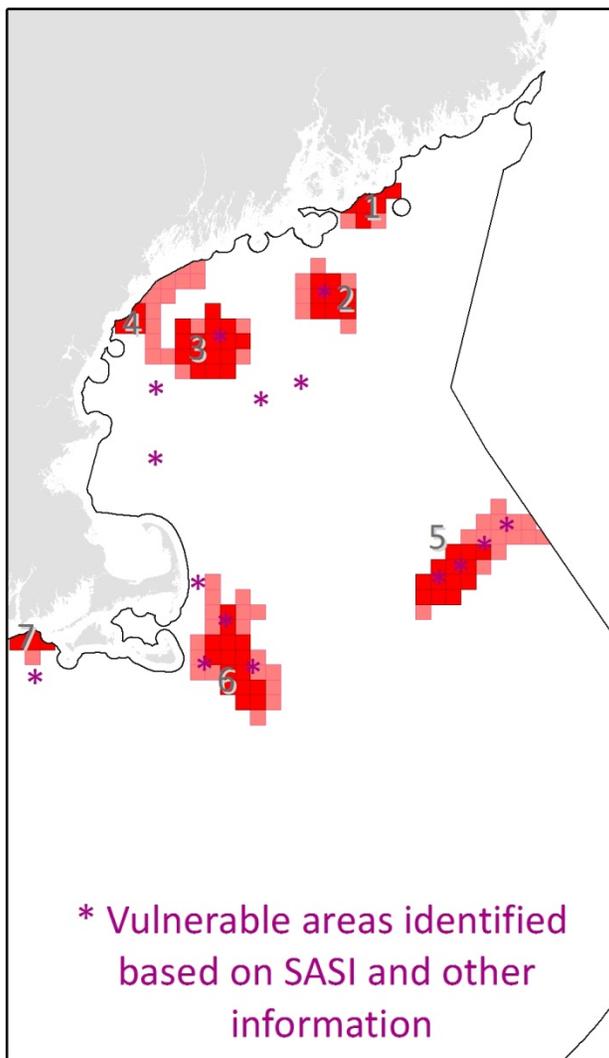


SASI output

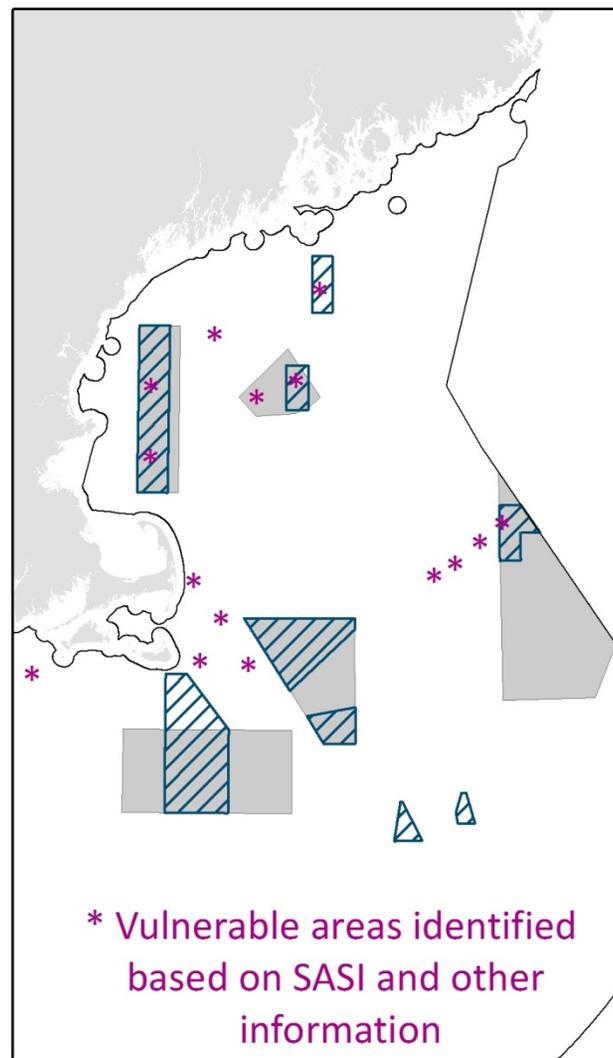
Simulated Z



LISA Clusters



Current management areas



Major conclusions of SASI

- Habitats estimated to be the most vulnerable to fishing are clustered together, lending themselves to spatial management approaches
 - These clusters are centered on locations where cobble and boulder substrates are frequently encountered
- Reducing area swept leads to reductions in estimated adverse effect across all gear types
 - Reductions in area swept are related to increases in CPUE

Relationship to groundfish closures

- In April, the Council voted to fold consideration of changing and/or eliminating year-round groundfish closures into the Omnibus Amendment
- The Habitat PDT and Committee have been working on options that are appropriate for minimizing adverse effects of fishing on habitat, but we recognize that habitat concerns are not the sole driver
- In order to ensure that other considerations are included in creating holistic, efficient, area-based management alternatives, (thereby fulfilling the Council's goals/objectives), groundfish Committee and PDT time needs to be allocated