Habitat Conservation Division’s Role in Offshore Wind Development in the Greater Atlantic Region

Sue Tuxbury
Habitat Conservation Division
SNE Science Forum
December 12, 2017
Habitat Conservation Division Role

• BOEM Task Force Representative
• Coordinate with...
  • BOEM
  • State agencies
  • Protected Resources
  • Sustainable Fisheries
  • Port Agents
  • NEFSC
  • FMC staff
  • Developers
• Advocate coordination with the industry and FMC
• Active stakeholder in planning for monitoring/science needs
• Provide comments and feedback throughout process
• EFH consultations
What is EFH?

MSA PL 104-297
Sec. 3. Definitions

“essential fish habitat” means those waters and substrate necessary to fish for spawning, breeding, feeding or growth to maturity.
“Waters” include aquatic areas and their associated physical, chemical, and biological properties that are used by fish and *aquatic areas historically used by fish* (e.g. potential utilization areas)
**Conservation recommendations**

intended to sequentially avoid, minimize, and offset or compensate adverse impacts

**Adverse Impact**

“…any impact which reduces quality and/or quantity of EFH.”

Direct (e.g. contamination or physical disruption)

Indirect (e.g. loss of prey, reduction in fecundity)

Individual, cumulative, or synergistic
Block Island Wind Farm

- Benthic Habitat
- Noise
- Community Structure
- Monitoring
  - Fisheries
  - Hard bottom habitat
  - Noise
  - Cable installation
Lessons Learned

• Coordinate early and often throughout the process

• Avoidance of sensitive habitats is possible

• Identify information needs for planning/siting and share data early in the process

• Establish monitoring program, which incorporates more than just regulatory stakeholders and includes regional studies

• Apply information gained from the Block Island experience but consider cumulative impacts and scale
Thank You!

Sue Tuxbury
Fishery Biologist
NOAA Fisheries
Habitat Conservation Division
Susan.tuxbury@noaa.gov
978-281-9176