



Department of Environmental Quality



North Carolina's Coastal Habitat Protection Plan (CHPP)



2018 APNEP's Leadership Conference

April 30, 2018

Department of Environmental Quality



Coastal Habitat Protection Plan – Origin and Purpose

G.S. 143B-279.8

- Required DEQ (formerly DENR) to draft the plan
 - Division of Marine Fisheries
 - Division of Coastal Management
 - Division of Water Resources
 - Division of Energy, Mineral, and Land Resources
- Specified information to be included
- Required the Environmental Management, Coastal Resources, and Marine Fisheries commissions to approve and implement recommendations
- Must be reviewed on five year cycles

Purpose

- Long-term enhancement of coastal fisheries by addressing habitat and water quality needs of fishery species.
- Recommend actions to protect and restore fish habitats

Coastal Habitat Protection Plan- What Is It?

A resource and guidance document to aid DEQ divisions and commissions in management of fish habitat and water quality.

Coastal Habitat Protection Plan

Habitats

- Description
- Ecological significance
- Status

Threats

- Physical
- Hydrological
- Water Quality

Recommendations

- Supported by science
- General to allow flexibility
- Organized under 4 goals

Implementation Plans (for CHPP recommendations)

- Developed by DEQ staff
- Two year plans
- Reviewed by the CHPP Steering Committee
- Adopted by the commissions



Coastal Habitat Protection Plan



1) **WETLANDS:** border vital nursery areas, export food, remove pollutants and are a buffer between water and land-based impacts.



2) **SOFT BOTTOM:** stores and regulates nutrients, and chemicals, and provides crucial foraging areas for fish.



3) **SHELL BOTTOM:** fish spawning and nursery area, improve water quality, and protect nearby shorelines from erosion.



4) **SUBMERGED AQUATIC VEGETATION:** provides refuge and food for small fish and invertebrates, improves water quality.



5) **HARD BOTTOM:** complex structure, often covered by living organisms, supports a temperate-subtropical reef fish community and snapper-grouper fishery.



6) **WATER COLUMN:** the basic habitat and the medium through which all other fish habitats are connected.

Coastal Habitat Protection Plan - Recommendations

Goal 1. Improve effectiveness of existing rules and programs protecting coastal fish habitats.

- 5 recommendations - compliance, monitoring, outreach, coordination, and invasive species.

Goal 2. Identify and delineate strategic coastal habitats.

- 2 recommendations – mapping, monitoring, and assessing fish habitat, and identifying priority areas for fish species.

Goal 3. Enhance and protect habitats from adverse physical impacts.

- 8 recommendations - habitat restoration, managing ocean and estuarine shorelines, protecting habitat from fishing gear and dredging and filling impacts.

Goal 4. Enhance and protect water quality.

- 8 recommendations - reduce point and non-point sources of pollution through BMPs, assistance, outreach, and coordination. Applies to not only DEQ activities, but for all land use activities, including forestry, agriculture and road construction.

Coastal Habitat Protection Plan

The CHPP was adopted in the first half of 2016. In the Fall of 2017, the 2018-2020 Implementation Plan was presented to the three commissions for their approval. All three commissions approved the IP. The Implementation Plan presents the actions based on the CHPP's recommendations. It is a guide for the agencies to follow as they implement the CHPP's recommendations.



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