

## Definitions <sup>1</sup>

**Adverse effect** - any impact which reduces the quality and/or quantity of essential fish habitat. Adverse effects may include direct (e.g., contamination or physical disruption), indirect (e.g., loss of prey, or reduction in species' fecundity), site-specific or habitat-wide impacts, including individual, cumulative, or synergistic consequences of actions. (50 CFR 600.810)

**Essential fish habitat (EFH)** - those waters and substrate necessary to fish for spawning, breeding, feeding, or growth to maturity. For the purpose of interpreting the definition of essential fish habitat: "Waters" include aquatic areas and their associated physical, chemical, and biological properties that are used by fish and may include aquatic areas historically used by fish where appropriate; "substrate" includes sediment, hard bottom, structures underlying the waters, and associated biological communities; "necessary" means the habitat required to support a sustainable fishery and the managed species' contribution to a healthy ecosystem; and "spawning, breeding, feeding, or growth to maturity" covers a species' full life cycle. EFH is described by Fishery Management Councils (Council) in amendments to Fishery Management Plans, and is approved by the Secretary of Commerce acting through the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). (50 CFR 600.10)

**EFH Assessment** - an analysis of the effects of a proposed action on EFH. Mandatory contents are: a description of the proposed action; an analysis of the effects of that action on EFH; the Federal action agency's views on those effects; and proposed mitigation, if applicable. Additional information that should be included (if appropriate): the results of on-site inspections; the views of recognized experts on affected habitat or fish species; a review of pertinent literature; and an alternatives analysis. (50 CFR 600.920 (g))

**EFH conservation recommendation** - a recommendation provided by NMFS to a Federal or state agency pursuant to section 305(b)(4)(A) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act regarding measures that can be taken by that agency to conserve EFH. EFH conservation recommendations may be provided as part of an EFH consultation with a Federal agency, or may be provided by NMFS to any Federal or state agency whose actions would adversely affect EFH.

**EFH consultation** - the process of satisfying the Federal agency consultation and response requirements of section 305(b)(2) and 305(b)(4)(B) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, and the EFH conservation recommendation requirement of section 305(b)(4)(A) of that Act. When completed, an EFH consultation generally consists of: 1) notification to NMFS of a Federal action that may adversely affect EFH, 2) an EFH assessment provided to NMFS, 3) EFH conservation recommendations provided by NMFS to the Federal action agency, and 4) the Federal agency's response to NMFS's EFH conservation recommendations.

**Federal action** - any action authorized, funded, or undertaken, or proposed to be authorized, funded, or undertaken by a Federal agency. (50 CFR 600.810 and 16 U.S.C. 1855(b)(2))

**Finding** - a determination by NMFS that an existing or modified consultation/coordination process satisfies the Federal agency consultation requirements of section 305 of the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

<sup>1</sup>Unless so noted, these definitions are not quotes from statute or regulation.