Tab P, No. 4

Essential Fish Habitat Generic Amendment 5 Progress Update

January 2025 Habitat Protection and Restoration Meeting

What is Essential Fish Habitat (EFH)?

- The EFH 5-year Review is a mechanism to ensure NOAA Fisheries and Fishery Management Councils incorporate the most recent and best science available into fishery management for EFH.

- The objective of an EFH 5-year Review is to review the ten EFH components of FMPs and revise or amend the ten EFH components as warranted based on available information (50 CFR 600.815).

Components of EFH

1. EFH descriptions and identification (text and maps)
2. Fishing activities that may adversely affect EFH
3. Non-MSA fishing activities that may adversely affect EFH
4. Non-fishing activities that may adversely affect EFH
5. Cumulative impacts analysis
6. EFH conservation and enhancement recommendations
7. Prey species list and habitat locations
8. Habitat areas of particular concern (HAPC) identification
9. Research and Information needs
10. Review EFH every 5 years

How is EFH used?

- EFH consultations
  - **Federal agency partner projects**
    - **Regulatory permits and Civil Works of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers**
    - **BOEM Wind, Oil and gas, and aquaculture development**

- Most accurate and precise data allows for better characterization of habitat usage which may benefit stock health and condition

- Better stock health may provide better fishing opportunities and more access

EFH review work to date

September 2021

SSC meeting

SSC recommended more updated benthic habitat data layers

January 2022

Draft Options Document

Council reviewed the proposed actions for EFH Generic Amendment 5 and determined contract work to update benthic habitat data was needed

2023/24

Contract Work

Dr. Bridgette Froeschke presented the finalized contract work at the November 2024 Council Meeting

January 2025

Council ppt update

Council update on progress of the EFH generic amendment 5

Purpose and Need

The purpose is to review and amend the description and identification of EFH for the Shrimp, Reef fish, Coastal Migratory Pelagics, Spiny Lobster, and Red Drum Gulf FMPs. This amendment incorporates all information required by 50 C.F.R. section 600.815(a).

The need is to consider contemporary habitat and species presence data sources, along with advances in computational modeling techniques to update the description and identification of EFH originally adopted in EFH Generic Amendment 3.

Anticipated Work

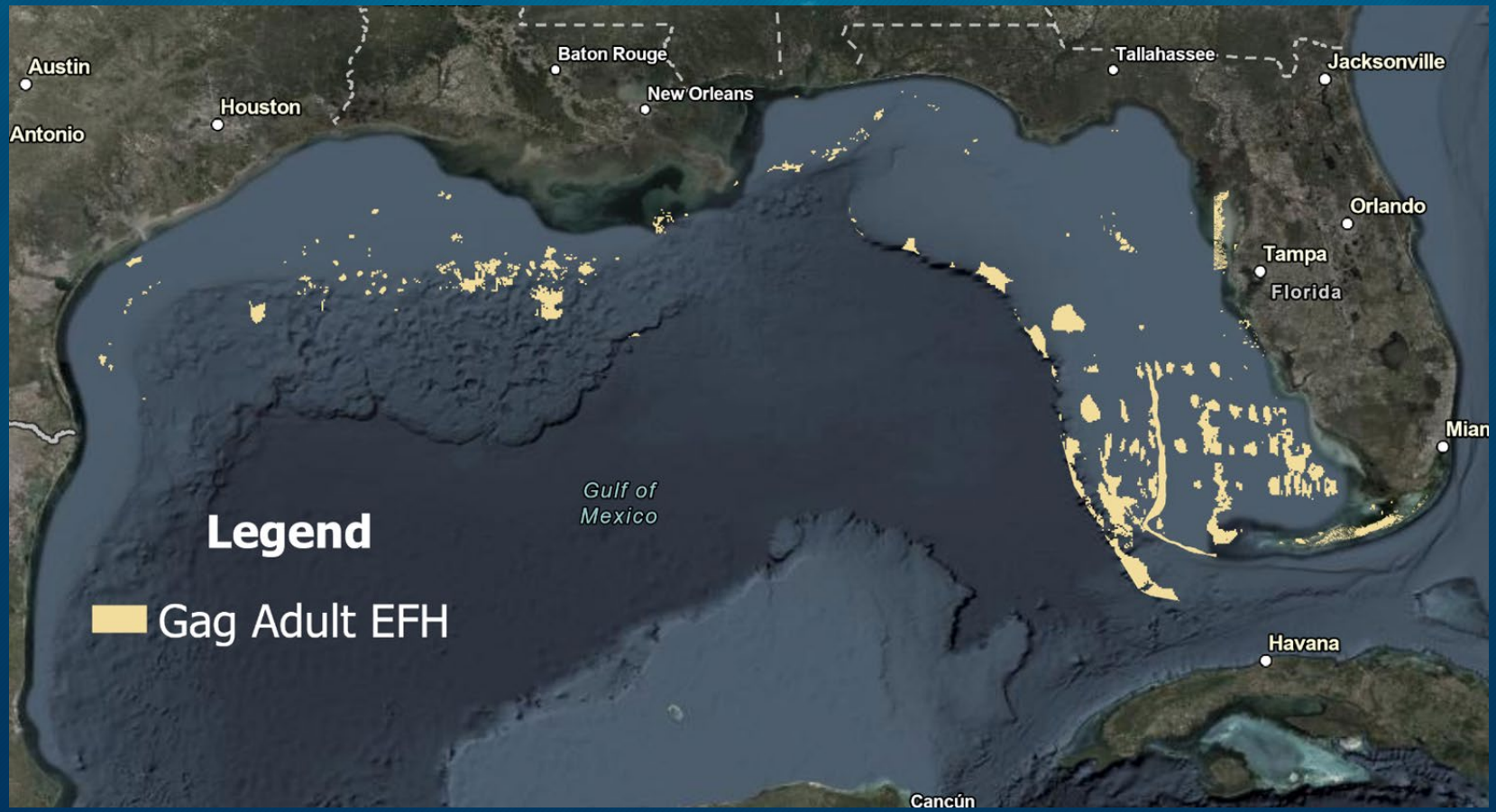
1. Update EFH descriptions and identification (text and maps) (C1)

Reef Fish	Shrimp	Coastal Migratory Pelagics	Red Drum	Spiny Lobster
31	1	4	1	3

40 species x 4 Life Stages (eggs,larvae, juvenile, adults)

= 120 maps

Anticipated Work



Anticipated Work

2. Update Habitat Attribute Tables (C7)

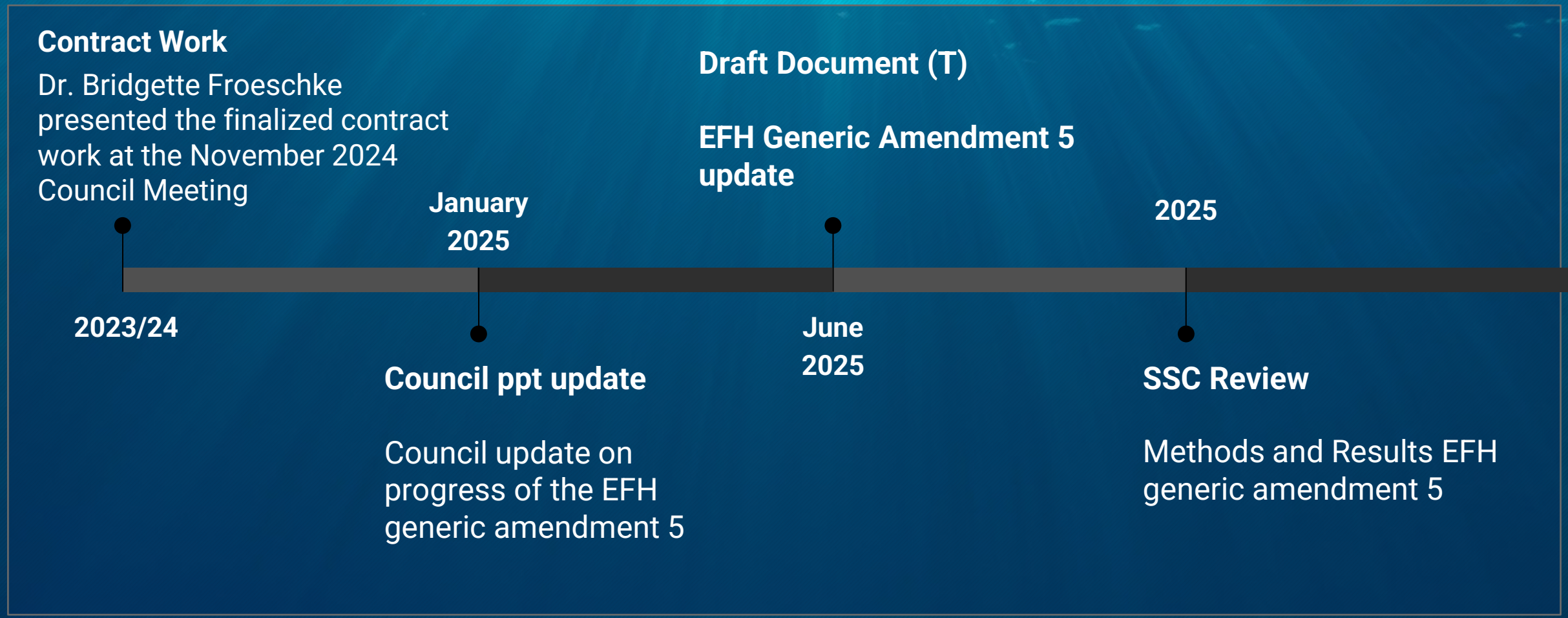
40 species

Habitat Attribute Tables

Species: Gag *Mycteroperca microlepis*

Life stage	Eco-region	Habitat Zone	Habitat Type	Season	Temp (°C)	Depth (m)	Prey	Predators	Mortality	Growth
eggs[4,5,7,9, 13,19,24]	ER-1, ER-2	offshore	WCA	Dec-Apr		***50-120***				hatch in 45h at 21°C
larvae[13, 19, 21, 24, 31]	ER-1, ER-2	offshore	WCA	early spring		***50-120***				pelagic larval duration = 29-52 d TL=2.1 cm ©
postlarvae[10, 13, 21, 31]	ER-1, ER-2	offshore	WCA			***50-120***				pelagic larval duration = 29-52 d
early juveniles[1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 13, 21, 23, 24, 28, 32]	ER-1, ER-2, ER-3	estuarine, nearshore	SAV, mangroves	late spring-early fall	22-32	0-12	crustaceans (amphipods, copepods, grass shrimp)		minimal while in SAV	rapid during association with SAV
late juveniles[2, 3, 7, 11, 13, 15, 21, 23, 24, 26, 28, 32]	ER-1, ER-2, ER-3, ER-4 (A)	estuarine, nearshore, offshore	SAV, hard bottom, reefs, mangroves, seawhip	recruit to reefs offshore in fall	22-32	1-50	decapod crustaceans and fish	cannibalistic, larger fishes	recreational fishery, shrimp fishery bycatch	ages 1-3 (A)
adults[2, 6, 9, 13, 15, 16, 18, 20, 22, 23, 24, 29, 34, 35]	ER-1, ER-2, ER-3, ER-4, ER-5	nearshore, offshore	hard bottom, reefs	year-round	14-24	13-100	fish, crustaceans, cephalopods	sharks	sudden low temps, fishing mortality; M = 0.1342; M= 0.13 +/- 0.03	L_{inf} = 1277.95 mm FL, k = 0.1342, t_0 = -0.6687, max. age = 31 yrs TL= 54 cm (B); Lmax= 145 cm
spawning adults[2, 4, 8, 9, 13, 14, 18, 19, 25, 27, 30]	ER-1, ER-2, ER-3, ER-4, ER-5	nearshore, offshore	shelf edge/slope, hard bottom (D)	Dec-May peak: Feb-Mar Jan-Apr (B)(D); Jan-April, peak Feb-March	21-30	50-120			spawning aggregations vulnerable to fishery	

EFH timeline- update with forward looking timeline



Questions?