

Coral Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (HAPC)

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Tuesday, September 22, 2015

Welcome to the Coral Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (HAPC) Mapper

The purpose of this tool is to create an interactive, online mapping application that facilitates discussion, review, decision making regarding coral HAPCs in the Gulf of Mexico. New data identify sensitive areas supporting shallow and deepwater corals are being identified. The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council is considering changes to current HAPC designations to take advantage of this new information consistent with their objective to balance conservation, sustainable use, and socioeconomic benefits of natural resources in the Gulf.

More and more, natural resource management questions are “spatial” in nature. What does that mean? It means that management tools are often place-based and requires different tools to facilitate decision making. Traditional “static” maps are often inadequate as they always tradeoff between fine-scale detail and the ability to see the “big picture”. A second limitation of static maps is that they only tell the story the author envisioned; there is no ability to explore or ask your own questions of these data.

Enter the world of interactive map viewers

What are Habitat Areas of Particular Concern

About this tool

This is a simple tool to explore current and proposed Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (HAPC) in the Gulf of Mexico. The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council is considering changes to current HAPC designations to take advantage of recent research that has identified additional regions supporting deepwater coral formations. Consideration of new areas has been the subject of on-going discussion for the Council working with their Coral Advisory Panel and Special Coral Scientific and Statistical Committee. This habitat supports many important fish and invertebrate species and is among the most biologically diverse habitats in the Gulf of Mexico.

The purpose of this tool is to permit viewing of current and proposed areas in this region using the interactive mapping (Map) tab. For reference, an aggregated database of know locations supporting deep or shallow water corals is also visible. In total, there are four queryable layers that can be turned on or off using the checkbox in the bottom left corner. The various types of corals recorded at each location are noted in the coral locations legend. The various HAPC types are discernable by color, and identified in the legend in the bottom right of the viewer. Geographic coordinates can identified by clicking on the map (Results displayed below map).

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