



HFAs are a key component of **NOAA's Habitat Blueprint**, which provides the framework for cross-NOAA collaboration and external partnerships to work toward shared conservation goals across the United States and its territories to maximize collective resources.

Since 2012, the HFA effort has been highly successful in tackling priority habitat challenges across the nation. NOAA's science, service, and stewardship have come together to improve habitat conditions for fisheries, coastal communities, and marine life.

Learn more at habitatblueprint.noaa.gov

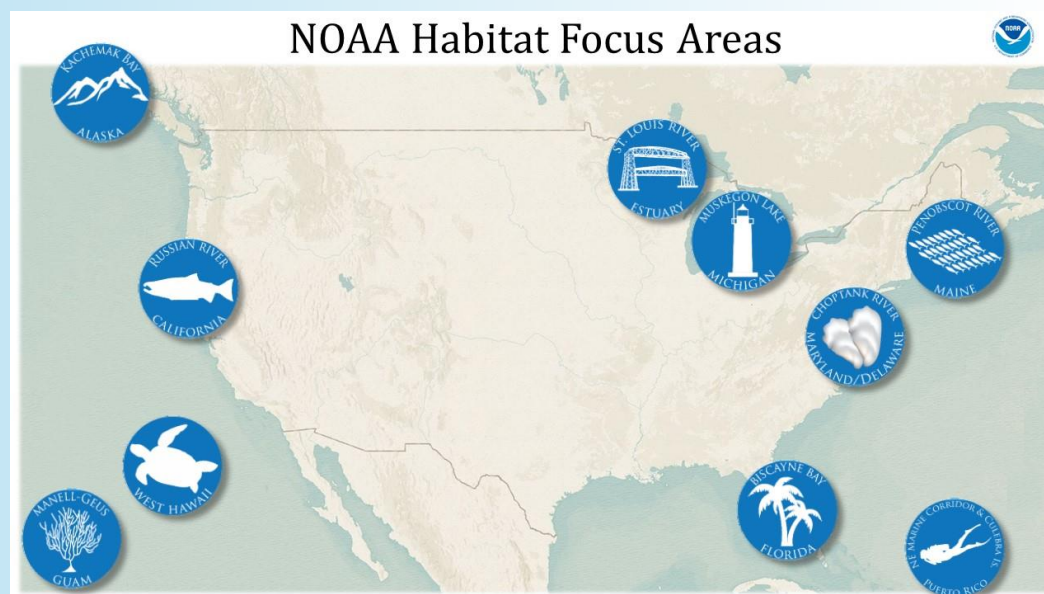
NOAA Habitat Focus Areas

Habitat Focus Areas (HFAs) are targeted places where NOAA focuses its programs and investments to address a high priority habitat issue by working with partners and communities. HFAs employ a place-based and watershed approach and are intended to make meaningful change within a short period of time.

Solutions for Habitat Challenges

Local communities and economies are threatened by widespread loss and deterioration of coastal and marine habitats. NOAA designates HFAs nationwide and each works in a unique, local context to address a specific habitat challenge. NOAA and partners apply science and solutions on-the-ground and in-the-water to help communities protect and restore valuable natural resources that support local economies.

Four values, outlined below, guide the HFA effort and enable NOAA to apply collaborative, innovative, strategic, and communicative place-based solutions at each location.



Map of NOAA's existing Habitat Focus Areas

Purposeful Collaboration

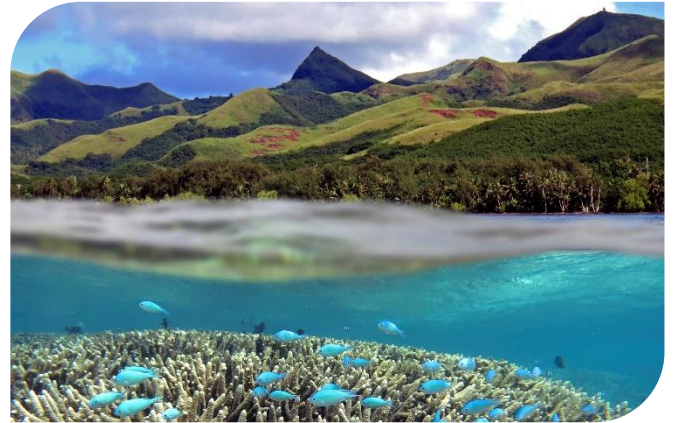
HFAs rely on collaboration across NOAA programs and with external partners and communities to accomplish shared conservation goals.



The **Russian River HFA** in California brought together expertise from across NOAA and other federal, state, and local agencies to develop an innovative management strategy— Forecast-Informed Reservoir Operations. The management strategy uses watershed monitoring data and weather forecasting to help water managers selectively retain or release water from reservoirs based on current and forecasted conditions. This innovative strategy allows for more water to be kept in the system for the benefit of endangered salmon and humans, and was applied to manage the Lake Mendocino reservoir in 2019.

Innovative Solutions

HFAs focus on discrete challenges that no program or organization can accomplish alone, bringing innovative strategies, science, and solutions.



The **Manell-Geus HFA** in Guam built restoration capacity in the local community through outreach and engagement in low-tech restoration techniques including reforestation and sediment control efforts to reduce the erosion that smothers coral reefs. The HFA team worked closely with the Guam Department of Forestry to provide community education efforts around wildfires, and install firebreaks around reforestation sites. This innovative work successfully reduced the impacts of wildfire on restoration sites, preventing the landscape from being stripped of vegetation.

Strategic Investments

NOAA cannot work everywhere at once. HFAs are places where NOAA and partners can focus resources to achieve measurable progress on the ground.



The **Choptank River Complex HFA** in Maryland and Delaware worked with a wide range of partners on the world's largest oyster restoration effort of its kind, restoring hundreds of acres with a 98% success rate. The restoration effort leveraged funding from other federal and state agencies, with a 20:1 return on investment for NOAA.

Effective Communication

The collaborative work and accomplishments in these important places provide a snapshot of NOAA's work across the country, helping to communicate the important role of habitat conservation for resilient communities, ecosystems, and economies.



The **West Hawai'i HFA** is built around storytelling. NOAA supports and links two community networks that share coral conservation lessons throughout the watershed, and has hosted numerous site visits to share the success stories from those communities with NOAA leadership and partners.