30 September 2022

2022-2023 HCOM Work Plan (NOTE: THIS IS A TWO-YEAR WORK PLAN)

OCEH-2.2: Strengthen habitat classification and ocean mapping efforts in the Northeast
Lead Organizations: NOAA, Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management Coordinate with NROC Ocean Planning Committee, NROC Ocean Planning Staff/Contractors and Habitat Classification and Ocean Mapping (HCOM) subcommittee members to strengthen collaboration between and compatibility of habitat classification methods and efforts in the New England Region. The work of the Habitat Classification and Ocean Mapping Working Group will be continued through shared knowledge and regional mapping coordination to effectively meet mapping needs in New England, particularly northeast submerged lands and outer continental shelf lands.

2.2.1 Regional mapping planning coordination

a) Through the use of SeaSketch and other partnerships, NROC partner members will continue to share their mapping.
b) plans and needs in an effort to find opportunities to leverage resources among NROC partners working in New England.
c) HCOM members will receive an update on mapping plans and recent activities.
d) Describe regional mapping priority gaps to share and help direct resources, this may be done through a workshop.

2.2.2 Develop a habitat classification community of practice

a) Foster ongoing community activities for sharing techniques around habitat classification mapping using CMECS. Will use peer to peer learning, for example listserv for sharing questions and techniques, and workshops to expand knowledge and collaboration, in order to build on regional best practices, to foster enhanced understanding and management of New England waters.

b) Encourage the requirement of offshore wind companies to map seafloor resources using CMECS and to develop platforms for sharing their data more broadly. Support companies through a workshop to better understand CMECS application in the Gulf of Maine.

c) Share revised CMECS classification approach used in the Gulf of Maine with regional and national partners. Share methods used in the HCOM Gulf of Maine Geoform Project (especially with regard to future updates using higher resolution data), through presentations and workshops.

d) Improve ability to utilize data in different habitat classification schemes through creating crosswalks to CMECS.

e) Connect with efforts going on in other regions (e.g., Great Lakes Aquatic Framework) for cross regional mapping learning opportunities.

2.2.3 Identification of new resources and collaboration opportunities

a) HCOM members will actively seek new regional financial resource opportunities and help to facilitate partnerships and collaborations between partners with regards to Habitat Classification and Ocean Mapping initiatives in the Northeast, looking specifically at how mapping and classification can continue to support ocean planning, resiliency, and ocean and ecosystem health.

2.2.4. Support best practices and evolution of data collection,

a) Improved methods for the collection of data.
b) Evaluating data collection tools (e.g., eelgrass) through a workshop.
c) Facilitating discussion on new mapping questions (e.g., biological mapping).
d) Identify and engage partners to explore moving from mapping to habitat assessment.

2.2.5. Foster development of innovative products that advance regional ocean science and planning.

a) Development of derived datasets and habitat maps for the Gulf of Maine, to improve management decision making. Products will be adaptable as new data becomes available.