



NORTHEAST REGIONAL PLANNING BODY

SIX STATES

- Connecticut
- Rhode Island
- Massachusetts
- New Hampshire
- Maine
- Vermont

SIX FEDERALLY RECOGNIZED TRIBES

- Aroostook Band of Micmacs
 - Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians
 - Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Council
 - Mohegan Indian Tribe of Connecticut
 - Narragansett Indian Tribe of Rhode Island
 - Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah)
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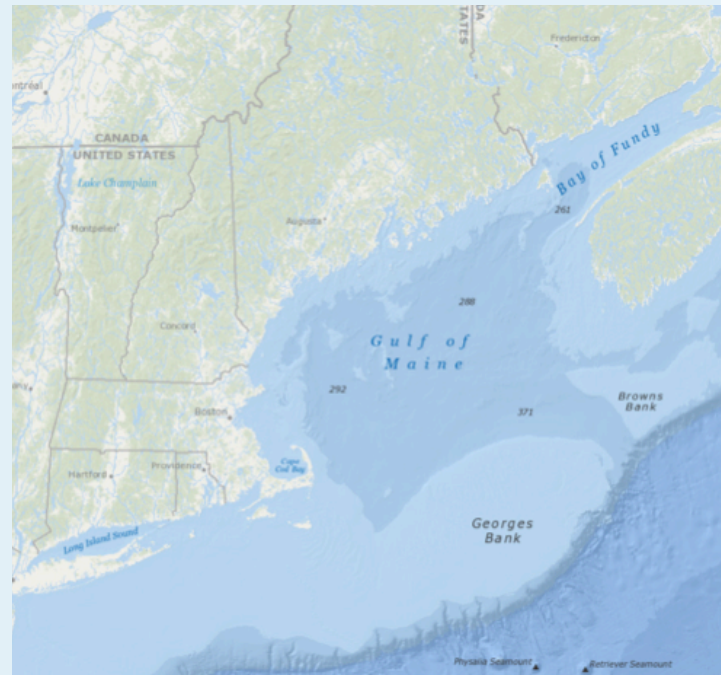
NINE FEDERAL AGENCIES

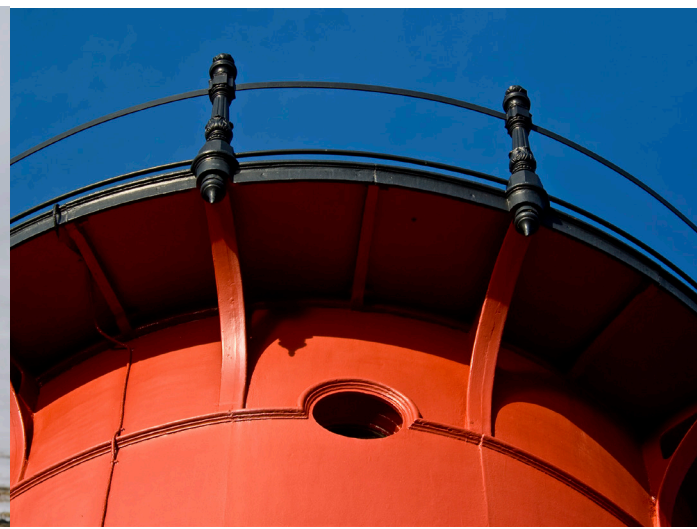
- Joint Chiefs of Staff
 - US Department of Agriculture
 - US Department of Commerce
 - US Department of Defense
 - US Department of Energy
 - US Department of Homeland Security
 - US Department of the Interior
 - US Department of Transportation
 - US Environmental Protection Agency
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NEW ENGLAND FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

- New York
- Canada





THE OCEAN PLAN

This Plan summarizes the ocean planning process and is a guide to informing agency decisions and practices in order to continue making progress towards achieving regional goals for the management of our public ocean resources.

This Plan recognizes that these goals and a desire to move towards an ecosystem-based approach to management must be achieved through existing legal frameworks by using the best available information and by ensuring public and scientific input in every decision. Therefore, the work is not done and this Plan serves as the foundation for continued progress.

Contents

These chapters describe the path forward for achieving the Plan goals—a path that reflects the RPB’s interest in continued public engagement, foundation in sound science, and in advancing an adaptive approach to managing the ocean ecosystem.

04 **CHAPTER 1** describes the unique characteristics of the northeast region and the need for and benefits of ocean planning.

14 **CHAPTER 2** summarizes the ocean planning process to date, including the development of the ocean planning goals, the Northeast Ocean Data Portal and the Plan.

30 **CHAPTER 3** summarizes the regulatory framework for managing ocean and coastal resources. It then provides an in depth look at the primary ocean resources and activities for which this Plan will guide and inform decision-making.

These include:

- 38** Marine Life and Habitat
- 58** Cultural Resources
- 66** Marine Transportation
- 76** National Security
- 84** Commercial and Recreational Fishing
- 94** Recreation
- 102** Energy and Infrastructure
- 112** Aquaculture
- 122** Offshore Sand Resources
- 132** Restoration

138 **CHAPTER 4** describes how the RPB will implement the Plan. This includes best practices for intergovernmental coordination and stakeholder engagement, Plan implementation and oversight responsibilities, and commitments to developing frameworks for monitoring and evaluating plan performance and ocean and ecosystem health.

160 **CHAPTER 5** identifies known knowledge and information gaps and organizes those gaps under six primary science and research priorities. These data and information gaps were identified throughout the planning process by the RPB, stakeholders and scientists. Agencies’ decisions will be enhanced as each of these individual gaps are filled by the RPB and the broader community over time.

175 ENDNOTES

180 APPENDICES