

Iowa Field Office Technical Guide - Section II - Special Environmental Concerns

8. Essential Fish Habitat

Authority: Magnuson- Stevens Act of 1966

Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) can consist of both the water column and the underlying surface of a particular area. Areas designated as EFH contain habitat essential to the long-term survival and health of our nation's fisheries. Certain properties of the water column such as temperature, nutrients, or salinity are essential to various species. Some species may require certain bottom types such as sandy or rocky bottoms, or vegetation, etc.

EFH includes those habitats that support the different life stages of each managed species. A single species may use many different habitats throughout its life to support breeding, spawning, nursery, feeding, and protection functions. EFH encompasses those habitats necessary to ensure healthy fisheries now and in the future.

There are no Essential Fish Habitat areas in Iowa.



There is also an [interactive EFH tool](#) that can be found on the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) website. Geospatial information on EFH (see picture above) is also available from NOAA NMFS at <http://www.habitat.noaa.gov/protection/efh/newInv/index.html>.