

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS  
OFFICE OF COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT  
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March 28, 2005

Dear Marine Habitat Manager,

Enclosed are two new documents about marine habitats in Massachusetts and the Gulf of Maine. The *Gulf of Maine Marine Habitat Primer* provides an overview of habitat characteristics, ecological functions, economic and recreational values, human impacts, and management considerations in this environmentally and economically important region. Written for resource managers and other coastal decision makers interested in learning more about the region's coastal and offshore habitats, the Primer is intended to support more informed decisions about project reviews, special management area designations, restoration targets, and other vital local and regional concerns. The Primer was developed by the Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment (GOMC) as part of a larger strategy of the Gulf of Maine Habitat Conservation Subcommittee (HCSC). This group is embarking on a two-year project to describe Gulf of Maine offshore habitats and to identify regional conservation strategies by working with partners to compile and recommend science, policy, and management approaches for conservation.

For an electronic version of the Primer, visit the GOMC website at [www.gulfofmaine.org/habitatprimer](http://www.gulfofmaine.org/habitatprimer). To contact the HCSC, visit [www.gulfofmaine.org/council/committees/habitat\\_conservation.asp](http://www.gulfofmaine.org/council/committees/habitat_conservation.asp).

The second document is the latest edition of the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management's (CZM) annual *Coastlines* magazine, featuring marine habitat issues here in Massachusetts. If you would like a free subscription to *Coastlines*, please email your name and address to [czm@state.ma.us](mailto:czm@state.ma.us) with "Coastlines mailing list" as the subject, or call the CZM Information Line at (617) 626-1212. For more on CZM habitat initiatives and other programs, see the CZM website at [www.mass.gov/czm](http://www.mass.gov/czm). Also, see [www.mass.gov/czm/czmail/currentczmail.htm](http://www.mass.gov/czm/czmail/currentczmail.htm) to subscribe to CZM's monthly e-newsletter, *CZ-Mail*, which provides updates on CZM initiatives and other news of interest to people working on coastal issues.

I hope you find these publications useful to your work.

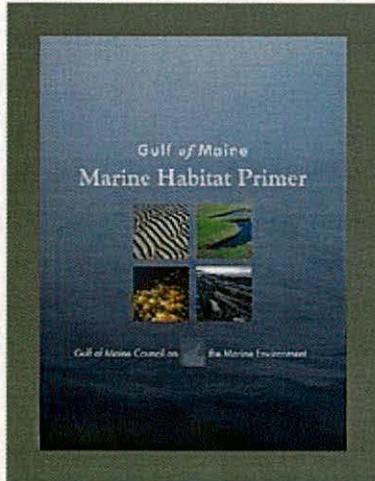
Sincerely,

Susan Snow-Cotter  
Director



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## Gulf of Maine Marine Habitat Primer > **About the primer**



### **Gulf of Maine Marine Habitat Primer** NEW!

The Gulf of Maine Marine Habitat Primer

- enhances understanding of marine habitats in the Gulf of Maine;
- provides background needed to make more informed decisions on human uses, management, and conservation; and
- provides an initial step toward a habitat conservation strategy for the Gulf of Maine, which will be developed in partnership with organizations around the Gulf.

The primer is available now for downloading in printer-friendly PDF format. Click the links below to download the primer.

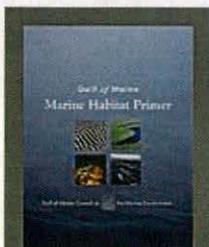
Printed copies of the primer will be available beginning in late March. To request a copy, please email or call the contacts listed below.

The Gulf of Maine contains rich habitats that are affected by many human activities. The 56-page Gulf of Maine Marine Habitat Primer provides an overview of the Gulf of Maine's coastal and offshore habitats for resource managers and other coastal decision-makers in government, NGOs, and the private sector. Beautifully illustrated with color photographs and drawings, the primer describes habitat characteristics, ecological functions, economic and recreational values, human impacts, and management considerations. The primer is intended as a useful tool for resource managers, planners, legislators, conservation commissioners, NGO staff members, and other people seeking a better understanding of marine habitats from Massachusetts to Nova Scotia.

The primer is a collaborative project of the [Habitat Conservation Subcommittee](#) and the [Science Translation Project](#).

### **Download the primer**

Download the Gulf of Maine Marine Habitat Primer in printer-friendly PDF format by clicking the following links.



[Section 1: Front matter \(PDF, 410 KB\)](#)

Front cover

Preface

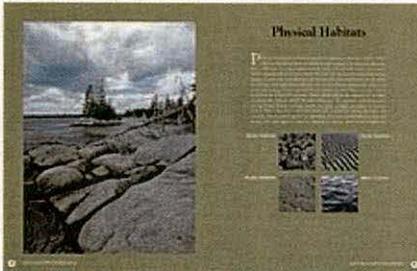
Acknowledgments

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[Section 2: Introduction \(PDF, 495 KB\)](#)

Overview of habitat types  
Habitat complexity and species diversity  
Habitats are interconnected  
Regional setting: The Gulf of Maine



[Section 3: Physical habitats \(PDF, 1.2 MB\)](#)

Rocky habitats  
Sandy habitats  
Muddy habitats  
Water column



[Section 4: Biogenic habitats \(PDF, 1.1 MB\)](#)

Salt marshes  
Seagrass beds  
Kelp beds  
Shellfish beds  
Cold-water corals



[Section 5: Habitats formed by human activity \(PDF, 630 KB\)](#)

Invasive-plant habitats (*Phragmites* and *Codium*)  
Fouling communities



[Section 6: Conclusion \(PDF, 183 KB\)](#)

Conclusion  
Bibliography  
Back cover

**Request a hard copy**

To request a printed copy of the primer, please contact the listing for your state or province. The printed copies will be distributed beginning in late March.

Massachusetts

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## Get involved

To get involved in Habitat Conservation Subcommittee activities, including the collaborative efforts to develop and implement conservation strategies for the Gulf of Maine's marine habitats, please contact:

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- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
- NOAA National Marine Protected Areas Center
- Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Canada
- Maine Coastal Program
- Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management
- Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution Sea Grant

## About the Science Translation Project

The [Science Translation Project](#) provides scientific information to state, provincial, and federal decision-makers to advance ecosystem-based management in the Gulf of Maine and its watershed. The project is supported by:

- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
- Cooperative Institute for Coastal and Estuarine Environmental Technology (CICEET)
- Maine Sea Grant
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- Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management
- New Hampshire Coastal Program
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