Human impacts on marine and coastal ecosystems are multifold. Our modes of transportation and the ways we warm and power our homes affect the temperature and pH of the ocean. The pesticides we put on our lawns and farms, the ways we dispose of automotive fluids, the salt we put on our driveways, the paint we use on our boats – all can be toxic or harmful to some of our local seafood species (or the organisms they depend on for prey or shelter). The techniques we use to build seaside houses and walls, the dams we build across rivers, the roads and parking lots we lay across the landscape, and the ways we collect and dispose of wastewater – all have impacts on our seafood. However, humans can also be local seafood habitat stewards. Join Eating with the Ecosystem in supporting our local marine ecosystems and fishing communities through protecting important local seafood habitats!

EATING WITH THE ECOSYSTEM IS A NON-PROFIT WHOSE MISSION IS TO PROMOTE A PLACE-BASED APPROACH TO SUSTAINING NEW ENGLAND'S WILD SEAFOOD. WE BELIEVE THAT AN IMPORTANT WAY TO SUSTAIN OUR LOCAL SEAFOOD IS TO FOSTER APPRECIATION FOR IT BY LEARNING ABOUT IT AND EATING IT!

# SALT MARSH & SUGAR KELP

## PROTECTING LOCAL SEAFOOD HABITAT

WWW.EATINGWITHTHEECOSYSTEM.ORG

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EATING WITH THE ECOSYSTEM

# A FEW LOCAL SEAFOOD SPECIES AND THE HABITATS THEY USE

**SCUP AKA PORGY**
Juvenile and adult scup utilize a variety of intertidal and subtidal habitats such as eelgrass beds, rocky ledges, mussel beds, sandy or muddy bottoms and large estuaries.

**QUAHOGS AND OYSTERS**
Quahogs inhabit mud flats burrowing just below the sand or mud substrate. Oysters live in the shallow brackish waters of esuaries and attach to each other to form reefs which provide habitat for many juvenile fish and invertebrates. Both oysters and quahogs eat by filter feeding plankton and other nutrients from the water. They can actually improve water quality by acting as a natural filter to remove pollutants and excess nutrients from the water.

**SUMMER FLOUNDER AKA FLUKE**
Larval summer flounder can be found in estuaries and coastal lagoons. As juveniles and adults they burrowed in the sediment in salt marsh creeks, seagrass beds, mud flats, and open bays.

**BLUEFISH**
Juvenile bluefish are dependent on estuary habitats until they migrate south in the fall. As adults they return to the Northeast and rely on estuary habitats to spawn and a variety of sandy ocean bottoms and vegetated areas to feed.

**BAY SCALLOPS**
Eelgrass plays an important role in the life history of bay scallops. Baby scallops attach to the eelgrass blades with bysal threads. Adults live on the bottom of the eelgrass beds.

**SEA ROBIN**
Sea robins can be found from estuaries to the edge of the continental shelf. They prefer the sandy bottoms where they feed by kicking up sediment to find food, using their modified pelvic fins aka "legs".

**STRIPED BASS**
Striped bass are anadromous, meaning they live in the coastal ocean but return to fresh water to spawn or release eggs. They remain in coastal sounds and estuaries until they are 2-4 years old. .

**BLUE CRABS**
Blue crabs live in salt marshes and open water estuaries. Juveniles and adults use wetlands, grassy shallow bays and aquatic vegetation as nursery habitat to forage for food and for refuge against predation.

# STEPS YOU CAN TAKE TO SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL SEAFOOD HABITATS

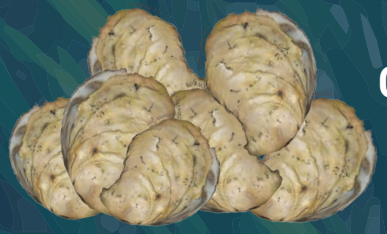
- LEARN ABOUT THE WATERSHED YOU LIVE IN AND WHAT KIND OF SEAFOOD LIVES DOWNSTREAM.
- SUPPORT POLICIES THAT PROTECT VITAL HABITATS, LIKE SALT MARSHS, EEL GRASS BEDS, AND RIVER PASSAGE.
- LIMIT YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT AND THE CHEMICALS YOU USE IN YOUR HOME, PUT ON YOUR LAWN, OR DOWN YOUR DRAIN.
- PLANT NATIVE PLANTS TO STABILIZE SHORELINES, ABSORB RUNOFF, AND REDUCE THE NEED FOR FERTILIZERS OR PESTICIDES.
- VOLUNTEER IN SALT MARSH, EEL GRASS, OYSTER REEF, AND RIVER PASSAGE HABITAT RESTORATION EFFORTS WITH LOCAL CONSERVATION GROUPS.
- WHEN ENJOYING YOUR FAVORITE LOCAL SEAFOOD SPECIES THINK ABOUT THE HABITATS THAT PRODUCED THEM.
- MORE HEALTHY HABITATS MEAN MORE HEALTHY SEAFOOD! LEARN MORE AT WWW.EATINGWITHTHEECOSYSTEM.ORG

image based on a photo from NOAA.gov

# A FEW IMPORTANT SEAFOOD HABITATS

## KELP FORESTS

## EEL GRASS BEDS



## OYSTER REEFS

## SALT MARSHES