

## GOAL 1

### Restored and Conserved Habitats

Habitats in the ocean and along the coast, including the rivers that flow to the Gulf, are healthy, productive, and resilient. They support rich aquatic life and a vibrant, sustainable ocean economy.

#### OUTCOME 1.1

##### Water Quality Protection

Coastal decision-makers receive up-to-date, accurate, relevant information needed to improve and protect marine water quality for current and future generations.

#### ACTIVITIES OF THE GULF OF MAINE COUNCIL

**1.1.1** Disseminate information about ways to improve and protect the region's marine and estuarine water quality.



Coastal habitats of the Gulf of Maine.

#### OUTCOME 1.2

##### Habitat Restoration

Habitat restoration practitioners and community-based organizations receive information, funding, and technical assistance for restoring degraded coastal ecosystems and habitats.

#### ACTIVITIES OF THE GULF OF MAINE COUNCIL

**1.2.1** Provide Gulf of Maine habitat restoration grants and technical assistance that result in restored coastal ecosystems.

**1.2.2** Facilitate the exchange of information among the region's habitat restoration practitioners.

**1.2.3** Promote greater public understanding of the environmental, human health, and economic effects of restoring coastal and marine ecosystems.

#### OUTCOME 1.3

##### Habitat Conservation

Coastal decision-makers have the data and information required to conserve coastal and marine habitats in a time of intensifying human uses and a changing climate.

#### ACTIVITIES OF THE GULF OF MAINE COUNCIL

**1.3.1** Support the region-wide exchange of information on observed and predicted effects of climate change on the people living in the region and its coastal and marine habitats.

**1.3.2** Advance the bi-national acquisition and use of seafloor mapping products and services for resource and management decisions.

**1.3.3** Promote the exchange of information among decision-makers about ecosystem-based approaches to managing coastal and ocean habitats.

**1.3.4** Strengthen linkages between U.S. and Canadian coastal and marine spatial planning efforts.

### The Need for Regional Action: Goal 1

In spite of its amazing natural beauty and historical abundance of marine resources, the Gulf of Maine is a highly stressed ecosystem in urgent need of attention. Hundreds of years of inadequate wastewater and stormwater infrastructure, tremendous pressures on natural resources, effects of shoreline development on coastal ecosystems, results of a changing climate, and the dumping of toxics have taken an enormous toll on the health of the environment and impaired the Gulf's overall potential. For example, raw sewage and polluted stormwater routinely wash into coastal waters. Thousands of miles of migratory fish habitat along rivers and streams are blocked by obsolete dams and poorly engineered road crossings. Invasive species are crowding out some native species and disrupting natural cycles. Sea level rise is threatening coastal habitats and human development alike. New solutions and scientific data to address these issues are being generated constantly. However, often this information does not reach coastal decision-makers around the Gulf of Maine who could put the solutions into action.

**Goal 1 activities address the region's need for data, information, and partnerships to restore and conserve marine and coastal habitats.**