



NOAA FISHERIES

Office of
Habitat
Conservation

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Healthy habitat keeps commercial and recreational fisheries strong



Habitat provides important feeding and breeding grounds for fish. Without the right habitat, fish can't grow or reproduce, and that means fewer—and less healthy—fish. Unfortunately, fish habitat has been declining for decades around the country and the rate of loss is increasing.

Restoration Center

The NOAA Restoration Center targets habitat conservation where our fisheries need it most. We provide funding and technical guidance to restore coastal habitat nationwide. Our projects help recover threatened and endangered species, support sustainably managed species, and reverse the damage done by oil spills and toxic releases.

The Great Lakes

In the Great Lakes, we focus on restoring the most degraded environments--designated Areas of Concern—as well as reversing the environmental damages resulting from oil spills, chemical releases, and marine debris. Our projects address loss of habitat and diminished fish and wildlife populations.

Since 2008, we have targeted roughly \$40 million to:

- restore more than 5200 acres of habitat for fish and wildlife,
- remove almost 200,000 metric tons of waste and demolition material
- open more than 780 miles of river for fish passage.

Funding for these projects has come through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, our base appropriations, and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

Wayne Road Dam Removal Project

The Rouge River hosts a variety of fish species, including trout, salmon, and smallmouth bass. The Wayne Road dam had blocked fish migration and had adverse impacts on habitat and water quality.

The dam removal began last summer and was completed by the fall. It reconnected 11 miles of the river's main stem and 112 miles of tributaries to the Great Lakes system. The project also involved the installation of a rock riffle and riparian corridor habitat improvements such as the creation of "bankfull benches," which provide floodplain storage during higher flows. These were constructed out of rock to provide a stable river reach as well as habitat and planted with native species.

We are already seeing success at this project. Two white suckers were tagged and released downstream of the dam prior to the dam's removal; one was recaptured upstream of the former dam this spring and one in the rock riffle. Fish were also found using the riffle for habitat.



The Wayne Road dam before removal (left) and after removal (below left), and the bankfull benches (below).

