

# PACIFIC MARINE AND ESTUARINE FISH HABITAT PARTNERSHIP

## OUR MISSION

Protect, enhance, and restore ecological processes and habitats to sustain healthy native fish communities and support sustainable human uses that depend on healthy fish populations.



The Pacific Marine and Estuarine Fish Habitat Partnership (PMEP) is one of 19 nationally recognized fish habitat partnerships. It works to conserve and restore fish habitat in nearshore and estuarine waters, and to achieve regional and national sustainability goals for native fish.

PMEP's scope covers the coastal waters of California, Oregon and Washington, which are home to many native species of fish and shellfish. Some, such as coho salmon, Dungeness crab, and Olympia oysters, are intrinsic to coastal culture, tradition, and economy. Others, while not so iconic, are also important for the recreational, economic, and ecological benefits they provide.

PMEP works to provide scientific expertise and financial support for work that local conservation groups and others do.



The geographic scope of the PMEP (highlighted in green). Map credit: Van Hare, PSMFC

## PMEP GOALS

Protect . . .  
Restore . . .  
Enhance . . .

- Juvenile fish habitat in nearshore marine and estuarine environments
- Connectivity between freshwater, intertidal, subtidal and nearshore waters
- The quality and quantity of water in estuaries and the nearshore environment

Pacific Marine and Estuarine Fish Habitat Partnership ([www.pacificfishhabitat.org](http://www.pacificfishhabitat.org))

- a recognized partnership of the National Fish Habitat Board



## PACIFIC COAST JUVENILE FISH HABITAT ASSESSMENTS

### A PMEPPRIORITY FOR 2013-2015

The PMEPP has begun efforts to conduct three Pacific Coast fish habitat assessments:

- A Nursery Habitat Assessment, focusing on nursery functions in estuaries for juvenile fish.
- An assessment of threats to habitats of recreationally and commercially important fish stocks (supporting the National Fish Habitat Plan National Estuary Assessment)
- A nearshore forage fish assessment, focusing on habitat-related changes over time in distribution and abundance of nine species of forage fish inhabiting estuary and nearshore habitats.

### Our Goals:

- Update wetland delineation and habitat types in West Coast estuaries.
- Advance understanding of the nursery requirements of 12-15 fish and shellfish species.
- Review the current state of science in terms of restoration and protection of juvenile fish habitat in estuaries.
- Describe juvenile fish habitat use of estuaries needed to prioritize restoration and protection.
- Advance understanding of nursery functions of West Coast estuaries.
- Improve understanding of spatial frameworks supporting estuary habitat conservation.
- Provide an authoritative geodatabase for information on West Coast estuaries and their nursery functions.

## CURRENT INITIATIVES

In 2013, the PMEPP funded two significant projects:

### Bear River Estuary Tidal Restoration Project

This work will restore 500 acres of estuary habitat in the Willapa Bay National Wildlife Refuge, Washington, including salmon spawning and rearing habitat in four tributaries.



PMEPP field tour of Willapa Bay National Wildlife Refuge. Photo credit: PMEPP

### Grays Harbor Derelict Gear Removal Project

In Grays Harbor, Washington, years of fishing have littered the seafloor with derelict nets and pots. This project supports efforts to remove derelict nets and pots throughout Grays Harbor. The project creates a net recovery program and shared best management practices to avoid derelict gear in the future.



Derelict gear. Photo credit: www.nature.org