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North Atlantic Region

NOAA Identifies Regional Habitat Focus Areas

NOAA announced the selection of two sites in the North Atlantic as the next Habitat Focus Areas under **NOAA's Habitat Blueprint**. The Penobscot River watershed in Maine and the Choptank River watershed in Maryland and Delaware are areas where the agency will focus its resources to support habitat conservation and restoration.



The **Penobscot River** is New England's second largest river, draining nearly one-third of the State of Maine with a watershed area of 8,570 square miles. The Penobscot River is used as a spawning or nursery area by 11 migratory fish species, including three listed under the Endangered Species Act. The river hosts the largest run of Atlantic salmon left in the United States. Historically, fisheries on the Penobscot River were bountiful, with an estimated 14 to 20 million alewives, 75,000 to 100,000 Atlantic salmon, and 3 to 5 million American shad.

The **Delmarva/Choptank River watershed**, which includes the Choptank and Little Choptank Rivers, is located on Maryland's Eastern Shore. The Choptank River is the longest river on the Delmarva Peninsula. This area is a treasured part of the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem, representing critical habitat for spawning striped bass and river herring, and historically abundant oysters. Residents of the watershed were traditionally employed in agriculture or commercial fishing.



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