Using Vulnerability Assessment Results to Inform Agency Decisions

The Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife experience

Session Outline

- Focus on Massachusetts example
- A bit of background on our vulnerability assessment
- Focus on management, acquisition, regulation and monitoring
- Will use Red Brook Wildlife Management Area as an exercise
- Will talk about Regional Context
- Example exercise from the audience

My Project Goal

- To ensure that the wildlife conservation strategies detailed in the State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) are adapted for climate change impacts
- Your Project Goal is to assess the vulnerability to climate change impacts of whatever is under your responsibility
Adapting to climate change impacts will require doing our best to understand the factors that drive both the impacts and our ability to respond.

In some cases, such as ocean acidification, there is no known adaptation option other than to reduce rates of change in GHG concentrations and climate.
Using the Vulnerability Assessment Results

- **Management**: Develop site Management Plans for a limited number of Wildlife Management Areas
- **Acquisition**: Add results of the Vulnerability Assessment under threats in existing land acquisition process
- **Regulation**: Climate change impacts may require changes to existing regulations. Examples include: intermittent versus perennial stream designation, allowed wetlands protection measures
- **Monitoring**: Working with USGS to develop a plan that will include wetlands and other aquatic habitat types

In Summary

- Searches for adaptation solutions should consider consequences both for multiple sectors and for the short and the long term.
- In addition, a comprehensive understanding of the psychological, social, and political obstacles to adaptation is required, as well as an understanding of how to overcome them.
- Failure to do so frequently increases both vulnerability to climate change and the costs of adaptation over the longer term; it may also reduce incentives to explore more effective long-term solutions.

Regional Context

- Northeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Regional Conservation Needs
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Landscape Conservation Cooperatives