**North Atlantic LCC**

**Update on Development of Methodology for**

**Northeast Regional Conservation Opportunity Areas (RCOAs)**

**NALCC Steering Committee Phone Conference July 1, 2014**

At the April 2014 NEAFWA meeting, NALCC approved continued involvement of NALCC staff in the facilitation of Northeast Regional Conservation Opportunity Areas (RCOAs) in collaboration and partnership with the Northeast Fish and Wildlife Diversity Technical Committee (NEFWDTC). In April, NALCC staff and NEFWDTC members developed a draft framework and timeline for development of a methodology for RCOAs, with the intention to support the states’ timelines for completion of their Wildlife Action Plans.

On June 30, 2014, NALCC staff reviewed next steps with the NEFWDTC and reached concurrence on involvement by LCC and a new timeline. The projected timeline and next steps are described below.

1. LCC staff will provide technical assistance and facilitation to complete a RCOA methodology in close collaboration with NEFWDTC;
2. Phase 1 of the process will emphasize refining the goals and objectives of RCOAs with the NEFWDTC, including as an outcome a document describing the scope of fish and wildlife resources, actions, and threats to be addressed by the methodology at the regional scale;
3. Initially, the RCOA scoping process will focus on the best applications of data assembled for Northeast Regional Species of Greatest Conservation Need and their habitats, for review in September 2014;
4. Throughout the development of the methodology, NALCC will assist the states by providing demonstrations of applications of the best available data and tools to the priority species and actions identified by the states;
5. The interim outcome in 2015 will be a standard methodology for RCOAs that may be referenced in State Wildlife Action Plans;
6. The final mapping and timeline for specific applications remain to be determined.