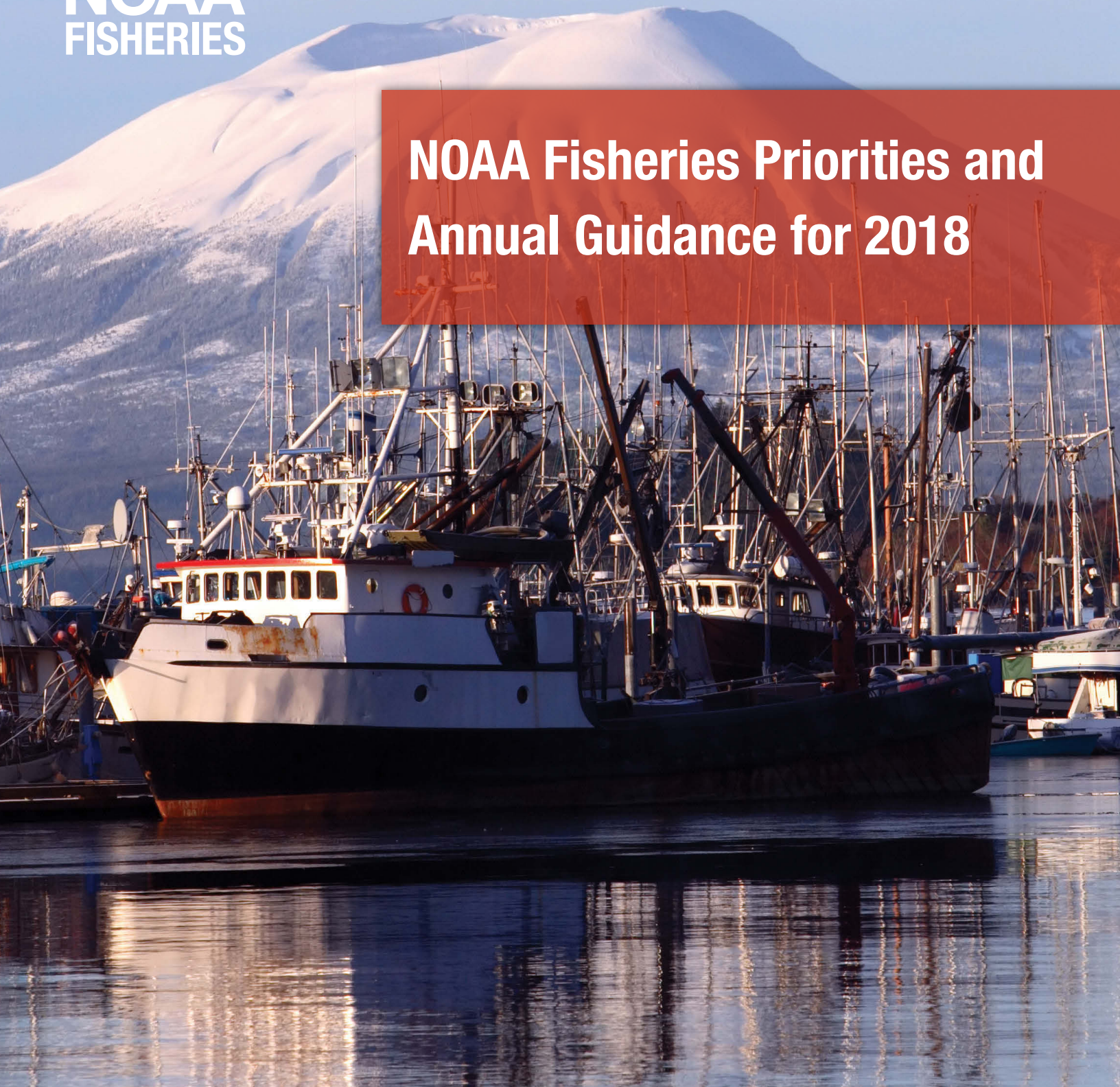




**NOAA  
FISHERIES**

# **NOAA Fisheries Priorities and Annual Guidance for 2018**



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# A Message from Chris Oliver

## Assistant Administrator for NOAA Fisheries



### Dear Friends and Colleagues:

Fresh into my tenure as the newly appointed Assistant Administrator for NOAA Fisheries, I am pleased to introduce our *Fisheries Priorities and Annual Guidance for 2018*. While our overall strategic goals have not changed substantially, the context in which we approach those goals has changed; therefore, those goals and our associated priorities and anticipated results will reflect a more practical approach to managing our fisheries and associated marine resources. I am proud to be part of this Administration, which through a series of Executive Orders and other actions has initiated a comprehensive approach to agency and regulatory reform. We must work to execute our stewardship mission more efficiently, with an emphasis on streamlining our regulatory processes and approaching that mission in a more business-minded manner. While we operate under many long-standing, mostly successful governmental processes, we will proactively seek and take advantage of opportunities for improved operational excellence and efficiency.

Anchored by my lengthy experience in the North Pacific, my primary goal continues to be the long-term sustainability of our fisheries, for the benefit of commercial, recreational, and subsistence fishermen, processors, other support industries, and the coastal communities that depend on those fisheries. We do not want to roll back any of our successes at ending overfishing, rebuilding fisheries, and conserving protected species, but we do want to maximize our commercial fisheries production to the extent possible, and provide ample fishing opportunities, stability, and predictability for our recreational fisheries. As I have stated many times, we can have it both ways, and we can reinvigorate our efforts to promote and facilitate marine aquaculture production to increase our overall U.S. seafood production.

NOAA Fisheries enjoys a world-class reputation for our robust science and research capabilities, and successful management of our marine resources will require a continued adherence to a science-based management approach. But we have to combine that scientific underpinning with practicality and common sense, in order to be just as effective while doing so more efficiently.

As we are coming off the recent 40-year anniversary of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, I want to congratulate and thank you for the tremendous job you all have done in 2017. It is also the 45-year mark of the Marine Mammal Protection Act, and also approaching 45 years for the Endangered Species Act. I eagerly look forward to working with all of our dedicated employees, and our various management partners, as we continue our successes into 2018. Our three Strategic Goals for 2018, as adjusted to reflect the vision of this Administration, are as follows:

- Maximize fishing opportunities while ensuring the sustainability of fisheries and fishing communities.
- Recover and conserve protected species while supporting responsible fishing and resource development.
- Improve organizational excellence and regulatory efficiency.

Again, please accept my gratitude for a job well done, and my enthusiasm to work with you to continue, and improve, our successful stewardship mission.









# NOAA Fisheries Strategic Goals

## Contributions to U.S. Economy

The ocean economy contributes more than \$352 billion annually to the U.S. GDP, and supports approximately 44 million jobs in coastal counties. Many benefits that our ocean resources provide are strained by high global demands for seafood, energy, coastal development, tourism, and recreational use. The benefits provided by our oceans, when realized, promote trade, jobs, and industry growth in commercial and recreational fisheries, aquaculture, tourism, and resource use while supporting various marine species facing extinction.

## Driving Mandates

Effective assurance of sustained, healthy ocean resources is driven by mandates for sustaining marine fisheries (Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act), conserving species that are in danger of extinction (Endangered Species Act), protecting marine mammals from depletion (Marine Mammal Protection Act), and fostering aquaculture production (National Aquaculture Act). The U.S. approach to fisheries management has become a global model of success, and NOAA Fisheries is leading the way in the development and use of innovative management strategies for living marine resources.

**To meet the goals of the Department of Commerce, NOAA Fisheries aligns its activities by the following three strategic goals:**

- **Maximize fishing opportunities while ensuring the sustainability of fisheries and fishing communities.**
- **Recover and conserve protected species while supporting responsible fishing and resource development.**
- **Improve organizational excellence and regulatory efficiency.**

## Setting Priorities for 2018

This document describes NOAA Fisheries strategic goals, and identifies associated annual priorities, which are **specific areas within these goals requiring a corporate focus in 2018**. The identified priorities consider our major mission functions, fiscal support, identified risks, and corporate areas of focus. These priorities are intended to guide the execution of the FY 2018 Annual Operating Plan and steer the individual efforts of each Regional Office, Science Center, and headquarters Program Office toward the accomplishment of the strategic goals.

NOAA Fisheries seeks to continually improve our ability to optimize investments toward these goals, in all parts of the organization and with partners.

# Maximize Fishing Opportunities While Ensuring the Sustainability of Fisheries and Fishing Communities

## From Strong Science to Sound Management

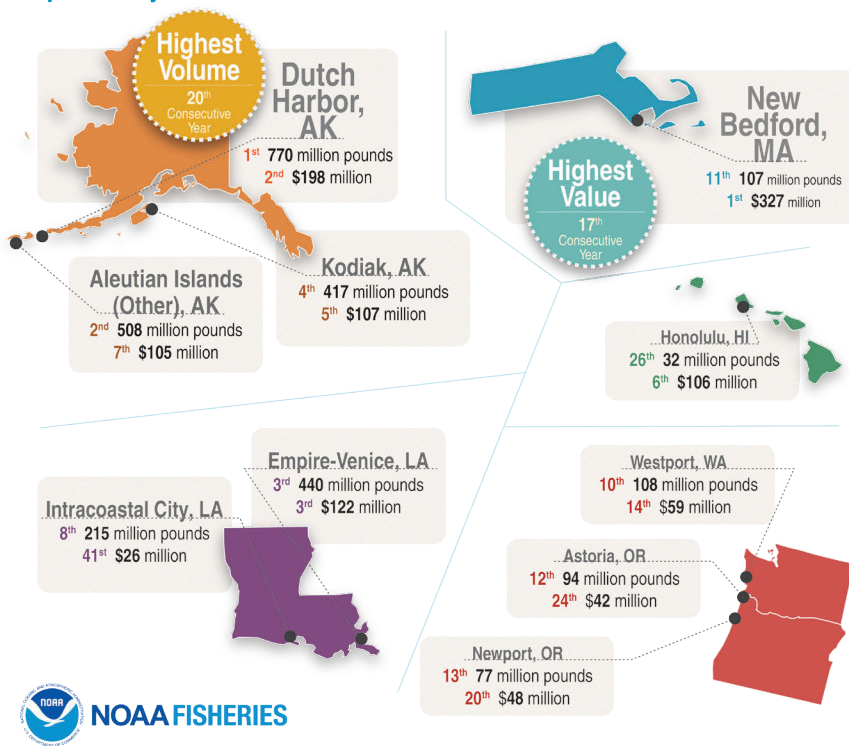
NOAA Fisheries—in close coordination with the regional fishery management councils and state partners—is responsible for fostering healthy, productive, and sustainable marine fisheries, as mandated by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA). Effective science-based management is essential to ensure sustainable domestic seafood production, maintain and enhance fishing opportunities, and protect ecosystem health. NOAA Fisheries achieves these outcomes through marine resource management actions supported by high-quality science, habitat conservation programs, an effective enforcement program, and partner coordination.

NOAA Fisheries is responsible for managing U.S. fisheries in federal waters. U.S. fisheries are among the largest and most sustainable in the world. The U.S. science-based fishery management process is designed to provide optimum yield while preventing overfishing and taking into account the protection of marine, estuarine, and coastal riverine ecosystems. Commercial (including seafood industries), recreational, and subsistence fishing opportunities strengthen the economy and our fishing communities. Aquaculture is an important and growing U.S. industry with the potential to provide a significant sustainable supply of healthy seafood for the nation and global markets.

With our partners, NOAA Fisheries has significantly reduced the number of stocks subject to overfishing and increased the number of rebuilt stocks through implementation of science-based annual catch limits and rebuilding programs. This substantially increases the economy in both revenue and jobs. We provide high-quality stock assessments, and ecological and socioeconomic information, required for federal management of fisheries. We also work closely with regional fishery management councils and with state partners to develop and implement effective management approaches and provide enforcement to ensure success. We promote fair trade by engaging internationally to increase global consumer confidence in seafood and to reduce illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing and seafood fraud. We also protect and restore coastal and marine habitat to sustain our valuable commercial and recreational fisheries.

Effective partnerships are critical to achieving the objectives of this strategic goal. NOAA Fisheries works to foster partnerships with the regional fishery management councils, interstate marine fisheries commissions, states, tribes, commercial and recreational fishing stakeholders, national and regional aquaculture associations, foundations, non-governmental organizations, and other stakeholders with responsibilities and interests in sustainable fisheries. These relationships lead to support and confidence in management approaches, regulatory compliance, and stewardship of the fishery resources that we are charged to manage.

## 2016 U.S. Commercial Fisheries and the Seafood Industry Top Ports by Volume and Value of Seafood Landed



### Priorities to maximize fishing opportunities:

In 2018, NOAA Fisheries will expand the stock assessment prioritization process, emphasize catch accounting, and advance practical electronic monitoring and reporting of U.S. fisheries. We plan to make progress in expanding U.S. seafood production and exports, particularly through marine aquaculture to address the gap between domestic seafood supply and demand. We will focus on the needs of the national saltwater recreational fishing community to collaboratively increase stability and predictability in fishing seasons and opportunities. We will strive to better harmonize federal-state fishing seasons and further federal-state partnerships, including the support of state data-collection programs. Across these actions, we will work to achieve our goals in a practical and common sense manner by carefully considering the need for additional regulations or requirements to ensure that our conservation goals are met in a way that maximizes revenue, increases fishing opportunities, and reduces burdens on the industry.



PRIORITIES	ANTICIPATED RESULTS
Maximize fishing opportunities, revenue, and jobs in U.S. fisheries while ensuring long-term sustainability of the resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide the analytical support and guidance to the regional fishery management councils needed to ensure fishing opportunities are maximized.</li> <li>• Remove additional stocks from the list of stocks overfished and subject to overfishing.</li> <li>• Rebuild additional stocks.</li> </ul>
Reduce regulatory constraints to optimize fishery benefits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fully and effectively implement the provisions of Executive Order 13771 (Reducing Regulation and Controlling Regulatory Costs) for the sustainable fisheries program in close cooperation with the regional fishery management councils.</li> <li>• Review current and future regulations to remove unnecessary burdens and outdated requirements, and increase revenue and fishing opportunities while meeting conservation objectives.</li> </ul>
Leveraging existing resources, identify and implement high-priority, near-term actions from the Ecosystem-Based Fisheries Management (EBFM) Roadmap and National Bycatch Strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work collaboratively with the regional fishery management councils to advance EBFM in additional fisheries.</li> <li>• Develop and publish regional EBFM implementation plans that will help NOAA Fisheries to meet sustainable fisheries goals under multiple mandates.</li> <li>• Implement new management measures to reduce bycatch and discard mortality.</li> </ul>
Enhance fishing opportunities for U.S. fishermen through engagement in regional fishery management organizations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain access to high seas fisheries by U.S. fishing vessels.</li> <li>• Advocate for international sustainable management of shared and migratory stocks.</li> </ul>
Combat illegal, unregulated, and unreported (IUU) fishing and seafood fraud, and advance Fair Trade management, monitoring, and compliance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement the requirement for seafood importers to provide a traceability record—from point of harvest to point of entry into U.S. commerce—for fish and fish products vulnerable to IUU fishing and/or seafood fraud.</li> <li>• Integrate and improve trade-monitoring functions.</li> </ul>
Ensure U.S. fisheries allocations remain relevant to current conditions through the use of the fisheries allocation review policy and catch share 5- to 7-year review guidance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with the regional fishery management councils and constituents to conduct comprehensive reviews of current allocations to ensure they reflect the best available information and are fair and equitable as required by the MSA.</li> <li>• Work with the regional fishery management councils to conduct comprehensive reviews of catch share programs, thereby fully meeting the requirements of the MSA.</li> </ul>
Advance the National Policy for Saltwater Recreational Fisheries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Execute national and regional recreational fisheries implementation plans.</li> <li>• Hold a National Summit on Recreational Fishing to provide a positive forum for dialogue and ensure the goals of the community are understood by the agency.</li> </ul>



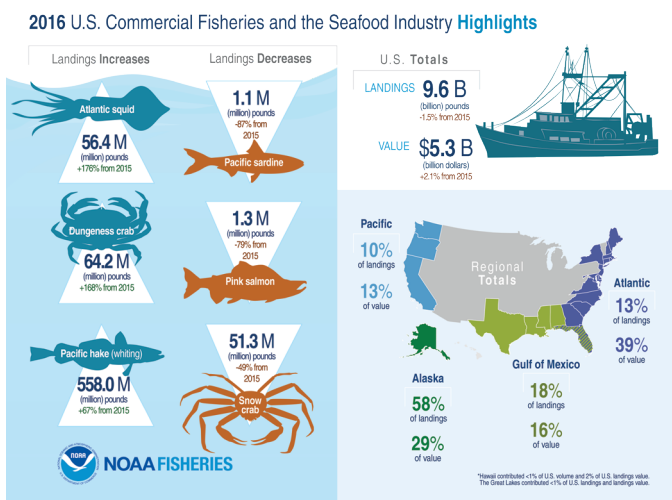
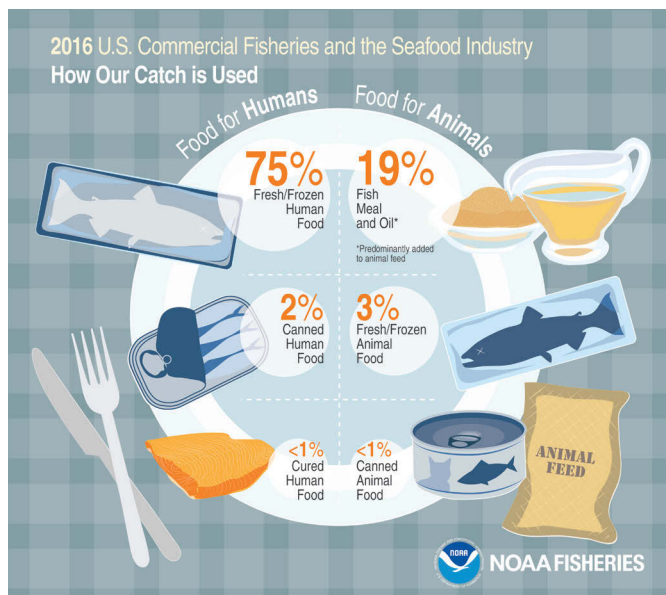
PRIORITIES	ANTICIPATED RESULTS
Facilitate marine aquaculture production to increase overall U.S. seafood production.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create an action plan for clarifying aquaculture legislation.</li> <li>• Engage the Secretary of Commerce with marine aquaculture industry via roundtable meetings with CEOs.</li> <li>• Stimulate investments in aquaculture by directing the use of federal science capabilities, including siting capabilities, disease prevention, and genetics research.</li> <li>• Identify and facilitate regulatory streamlining and cross-agency reviews and actions, creating efficient and timely federal permitting of aquaculture activities.</li> <li>• Increase the number of marine aquaculture permit applications being submitted and reviewed.</li> </ul>
Maintain and enhance stock assessments to support management of U.S. fisheries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete approximately 150 stock assessments and supporting surveys for federally managed, non-salmonid fish stocks.</li> <li>• Complete a Fishing Effort Survey.</li> <li>• Publish and begin implementing priority actions for the “Implementing a Next Generation Stock Assessment Enterprise: An Update to NOAA Fisheries Stock Assessment Improvement Plan.”</li> </ul>
Implement stock assessment prioritization.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand the Stock Assessment Prioritization process to remaining councils such that assessment schedules are prioritized based on management needs and biological and fishery characteristics.</li> </ul>
Modernize and streamline our fishery information systems and data collection.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advance assessment and data collection for recreational fisheries.</li> <li>• Explore and utilize new technologies for data collection and management.</li> <li>• Develop and implement a strategy to modernize the management, integration, access, and use of fisheries data by scientists, stakeholders, and decision-makers.</li> </ul>
Advance effective and practical electronic technologies to improve collection of fishery-dependent data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to execute regional electronic technology implementation plans.</li> </ul>
Increase compliance with regulations through education and outreach, and provide effective enforcement of laws and regulations designed to support sustainable fisheries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase emphasis on priority-focused, effective enforcement operations and compliance assistance activities across all five enforcement divisions.</li> </ul>
Focus habitat conservation efforts on essential fish habitat and deep-sea coral protection in support of regional fishery management councils.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the Council Coordination Committee’s Habitat Working Group in their effort to maximize habitat conservation by sharing best practices across the regional fishery management councils.</li> <li>• Deliver high-quality essential fish habitat and deep-sea coral data to support council decision-making.</li> </ul>

PRIORITIES	ANTICIPATED RESULTS
Implement Regional Action Plans in support of the Climate Science Strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete several climate vulnerability analyses for fisheries and their habitats.</li> </ul>
Review process regarding conflict and recusal of regional fishery management council members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revise guidelines that result in more transparent and effective implementation of statutory requirements regarding council membership.</li> </ul>
Improve the competitiveness of U.S. seafood.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen confidence in the quality and safety of U.S.-produced seafood entering global markets.</li> <li>• Support access to export markets through industry outreach, trade analysis, advocacy for trade-friendly import regulations, and negotiated certification agreements.</li> <li>• Support the continuous improvement of quality management practices, processing efficiency, and delivery to market by U.S. seafood producers.</li> </ul>

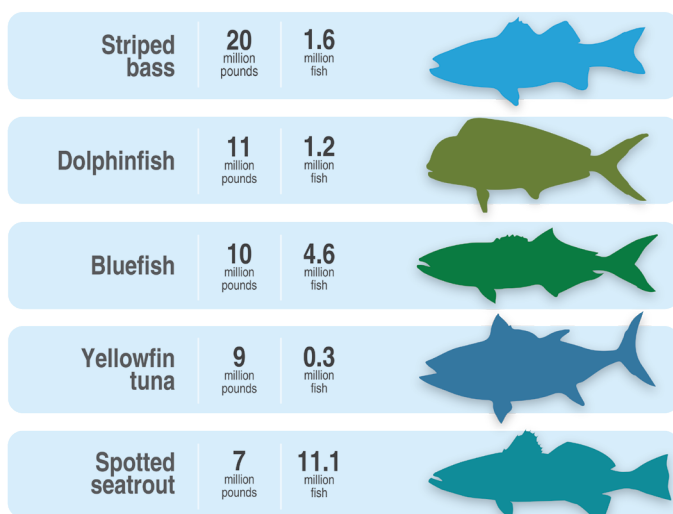




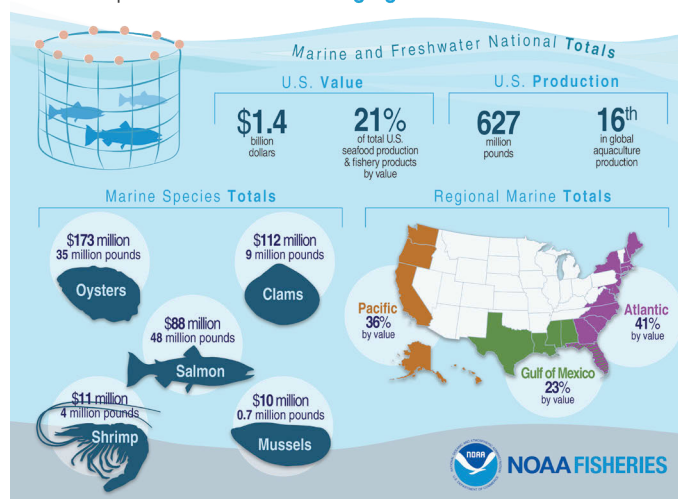
# Sustainable Fisheries by the Numbers



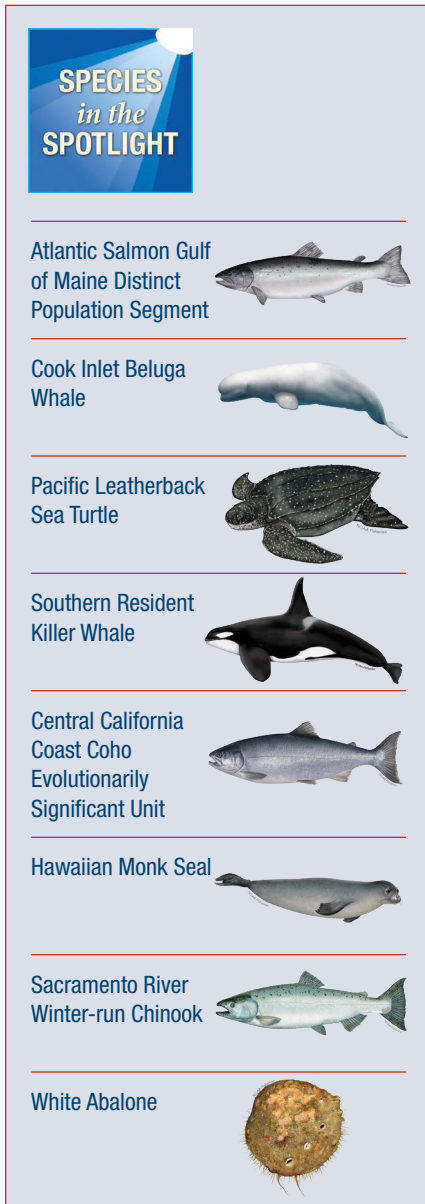
## 2016 U.S. Recreational Fisheries Top Species by Pounds Harvested\*



## 2015 Aquaculture Production Highlights



# Recover and Conserve Protected Species While Supporting Responsible Fishing and Resource Development



NOAA Fisheries is responsible for recovering protected species that are facing extinction and conserving marine mammals. These species are key components of their ecosystems and have particular social and cultural importance. These valuable and vulnerable living resources depend on our collective efforts to conserve them.

We carry out our mission through specific actions focused on reducing negative effects of human activities (e.g., making endangered and threatened species listing determinations, mitigating and authorizing activities, and reducing bycatch), enforcing regulations against harming endangered species and marine mammals, and developing plans to guide the recovery and conservation of these protected species. We also implement measures in our fisheries management approaches to reduce mortality and serious injury of marine mammals and protected species, including in international fisheries.

We conduct high-quality science for the recovery and conservation of protected species, including understanding and reducing human impacts. Science activities include using innovative technologies to survey and assess protected species populations and track their movement; investigating contributing factors to the well-being or mortality of protected species; developing bycatch reduction techniques; supporting the implementation of adaptive water management measures in areas of drought; implementing guidelines for reducing anthropogenic sound in oceans; understanding impacts of habitat loss; and focusing on science related to understanding the effects of changes in climate on the resources we manage.

NOAA Fisheries often depends on captive propagation and outplanting when protected species are critically endangered to maintain or improve a species' status in the wild. For example, some of our Species in the Spotlight (species most at risk of extinction in the near future)—white abalone, Gulf of Maine Atlantic salmon, and Central California Coast coho salmon—currently depend on aquaculture technology (captive propagation and conservation hatcheries) to prevent extinction.





We also protect and restore habitat on which these species depend. Marine, estuarine, and coastal riverine habitat limitations are significant for many protected species, and require focused conservation and restoration strategies. NOAA Fisheries supports partnerships with communities, federal agencies, local and state governments (e.g., with the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund), tribes, and non-governmental organizations (e.g., with the Community-based Restoration Program and Species Recovery Grants) to accomplish recovery goals related to habitat conservation.

### **Priorities to recover and conserve protected species:**

In 2018, NOAA Fisheries will continue to focus efforts on the recovery of high-priority Species in the Spotlight. We will continue to create efficiencies in the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) permit, authorization, and consultation processes while ensuring effective recovery and conservation of protected species, recognizing the Administration's interest in maximizing our seafood production and facilitating U.S. economic growth. We will also continue to modernize and optimize our protected species data collection and information systems to provide the scientific information we need to make management decisions in a timely fashion. We know the health of species is tied to the health of their habitat; NOAA Fisheries will continue to focus on long-term habitat science and conservation necessary for the recovery of protected species.

PRIORITIES	ANTICIPATED RESULTS
Implement the 5-year action plans for the eight Species in the Spotlight to stabilize the declining populations of these species.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advance science and reduce threats to stabilize populations of the eight Species in the Spotlight.</li> </ul>
Focus habitat conservation investments on the Habitat Requirements and Limiting Factors identified in ESA recovery plans, including the key actions identified in Species in the Spotlight action plans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase quality and access to habitat to support the recovery of ESA-listed species, particularly for foraging and reproduction of Species in the Spotlight (including Susitna River Delta, Alaska; Russian River and Central Valley in California; and Penobscot River, Maine).</li> <li>• Implement priority actions within the Habitat Focus Areas to support protected species recovery.</li> </ul>
Improve the efficiency and timeliness of ESA and MMPA consultation and permitting processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce time to complete ESA Section 7 informal consultations by an average of 25 percent over the next year.</li> <li>• Reduce time to complete MMPA incidental harassment authorizations by 25 percent over the next year.</li> <li>• Reduce the review backlog for hatchery and genetic management plans on the West Coast by completing ESA and National Environmental Policy Act review of 55 plans.</li> </ul>
Implement recommendations from the ESA Recovery Program Review to improve the recovery planning and implementation process, and increase the likelihood of recovering species.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revise the 1990 Endangered and Threatened Species Recovery Priority Guidelines.</li> </ul>
Reduce the negative impacts of human activities on protected species by advancing scientific understanding, and developing and implementing guidance and tools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convene expert working groups to advance our understanding of threats to recovery of North Atlantic right whales.</li> <li>• Implement successful intervention strategies to improve long-term ecological functions of coral reefs.</li> <li>• Develop national guidelines for safely deterring marine mammals from damaging fishing gear and catch and from damaging personal or public property, and preventing entanglement.</li> <li>• Reduce the bycatch of marine mammals and sea turtles by working with the fishing industry on innovative technologies.</li> </ul>
Improve the quality of protected species stock assessments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete stock assessments and supporting surveys for all strategic marine mammal stocks, and publish annual Stock Assessment Reports for the Atlantic/ Gulf, Pacific, and Alaska regions.</li> <li>• Use innovative and cost-effective technologies to improve protected species data collection and management.</li> </ul>



PRIORITIES	ANTICIPATED RESULTS
<p>Advance scientific understanding of West Coast water operations and the importance of habitat types to the recovery of salmon, steelhead, and sturgeon, and work with partners to improve natural flow, restore habitat, and increase water supply reliability for these species.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete life cycle models for water operations in California's Central Valley and for habitat actions to advance recovery of listed Columbia River salmon.</li> <li>• Align Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund and Community-based Restoration Program projects with priorities in ESA recovery plans through increased awareness of recovery plan priorities by partners that carry out habitat restoration actions in Pacific Coast salmon habitats.</li> <li>• Develop a rigorous "fish per acre" productivity quantification model and concurrent habitat valuation for salmon in the Lower Columbia River and Puget Sound to facilitate the selection, design, and scaling of habitat restoration and to maximize the impact and value of the work.</li> <li>• Participate in NOAA's Water Initiative to enhance water quality and quantity for protected species.</li> </ul>
<p>Improve understanding of the impacts of changes in climate on protected species and their habitats.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete protected species climate vulnerability projects for marine mammals in selected regions.</li> <li>• Develop Regional Climate Science toolkits in selected regions.</li> </ul>
<p>Prioritize enforcement of MMPA and ESA in Joint Enforcement Agreements with state and territorial partners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate well-defined marine mammal and endangered species priority enforcement activities, where appropriate, within state and territorial Joint Enforcement Agreements with the NOAA Fisheries Office of Law Enforcement.</li> </ul>
<p>Develop long-term restoration programs in partnership with trustees to restore marine mammals and sea turtles affected by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to develop and implement restoration plans for marine mammals and sea turtles.</li> </ul>
<p>Ensure adoption of measures to protect marine mammals in foreign fisheries comparable to measures implemented in the United States.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publish the List of Foreign Fisheries as a critical step to implementing the Marine Mammal Protection Act import provisions.</li> </ul>







# Improve Organizational Excellence and Regulatory Efficiency

## Risk Management

Chief among the currently identified risks and challenges affecting our ability to achieve our mission are:

- Human capital management (e.g., hiring and staffing).
- NOAA fleet capacity to support science needs (e.g., aging fleet and reduced ship time).
- Increasing operational demands (e.g., increasing requests for ESA consultation and increasing demands for fish stock assessments).
- Aging facilities (i.e., those more than 50 years old) and infrastructure.

Improving organizational excellence and regulatory efficiency is a continuous process that enables us to fulfill our mission by transforming the organization to be more responsive and to deliver better services. In achieving organizational excellence, NOAA Fisheries emphasizes strategic planning, effective program execution and performance monitoring, and identification and management of risks and challenges. Regulatory efficiency includes identifying and addressing existing regulations and processes that may be outdated, unnecessary, or ineffective, or that inhibit job creation and growth.

NOAA Fisheries is a science-driven agency whose credibility depends on the reliability and accessibility of our scientific findings. We must ensure that high-quality scientific information is developed in a timely fashion to meet the needs of decision-makers and stakeholders. Working effectively with partners and constituents and fostering cooperation among state, regional, and federal agencies as well as the commercial fishing industry and recreational anglers—these are the essential ingredients for making more data available for effective resource management.

We depend upon secure information technology systems, modern facilities, and observing platforms (e.g., vessels and aircraft) to enable our mission and provide access to research, verifiable real-time data, and results as quickly as possible.

Our people are central to our mission. We are committed to maintaining a healthy and safe work environment, with well-trained employees of diverse backgrounds and experiences, in a positive workplace setting.

## Priorities to improve organizational excellence and regulatory efficiency:

In 2018, NOAA Fisheries will focus on lowering regulatory burdens where possible. We will examine and streamline our business processes, including internal review and approval authorities. A high priority will be given to tightening the linkage between our science and management enterprises to improve our focus on real-time management issues. We will continue to assess and manage our programmatic and operational risks, and will optimize agency investments toward high-priority, high-performance activities. We will focus on recruiting qualified individuals to advance the mission of the agency through a diverse workforce.

PRIORITIES	ANTICIPATED RESULTS
Improve science focus on real-time current management issues and data needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete a systematic peer-review process of all science programs to improve integration, identify best practices, and share successes and challenges within the NOAA Fisheries science enterprise.</li> <li>• Synthesize national response to independent reviews of the NOAA Fisheries Economics &amp; Human Dimensions Science programs to guide research and development of science products used to evaluate the consequences of management actions and to design policies to maximize societal benefits from ocean and coastal ecosystems.</li> </ul>
Improve internal processes for allocating funds toward annual priorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete Priority Based Resourcing tools for the four NOAA Fisheries enterprises.</li> <li>• Initiate a pilot to prioritize and rank activity plans (projects or services) within each Financial Management Center.</li> </ul>
Improve agency ability to monitor and measure performance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quantify Financial Management Centers' contribution to national performance measures.</li> </ul>
Integrate Enterprise Risk Management to assess programmatic and operational risks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a NOAA Fisheries Risk Register.</li> </ul>
Re-evaluate the role of legal review.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarify NOAA General Counsel's role in legal versus policy direction.</li> </ul>
Ensure that NOAA employees and contractors work in a safe and secure environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement NOAA Fisheries response to recommendations proposed in external review of training and safety protocols for the National Observer Program.</li> </ul>
Proactively recruit qualified individuals at all experience levels and grades, whose diverse background, educational experience, and skills will advance the overall mission of the agency.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adequately represent local demographics—particularly persons with disabilities, veterans, minorities, and women—in our workforce.</li> </ul>
Develop workforce succession strategies to help meet evolving mission needs and respond to anticipated changes in leadership composition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and implement succession strategies to build a leadership talent pool and accompanying action plan in each Financial Management Center.</li> </ul>
Implement VetCorps and GulfCorps programs to enhance workforce development in the natural resources, while restoring coastal habitat to support healthy fisheries, fishing communities, and trust resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employ post-9/11 military veterans in the California Conservation Corps (VetCorps) to assess habitat, monitor populations, and restore critical habitat for fish.</li> <li>• Build the natural resources workforce and engage local citizens in coastal restoration by investing \$7 million of oil spill recoveries in the first 3 years of a Gulf of Mexico-wide Conservation Corps (GulfCorps).</li> </ul>
Confirm agency facilities and infrastructure requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete facilities and infrastructure portfolio review.</li> </ul>



PRIORITIES	ANTICIPATED RESULTS
Develop technology product and service delivery platforms that facilitate rapid deployment of mission capabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand the use of cloud capabilities.</li> <li>• Establish a NOAA Fisheries technology innovation center.</li> </ul>
Prioritize investments in vessel and aircraft assets, including NOAA platforms and partnerships with industry, to maximize data collection efforts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support NOAA's Office of Marine and Aviation Operations' Platform Acquisition Division in the implementation and sequencing of vessel construction, identifying gaps between legacy vessels and new vessels, and providing input on developing technologies and tools to be integrated into the planning phase of each new vessel.</li> </ul>
Improve communication of data, products, and activities to external audiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launch Phase 2 of the NOAA Fisheries Web Transformation project, including bringing additional regional offices and science centers into the new system.</li> <li>• Explore a public education campaign focused on U.S. sustainable seafood and FishWatch—our public-facing consumer-friendly website—to better arm consumers with the facts about sustainable seafood.</li> <li>• More effectively share NOAA Fisheries scientific data, information, and publications by executing the Public Access to Research Results implementation plan and modernizing enterprise data management practices.</li> </ul>





**U.S. Secretary of Commerce**  
Wilbur Ross

**Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and  
Atmosphere and Acting Under Secretary of Commerce  
for Oceans and Atmosphere**  
RDML Tim Gallaudet, Ph.D., USN Ret.

**Assistant Administrator for NOAA Fisheries**  
Chris Oliver

**January 2018**

**[www.fisheries.noaa.gov](http://www.fisheries.noaa.gov)**

**OFFICIAL BUSINESS**

**NOAA Fisheries**  
1315 East-West Highway  
Silver Spring, MD 20910