

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE REPORT ON RECREATIONAL FISHERIES ENGAGEMENT PLANS

On June 3, 2019, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) released six regional recreational fisheries engagement plans which highlight actions that NMFS offices will undertake in 2019 and 2020 to improve visibility, develop understanding, and enhance collaboration with America's recreational fishermen.

We have provided the West Coast plan developed by the NMFS West Coast Region, Northwest Fisheries Science Center, and Southwest Fisheries Science Center. The activities listed are not an exhaustive list, but include actions such as participating in fishing shows and angler club meetings, hosting roundtable meetings with constituents, and promoting citizen science efforts.

To kick off the plan, the West Coast Regional Office, Southwest Fisheries Science Center and Northwest Fisheries Science Center will be hosting roundtable sessions in San Diego, CA (June 18) and Seattle, WA (July 1).

For questions or comments, please contact the NMFS West Coast Region's Recreational Fisheries Coordinator, Daniel Studt (Daniel.Studt@noaa.gov).



NOAA FISHERIES

West Coast Region



Recreational fishing provides a significant economic benefit to the U.S. West Coast. In 2016, 1.2 million saltwater anglers spent roughly \$1.8 billion on durable goods and took part in an estimated 5.2 million saltwater fishing trips, supporting approximately 25,000 jobs and \$3.0 billion in sales on the West Coast. The NOAA Fisheries West Coast Region, Northwest Fisheries Science Center, and Southwest Fisheries Science Center work together to support the recreational fishing community through sustainable fisheries management, research, communication, and collaboration. These partnerships support NOAA Fisheries' National Recreational Fisheries Policy and promote stewardship of our nation's marine resources.

A thriving partnership with the recreational fishing community fosters innovative science and management, economic vitality, sustainable fisheries, and healthy ecosystems. West Coast anglers are leading the way in sustainable fishing practices, from increased use of descending devices to the recent development of midwater long-leader gear and a new sustainable fishery off Oregon. These solutions are made possible by the talents and unique perspective of recreational anglers. We will continue collaborating with the recreational fishing community in 2019 and 2020 to expand fishing opportunity and stewardship throughout the West Coast.

The Agency has recently developed three key priorities, each of which is discussed in detail below, including strategies and specific actions for addressing each one.

Establish a visible agency presence among the recreational fishing community

Engaging the recreational fishing community on the ground and online is the best way to disseminate information. It also allows the agency to gain awareness of the concerns and priorities of the community first-hand and to promote quality fishing opportunities that might not otherwise be recognized by the community, such as programs providing conservation education and fishing trips to both veterans and kids. Likewise, outreach allows the agency to raise awareness about the economic importance of recreational fisheries to diverse groups outside of the immediate recreational fishing community. The following actions aim to establish a visible agency presence in the recreational fishing community, both on the ground and online.

Strategy	Action
<p>Actively engage the recreational community on the ground and on-line</p>	<p>Outreach Events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in fishing expositions, festivals, and routine NOAA Fisheries outreach events (e.g., Fred Hall Shows, Port of San Diego’s Day at the Docks, Salem Saltwater Sportsmen’s Show, NOAA Day at the Aquarium, Pacific Northwest Sportsmen’s Show, and the Seattle Boat Show, etc.) as resources and staff time allow. • Participate in angler club meetings to discuss topics of interest to members, such as fisheries management, collaborative research, and ethical angling techniques. • Promote veterans’ and kids’ fisheries conservation education and hands-on experiences through fishing trips and participation at outreach events. Build partnerships with existing recreational fishing non-profits to accomplish these goals (e.g., Fish for Life, Los Angeles Rod and Reel Club, Rollo Kids Fishing, etc.). <p>Online / Media Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep anglers informed of important updates via the West Coast Region Rec Fish email listserv and posting of news stories to the NOAA Fisheries website and social media accounts. • Connect with recreational fishermen by writing newspaper editorials or articles, posting articles on recreational fishing associations/clubs websites and monthly newsletters, and talking on fishing radio shows. Engage anglers on major online sportfishing forums. • Support NOAA’s National Marine Sanctuaries outreach on recreational fishing, including West Coast sanctuary newsletters to the recreational fishing community. <p>Educational Materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to distribute and promote the use of descending devices at outreach events, angler club presentations, and kids and veterans fishing trips. • Create a central location for NOAA Fisheries outreach and educational materials, accessible for the West Coast Recreational Fisheries team. • Produce and disseminate marine conservation outreach materials (e.g., reducing whale entanglements with recreational crab gear, ethical angler techniques, reducing sea turtle and sportfishing interactions in coastal waters and embayments, etc.). • Work with recreational fishermen to develop educational materials on recreational fisheries management and how to become more engaged. • Promote the use of mobile phone applications for fisheries education and research.

Develop mutual understanding of priorities, concerns, and challenges

Discussions with the recreational fishing community are one way we hear and understand the community’s concerns and priorities, identify shared goals, and develop collaborative opportunities. It also allows the agency to consider how best to allocate resources to address mutual priorities. The following actions are intended to increase mutual understanding by fostering consistent open dialog with the recreational community.

Strategy	Action
<p>Seek and create opportunities for consistent open dialog with the recreational community</p>	<p>Roundtables / Meetings with Recreational Fishermen</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host annual roundtable meetings with recreational fisheries stakeholders in California, Oregon, and Washington. • Convene town hall-style calls or a Q&A session at Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) meetings for recreational issues. • Maintain consistent communication with recreational fishing clubs and associations, providing them with updates and summaries of rec issues and actions being discussed in the PFMC process to distribute to their club members. • Communicate updates and results of relevant NOAA Fisheries research projects to the recreational fishing community. <p>Multi-Agency Collaboration and Coordination</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance multi-agency partnerships through participation in joint meetings and recreational angler education projects (e.g., Recreational Fisheries Information Network (RecFIN), California Department of Fish and Wildlife Ocean Fishing Workshops, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Youth Fishing Events, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Oregon Family Fishing Events).



Enhance collaboration with the recreational fishing community

Working to improve the fishing community’s understanding and confidence in the science and management that supports recreational fisheries strengthens relationships between the recreational fishing community, scientists, and managers. Involving West Coast anglers and interested stakeholders in the development of data collection programs helps increase angler participation and develop sustainable programs and policies. Collaboration can lead to improved data collection and reporting, development of innovative management approaches, greater understanding of socio-economic considerations in recreational fisheries management, and conservation enhancement. The following actions demonstrate how NOAA Fisheries will enhance collaboration with the recreational fishing community by pursuing opportunities to jointly address challenges.

Strategy	Action
<p>Identify and pursue opportunities to jointly address challenges facing recreational fisheries</p>	<p>Enhance Engagement with the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support participation of recreational fishery stakeholders in PFMC meetings and Marine Resource Education Program (MREP) Science and Management Workshops. • Work with the MREP team, recreational anglers, and associations actively engaged in the PFMC process to develop a pilot training on fisheries science and management, and enhance the recreational community’s understanding of fisheries science and management. <p>Increase Recreational Fisheries Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with recreational anglers and clubs to identify potential Exempted Fishing Permits with a broader scope (supported by multiple fishing associations/clubs, use of innovative gear, collaborative research, etc.). • Work with recreational fishing community to identify and pursue regulatory changes for greater fishing opportunity in harmony with applicable law and treaties (e.g., the long-leader sport fishery). <p>Collaborative Fisheries Research Projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor rockfish populations through the Puget Sound charter vessel citizen science sampling program, to assist in expanding local fisheries knowledge to recover endangered and threatened fish populations. • Encourage angler donations of biological samples of Pacific bluefin tuna, opah, and thresher shark for use in species life-history studies and other research. • Promote billfish tagging and participation in the annual billfish angler survey to identify changes in the health of billfish stocks and provide a measure of relative abundance and understanding of the impact of fisheries on billfish resources. • Support sighting reports of basking sharks to gain a better understanding of their biology and current population size. • Partner with industry/charter vessels to conduct biological sampling and other surveys (e.g., Northwest Fisheries Science Center Southern California Shelf Rockfish Hook and Line Survey) and collect information about the abundance, biology, ecology, and genetics of species for use in stock assessments. • Analyze and report on recently collected West Coast Sportfishing Survey and Angler Expenditure Survey data to improve socioeconomic recreational fisheries data. <p>Improved Fisheries Habitat and Ocean Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase angler participation in marine debris removal and habitat restoration (e.g., International Coastal Cleanup Day). • Continue Russian River water quality modeling to inform time-dependent availability of estuarine habitat for salmonids.

The West Coast Regional Office and the Northwest and Southwest Fisheries Science Center will continue to focus on improving opportunity and stability in recreational fisheries during 2019 and 2020. The recreational fishing community is an essential partner in our efforts to develop innovative management approaches, enhance socio-economic information, and identify opportunities to expand recreational fishing opportunities through conservation.

Contact

For West Coast recreational fisheries questions, please contact Daniel Studt - the West Coast Recreational Fishing Coordinator - or your local representative from the West Coast Recreational Fisheries Team:

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