



NOAA Fisheries West Coast Region Fiscal Year 2021 Priorities

Agenda Item C.2.b
Supplemental NMFS Report 2
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NOAA
FISHERIES

A Message from Barry Thom, Regional Administrator

Over the past year I have been so proud of what we have accomplished, both advancing our service to the nation and how we have come together to support each other and our partners through whatever 2020 could throw at us. I am awed by the perseverance staff have shown despite the surprises the year kept sending us. We have not let any important efforts fall through the cracks. This is truly impressive.

We face numerous challenges as we head into 2021. The global pandemic has forced our collaborative work into virtual space, severely limited field activities, and created strain on colleagues juggling dependent care and work at home. Every corner of our Region was hit hard by the unprecedented fire season, and our communities are wrestling with unrest around social injustice and an uncertain political climate.

In the midst of this, our work has never been more important. The West Coast fishing industry is worth \$15 billion and supports 232,300 jobs (2017 values). These are particularly important to our local communities and tribes in this time of economic uncertainty. Our habitat and protected species missions continue to be critical as we adjust to new circumstances and more frequent and extreme environmental events, such as this summer's wildfires.

We developed our 2021 priorities mindful of the extremely challenging context we are working in and the impact on our colleagues and constituents. We have emphasized mission-critical activities and key conservation actions that will yield the greatest benefit to our trust resources, while providing support to our people. We are committed to working with the communities we serve and will be flexible to the unique and challenging situations they are now facing.

These priorities are not a comprehensive list of all the critical work that we will do. It will take numerous additional actions to move our work forward, including all the essential administrative, operational, fiscal, and regulatory work that has given us a reputation of excellence.

This year will also present opportunities. Over the last year we have all come to reassess what is most important and how we can best adapt. We plan to work with all of you -- our staff and our partners -- to respond to change with flexibility, innovation, and creativity. By focusing on realistic and strategic conservation actions, and committing to our shared values of public service, finding solutions, and growth and learning, we will come through 2021 stronger and better than ever.





FY21 Priorities

Cross Cutting Priorities

These priorities are supported by multiple actions as indicated by the icons throughout the document.

Tt - Tribal Trust

Supports our commitment to upholding our tribal trust responsibilities.

Ss - Species in the Spotlight

NOAA Fisheries launched the “Species in the Spotlight: Survive to Thrive” in 2015 to bring greater attention to nine endangered marine species most-at-risk of extinction in the near future. These priority activities support the Region’s goal to focus recovery actions and further engage partners and interested citizens to work with us to prevent extinction.

Goal 1 - Amplify the Economic Value of Commercial and Recreational Fisheries While Ensuring Their Sustainability

Sustain and Increase Fishing Opportunities

- Advance authorization of deep-set buoy gear to harvest swordfish -- publish Draft Environmental Impact Statement and initiate Endangered Species Act (ESA) consultation.
- Continue support for Pacific tropical and temperate tuna management and rebuilding by working with the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission and Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission on new management measures for 2022 and beyond.
- Complete all ocean fisheries management measures and harvest specifications: highly migratory species, salmon, sardine, mackerel, and groundfish -- transmit proposed and/or final rules to headquarters.

Conserve Habitat Supporting Fisheries

- Host two workshops with the angling community to increase our understanding of habitat issues of greatest importance to West Coast anglers and to identify potential collaborative projects and research priorities.

Advance Aquaculture Opportunities on the West Coast

- Work with stakeholders and NOAA’s Ocean Service to identify and develop a site in southern California as a NOAA Offshore Aquaculture Opportunity Area.

Goal 2 - Conserve and Recover Protected Species While Supporting Responsible Fishing and Resource Development

Advance Reintroduction Efforts for At-Risk Species

- Continue experimental outplanting efforts to advance endangered white abalone recovery. **Ss**
- Provide Technical Assistance to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and Klamath River Renewal Corporation in Support of Klamath Dam Removal Activities in the Klamath Basin. **Tt**
- Continue to support tribal-led efforts to reintroduce salmonids into the upper Columbia River basin, including in Columbia River Treaty discussions. **Tt**
- Continue collaborating with partners to evaluate reintroduction opportunities and advance reintroduction plans for Chinook salmon in the Central Valley.

- Assist partners in improving upstream and downstream passage for salmonids in the Willamette Valley.

Complete and Advance Priority ESA Consultations

- Complete a biological opinion on the effects of the Pacific Coast Salmon Fishery Management Plan on endangered Southern Resident killer whales. **Ss**
- Provide technical assistance to Santa Clara Valley Water District and FERC on the Anderson Dam seismic retrofit project.
- Continue reducing the backlog of Hatchery and Genetic Management Plans that need to be reviewed under the National Environmental Policy Act and/or the ESA. **Tt**

Engage Partners to Enhance Conservation

- Assist the states of California, Oregon, and Washington to advance their efforts to draft applications for ESA Section 10 permits for their dungeness crab fisheries' entanglements of ESA-listed whales and sea turtles.
- Engage partners in the Puget Sound Domain Climate Scenario Planning Pilot to explore possible future salmon management responses to near-term climate variability and long-term climate change.
- Finalize the ESA Safe Harbor Agreement for Shasta River in Siskiyou County, California.
- Improve cold water management, improve adult fish passage, and restore juvenile rearing habitat for endangered Sacramento River winter-run Chinook salmon. **SS**
- Expand endangered Central California Coast coho salmon conservation hatchery rearing and release locations. **SS**

Protect and Conserve Anadromous Fish Habitat

- Advance development of new Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs): 1) Western Oregon / Oregon Board of Forestry, 2) Deschutes River Basin, 3) City of Santa Cruz, and 4) Placer County.
- Implement the new Calaveras HCP with Stockton East Water District.
- Restore salmon habitat and fish passage through the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund exceeding 150 stream miles made accessible and 5,000 acres restored in FY2021.
- In collaboration with the Pacific Salmon Commission and Northwest states and tribes, implement the funding initiative to protect and restore habitat for threatened Puget Sound Chinook salmon and increase the hatchery production of prey for endangered Southern Resident killer whales. **SS**



Goal 3 - Improve Organizational Excellence and Regulatory Efficiency

Advance Diversity and Inclusion

- Promote and support internship opportunities, including NOAA-sponsored undergraduate programs (Educational Partnership Program with Minority Serving Institutes, Hollings Preparation Pilot Program, Pathways, and SeaGrant programs) and forge new partnerships with organizations that support minority student opportunities.
- Assess inclusion, equal opportunity, and barriers for the workforce, including affiliates, to gain new insights into our culture and additional ways to advance diversity and inclusion.

Support Resiliency and Well-Being

- Provide professional services to address total wellness during extended telework and engagement in reintegration planning for a safe and informed return to offices.

Invest in Learning and Development

- Continue to foster career development through the advancement of regional tools, learning opportunities, mentoring and employee support.

- Invest in the 2nd cohort of our Emerging Leaders Development Program to advance growth and learning and leadership development.
- Launch new Essential Fish Habitat and FERC training to support staff development to better implement our full range of habitat conservation authorities.

Enhance Communications and Information Management

- Continue to cultivate a communications-savvy Region: improve staff access to communication resources, advance early identification and preparation for controversial issues, and develop and deploy consistent region-wide messages.

Improve Regulatory Efficiency and Effectiveness

- Complete Amendment 20 to the Pacific Coast Salmon Fishery Management Plan modifying the annual season setting schedule – transmit proposed rule to headquarters.
- Complete timely collection and submission of documents for all 2021 Freedom of Information Act requests with a goal of 80 percent on-time submission based on response date.

PHOTOS: Cover, top left - Scott Rumsey; center - Shutterstock; right - Jake Rennert, NOAA; main photo - Erin Strange, NOAA. Page 1 - Melissa Neuman, NOAA. Page 2 - Fabien Forget, International Seafood Sustainability Foundation. Page 3, left - Shutterstock; center - Thomas Dunklin; right - Katie Conroy.