



**NOAA  
FISHERIES**

# West Coast Priorities

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NOAA Fisheries is responsible for building sustainable fisheries, recovering endangered and threatened species, maintaining healthy ecosystems, promoting safe seafood and environmentally-sound aquaculture, and supporting coastal communities.

We have made substantial progress in advancing high-quality science to inform management of West Coast marine resources. We have rebuilt fish stocks to productive and sustainable levels, implemented actions that support the recovery of protected species, restored thousands of miles of habitat, and created collaborative partnerships with states, tribes, fishing communities, and conservation organizations.

Our work grows ever more crucial and challenging, as a volatile climate and dynamic conditions affect the many species that live in the Pacific Ocean, Southern Ocean off Antarctica, and

freshwater systems of Washington, Oregon, California, and Idaho. We face a growing need to better understand and respond to a changing climate, including rising water temperatures, increasing frequency of extreme weather events, and duration of drought. These challenges affect many species and the millions of people who depend on these resources for their culture, livelihoods, and well-being.

Over the next few years and within available resourcing, NOAA Fisheries' Northwest and Southwest Fisheries Science Centers, West Coast Regional Office, Office of Law Enforcement, and Restoration Center will continue to identify, implement, and enforce science-based solutions to these challenging environmental issues. We will work together on the following priority actions to regionally implement the NOAA Fisheries' strategic plan.

## Strategic Goal 1: Adaptively manage West Coast fisheries and aquaculture through sound science to ensure sustainability and economic competitiveness in a changing climate.



### Our priority is to work together to:

- Increase our understanding of the changing ecosystem's impact on the life history, distribution, and abundance of key species.
- Enhance fishery stock assessments and management to promote sustainable fisheries.
- Strengthen data collection and bycatch monitoring through research collaborations and the use of innovative technology.
- Support the sustainable and responsible development of aquaculture, including the West Coast Aquaculture Opportunity Areas.
- Incrementally integrate climate, ocean, and ecosystem science into risk assessments and identify management strategies to safeguard our marine resources and support communities.
- Communicate and coordinate with federal and state agencies on offshore wind energy development and its impacts on fisheries.

## Strategic Goal 2: Safeguard protected species and propel their recovery, which has become more challenging due to habitat loss, contaminants, offshore development, and the changing climate.

### To achieve this goal, we plan to:

- Advance recovery of the species most at-risk of extinction (e.g., Pacific salmon, Southern Resident killer whale, leatherback turtle and white abalone), while promoting and enforcing conservation actions for all protected species.
- Increase reintroduction efforts for abalone, salmon and steelhead.
- Leverage these efforts through partnerships with tribes, federal agencies, states, academic institutions, and conservation organizations.
- Reduce fisheries bycatch and whale entanglements by developing technology and research partnerships to better understand and mitigate these threats.



NOAA Fisheries, Permit #16163



- Research the impacts of stormwater runoff on Pacific salmon and integrate best practices into management actions across the West Coast.
- Research potential impacts of offshore development (wind, aquaculture) on ESA-listed and protected species. Implement innovative technologies to improve spatial and temporal data collection to address these impacts. Develop offset strategies for proposed wind energy development to mitigate impact on protected species.

## Strategic Goal 3: Support our mission by maintaining a high level of organizational excellence.



### Together, we plan to:

- Remove institutional barriers to achieving workforce diversity.
- Strive to create products and services that are accessible and equitable across all West Coast communities.
- Develop guidance and support for the new hybrid workforce, encourage employee growth and learning, and implement strategies to promote employee wellness.
- Provide infrastructure to store, process, and analyze large data streams to stay relevant with emerging innovative technologies.



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