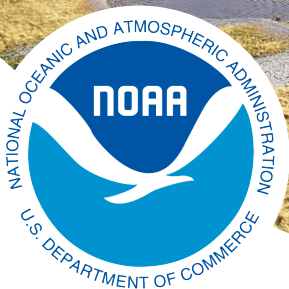




Agenda Item D.1.a  
Supplemental NMFS Report 2  
November 2024

# NOAA Fisheries West Coast Region Fiscal Year 2025 Priorities



**NOAA**  
**FISHERIES**

# A Message from Jennifer Quan, Regional Administrator

Dear Colleagues,

Together we made great strides in fiscal year 2024 that set us up for even more progress to come. We just celebrated removal of four major Klamath River dams, reopening hundreds of river miles to salmon and one of the greatest watershed renewal successes I know of. We dedicated unprecedented funding to crucial habitat renewal and hatchery updates across the West Coast that will restore resilience at a time when our ecosystems most need it. Soon we will offer new fishing opportunities for Pacific bluefin tuna, which have rebuilt ahead of schedule in a testament to good science and international cooperation.

We should take pride in these successes, and we will build on them by tackling the new challenges and opportunities outlined in these annual priorities. We are following fish up the Klamath River so we can best focus continued restoration efforts. We are working with partners to apply new bluefin catch limits. And we are working with tribes and partners to put crucial funds where they do the most good. The stakes are only getting higher, as climate change alters the landscape and the ocean in unpredictable ways and we ask our resources to support a growing population. Our achievements give me confidence that we can respond to those changes with strong science and ecological know-how.

Our tremendous administrative, budget and information technology staff have given us a strong foundation to work from as we manage larger, more ambitious and more complex projects than ever before, often on tight schedules with little margin for error. Our biologists are reviewing more new infrastructure projects than ever before, identifying efficiencies and mitigating for ecosystem impacts as we go. We have expanded our team who works with tribes as we do our part to deliver on the promises our nation made in treaties more than a century ago. We are striving to reach underserved communities, such as coastal communities who fundamentally depend on the sustainable use of the sea. We have also committed our experience and expertise to assess the potential impacts and implications of offshore wind development, a new use of the Pacific Ocean.

We have learned through the years that the one thing we can count on for our fisheries, resources, and issues is change. At the same time we build resilience into our ecosystems, we are doing the same for our own staff and operations through a culture of support, training, and collaboration. I look forward to working with you to advance these priorities over the next year and cannot wait to see what we accomplish together.

Sincerely,



# FY25 Priorities

## Cross-Cutting Themes

Five cross-cutting themes appear across our strategic goals and actions: Climate Change, Equity & Environmental Justice, Responsible Offshore Development, Species in the Spotlight, and Tribal Trust. These themes are indicated in the text at right.



## Climate Change - **CC**

Priorities addressing the impact of climate change on our fisheries and protected resources.

## Equity & Environmental Justice - **EEJ**

Priorities that advance equity and accessibility of services and benefits to underserved and under-resourced communities.

## Responsible Offshore Development - **ROD**

Priorities that advance the development of offshore wind energy and aquaculture while safeguarding fisheries and protected resources.

## Species in the Spotlight - **SS**

NOAA Fisheries' "Species in the Spotlight" program brings greater attention to nine endangered marine species most at risk of extinction in the near future.

## Tribal Trust - **TT**

Priorities supporting our commitment to uphold our tribal treaty and trust responsibilities.

## Goal 1 - Adaptively manage fisheries for sustainability and economic competitiveness.

### Increase Opportunities and Build Resilience in U.S. Seafood and Fishing Sectors

- Collaborate with the Bureau of Indian Affairs on the administration of \$240 million in Inflation Reduction Act funds for tribal hatchery maintenance and modernization. **TT**
- Develop a final programmatic environmental impact statement to identify aquaculture opportunity areas in Southern California. **ROD**
- Initiate sentinel Climate Ecosystem and Fisheries Initiative projects with the Southwest and Northwest Fisheries Science Centers. **CC**
- Convene the West Coast Fixed Gear Take Reduction Team to address whale entanglements. **SS**
- Implement harvest specifications and management measures for Pacific Coast groundfish, Pacific whiting, salmon, highly migratory species, halibut, sardine, and mackerel.
- Support fishing communities in transition from the large-mesh drift gillnet fishery and implementation of a new permit for the Directed Open Access groundfish fishery.
- Engage West Coast saltwater recreational anglers to implement the National Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Policy. **EEJ**

### Advance Rebuilding Efforts for Overfished Stocks

- Advance rebuilding of Columbia Basin salmon and steelhead by implementing our commitments from the Resilient Columbia Basin Agreement and the Presidential Memo on Healthy and Abundant Salmon. For example, provide technical and policy support for the removal of Enloe Dam. **TT, CC**
- Collaborate with Southwest Fisheries Science Center on coastal pelagic species science needs, including stock assessment timing and sardine sock structure. **CC**
- Engage the Pacific Fishery Management Council to support sensible rebuilding efforts in the groundfish and Pacific salmon fisheries.

### Conserve & Restore Habitat Supporting Fisheries

- Support the development and implementation of long-term solutions to restore salmon and steelhead habitat in the Columbia River Basin. **TT**
- Collaborate with agency partners and stakeholders to fully realize the California Eelgrass Mitigation Policy, including improved eelgrass survey reporting and supporting implementation of the Humboldt Bay Comprehensive Eelgrass Management Plan.
- Engage with the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM), state agencies, tribes, developers, and community members to provide fisheries-related technical assistance that informs offshore wind siting and development. **CC, ROD**

## Goal 2 - Safeguard protected species and propel their recovery.

### Advance Reintroduction Efforts for At-Risk Species

- Continue experimental outplanting efforts to advance white abalone recovery. **SS**
- Advance development of a new Central California Coast coho salmon conservation hatchery south of San Francisco, including site selection. **SS**
- Advance the hatchery and genetic management plan for Feather River spring-run Chinook salmon.
- Support and advance salmon and steelhead reintroduction efforts in Upper Klamath, Shasta, Merced, Tuolumne, Yuba, and Upper Columbia Basins.

### Complete and Advance Priority Endangered Species Act Consultations

- Complete or advance environmental reviews on the impacts of proposed activities on listed species, including multiple significant consultations across the West Coast Region:
  - Klamath Project
  - Russian River
  - Anderson Dam seismic retrofit project
  - Payette National Forest Stibnite gold project
  - Willamette Valley system

- State and federal water deliveries in California
- Updates to California's Water Quality Control Plan
- National Floodplain Insurance Program in California
- Ports of Seattle and Tacoma maintenance and repair proposals
- Seattle City Light Skagit Hydro Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Relicensing
- Mitchell Act hatchery funding
- Southeast Alaska salmon fisheries
- Environmental Protection Agency's cyanide criteria
- Complete or advance the 5-year Endangered Species Act (ESA) status reviews for Central Valley spring-run Chinook, Hood Canal summer chum, Puget Sound Chinook, and Puget Sound steelhead.
- Complete listing decisions for Oregon Coast/Southern Oregon and Northern California Coastal, Olympic Peninsula, and Washington Coast salmon and steelhead.

### Engage Partners to Enhance Conservation & Recovery

- Develop a summary report on Southern Resident Killer Whale health-related actions. **SS**
- Complete an external review of a combined Stream Crossing Guidelines draft document.
- Develop priority "Treaty Rights at Risk" initiatives with federal and tribal leaders in Western Washington. **TT**
- Coordinate with Columbia River co-managers on the renegotiation of the U.S. v Oregon management agreement. **TT**
- Develop a cooperative agreement with the Makah Tribe under the Whaling Convention Act. **TT**
- Coordinate with fishing industry and water community parties to advance opportunities to support fall-run salmon conservation, the commercial and recreational fisheries, and the cultural and environmental values provided by the stock.
- Support wildfire crisis strategy actions to ESA-listed species and their habitat, safeguard communities, and improve resilience in America's forests. **CC**

- Support the U.S. Department of Transportation in implementing the \$1B Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) fish passage program that prioritizes removing barriers for salmon and steelhead in support of species recovery. **CC**
- Provide technical assistance to FERC and other partners to promote fish passage and salmon recovery in key watersheds and projects, including Anderson Dam, Potter Valley, and the Daguerre Point Dam Nature Like Fishway.
- Promote the conservation of protected resources by engaging with BOEM, state agencies, tribes, developers, and community members to provide technical assistance that informs offshore wind siting and development. **ROD**

### Conserve & Restore Anadromous Fish and Protected Species Habitat

- Improve Pacific salmon habitat and fish passage through implementation of the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund (PCSRF) competitive grant process, and by providing technical assistance to other federal agencies to maximize BIL and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) investments.
- Finalize the Oregon Programmatic Agreement for conducting consultations under the National Historic Preservation Act to support the PCSRF program.
- Advance implementation of nearshore conservation efforts to protect Essential Fish Habitat for rockfish and salmonids, including contributions to the nearshore Submerged Aquatic Vegetation Evaluation workgroup.
- Represent NOAA on the U.S. negotiating team by providing technical, scientific, and policy support to modernize the Columbia River Treaty regime with Canada. **TT, CC**
- Support Klamath River restoration, environmental monitoring, and salmonid reintroduction activities, as well as provide technical assistance on the operation of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's Klamath Project.
- Update salmon and sturgeon recovery plans for California's Central Valley.

## Goal 3 - Diversify our workforce, promote equity and environmental justice, and improve our mission performance through organizational excellence.

### Develop, Support, and Adapt to an Emerging and Evolving Workforce

- Use best hiring practices to advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) in our recruitment and hiring processes.
- Continue our DEIA climate and culture assessment and make adjustments in response.
- Train staff on tribal culture, history, customs, and federal tribal trust responsibilities. **TT, EEJ**
- Implement actions from the West Coast Equity and Environmental Justice Regional Implementation Plan. **EEJ**
- Support worker wellness and a culture of belonging in a hybrid environment by creating opportunities to foster meaningful connections among staff, providing wellness programs and work-life balance flexibility. Prioritize workload to further address burnout; manage expectations with external partners.

### Enhance Strategic Communications and Outreach

- Promote the returns on investment of the historic BIL and IRA funding for fish passage, habitat restoration, and tribal priorities. **TT**

- Host forums with the recreational fishing community to discuss priorities and concerns.
- Engage tribes on important issues such as salmon predation, treaty rights, offshore wind, and proposals to list species under the ESA. **TT, CC, ROD**

### Promote Operational Efficiency and Effectiveness

- Evaluate generative artificial intelligence applications to improve efficiency and efficacy.
- Develop an automated letter of concurrence form to streamline informal ESA consultations.
- Develop regional guidelines for maximizing the use of our existing leased facilities and office space management.
- Continue to develop a regional records management program.

*PHOTOS: Cover from top left - Coho returns, Clear Creek Hatchery. Credit: Nez Perce Tribe; Juvenile white abalone for outplanting. Credit: Melissa Neuman, University of California, Davis; Juvenile green sturgeon. Credit: Thomas Dunklin; Bottom - Dworshak Fish Hatchery. Credit: Nick Rahaim. Page 1 - Recreational fishing, Newport. Credit: Daniel Studt. Page 2 - Southern Resident killer whale and salmon. Credit: J. Durban Sr3, permit #19091.*