



**NOAA**  
**FISHERIES**

# National Bycatch Update

Council Coordination Committee Meeting

February 24, 2016



# Topics

- Draft National Bycatch Reduction Strategy
- Standardized Bycatch Reporting Methodology (SBRM) Proposed Rule

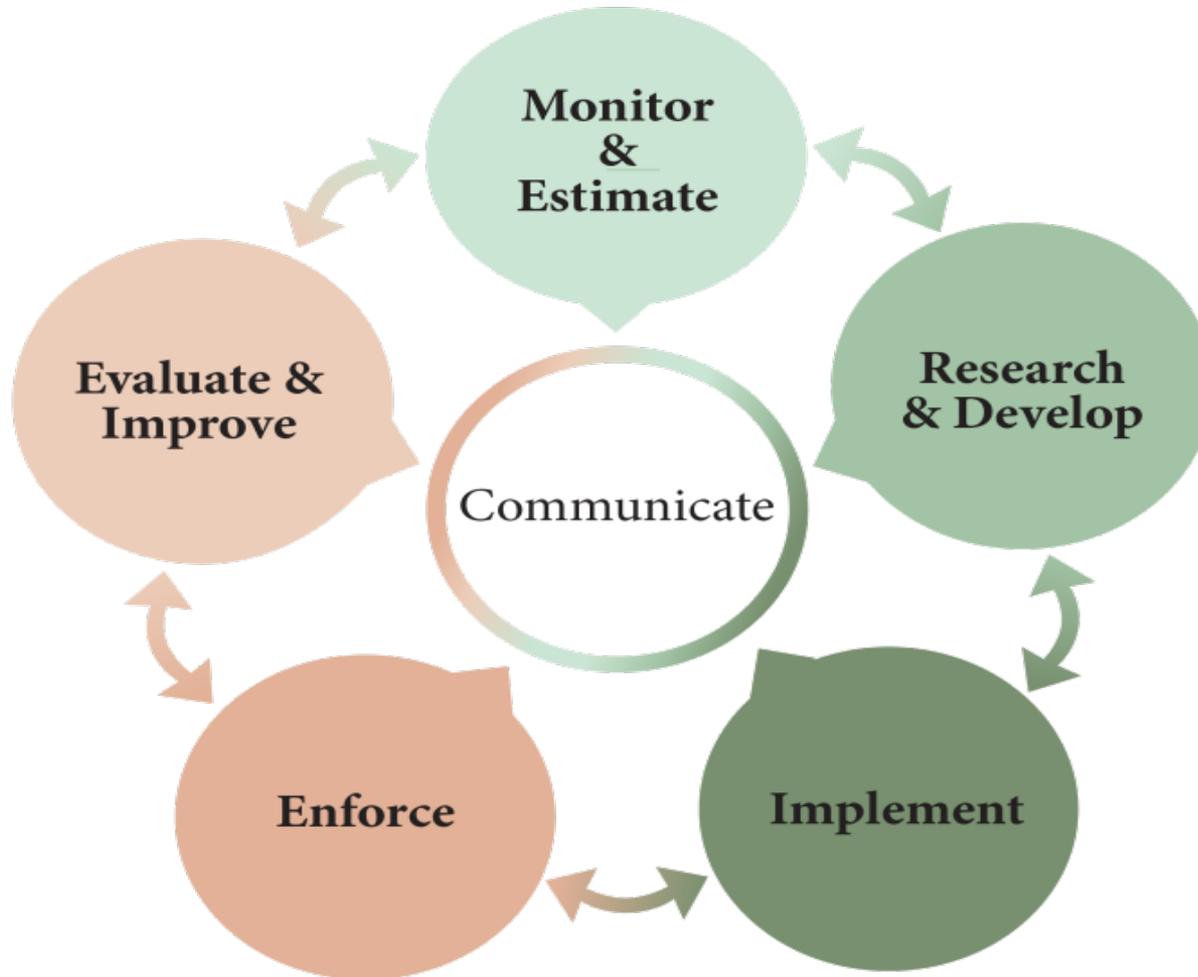
# National Bycatch Reduction Strategy Goal

To guide and coordinate NOAA Fisheries' efforts under the MSA, MMPA, ESA, and other relevant mandates to reduce bycatch and bycatch mortality and encourage utilization of economic discards to maintain sustainable fisheries while conserving and recovering protected species.

# What is Bycatch?

- For the Strategy, we have a broad definition that covers mandates under the MSA, MMPA, and ESA, but are also clear that there are different statutory definitions/applications under each statute.
- Bycatch occurs when fishing operations unintentionally catch and discard fish, cause unobserved injury and mortality, or interact with living marine resources.
- “Reducing bycatch” refers to efforts that minimize bycatch or that minimize the mortality, serious injury, and impact of bycatch that does occur. This also encompasses efforts to encourage utilization of fish that may otherwise be discarded.

# What are we doing about bycatch?



# Strategy Objectives

1. Strengthen monitoring and data collection programs through cost-effective use of new and existing tools (e.g. observers, logbooks, electronic technologies) to collect bycatch data that inform agency bycatch priorities.
2. Clarify bycatch research needs and support research programs to meet these needs.
3. Improve discard and take estimates for use in commercial and recreational fishery management.

# Strategy Objectives

4. Improve management measures designed to reduce bycatch and its impact, while strengthening understanding of the economic and social factors contributing to bycatch and the effectiveness of bycatch measures.
5. Strengthen the effectiveness of management measures through regular review and coordination with law enforcement.
6. Improve internal communication and increase partner and stakeholder awareness, understanding, and engagement through open two-way communication.

# Implementation

- National and Regional Action Plans will be developed in coordination with partners and stakeholders to identify priority actions.
- Action plans will guide efforts across the agency to ensure a coordinated, transparent effort to achieve goal of the Strategy.

# Next Steps

- The draft Strategy is available online.
- Comments will be accepted until June 3, 2016.
- You can submit comments to [nmfs.bycatch@noaa.gov](mailto:nmfs.bycatch@noaa.gov)
- We are also planning on 2 informational webinars, with dates and logistics posted online.

# Standardized Bycatch Reporting Methodology (SBRM) Proposed Rule - Overview

- Magnuson Steven's Act (MSA) Section 303(a)(11) requires FMPs to establish standardized reporting methodologies to assess the amount and type of bycatch in a fishery.
- Purpose is to articulate an interpretation of the basic requirements of the SBRM provision of the MSA to promote transparency and consistency.

# Key components

- Defining “standardized reporting methodology” as applicable only to the definition of “bycatch” in the MSA.
- Clarified procedures for establishing, documenting, and reviewing SBRMs under the MSA.
- Option for adaptable implementation to allow for operational flexibility.

# Definitions

- *Standardized reporting methodology* means an established procedure or procedures used to collect, record, and report bycatch data in a fishery or subset of a fishery.
- “Standardized” procedures may vary from one fishery to another but must provide a consistent approach for collecting, recording and reporting bycatch data.

# Purpose of SBRM

- To inform the assessment of the amount and type of bycatch occurring in the fishery for use in developing conservation and management measures that, to the extent practicable, minimize bycatch and bycatch mortality.

# Contents of FMPs

- Must clearly state the required standardized reporting methodology for each fishery.
- Must explain why the methodology is appropriate for the fishery, based on a set of required and discretionary factors.
- May incorporate by reference existing analyses or other documents.

# Required Factors

- Data resulting from the SBRM must be useful in meeting its purpose. This requires Councils to consider:
  - Conservation and management objectives related to bycatch
  - Data quality associated with the methodology
  - Bycatch characteristics of the fishery (e.g. amount and importance of bycatch in the fishery)
- Councils must also consider feasibility.

# Additional Factors

- Councils may also consider:
  - Overall magnitude and/or economic impact of the fishery
  - Scientific methods and techniques available to improve bycatch estimates

# Adaptable Implementation

- FMPs may include a process for adjusting the implementation of an SBRM.
- The FMP must specify the types of adjustments to be used (changes in intensity or frequency of data collection and reporting).
- It must also describe limits of using such a process and how the Council will determine if a reevaluation of the SBRM is warranted.

# Review

- All FMPs must be consistent with this rule within five years of finalizing the rule.
- After the initial review, Councils should periodically review SBRMs (at least every five years).

# Outcomes

- Improved clarity and transparency of the basic requirements to establish SBRMs under MSA.
- Greater clarity about the policy choices made by the Council to establish an SBRM that is appropriate for assessing bycatch and that is feasible with available funding.

# Other bycatch activities

- Release Discard Mortality Action Plan
- Bycatch Reduction Engineering Report to Congress
- Bycatch Reduction Engineering 2016 Federal Funding Opportunity (pre-proposals due March 1)
- National Bycatch Report – online update

# Questions?