



# NOAA FISHERIES

## Alaska Region



Alaska's 40,544 miles of coastline make up 40 percent of the total coastline in the United States and provide endless recreational fishing opportunities in both fresh and marine waters. Commonly caught sport fish species include Pacific halibut, rockfishes, Pacific cod, lingcod, and five species of Pacific salmon. In marine waters, Pacific halibut is the most common sport-caught species.

The 2019–2020 Engagement Plan highlights core engagement activities with the recreational fishing community for the next 2 years. Engagement and collaboration are vital to the success of recreational fisheries management. The NOAA Fisheries Alaska Regional Office and Alaska Fisheries Science Center are committed to fostering these ideals with our regional fishery management partners, including the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, the International Pacific Halibut Commission, the State of Alaska, and our partners in the recreational fishing and research communities.

Under the authority of an international treaty with Canada and the United States, NOAA Fisheries is responsible for the management of recreational fishing for halibut in Alaska. The remainder of the freshwater and saltwater species sought by anglers in Alaska fall under the jurisdiction of the State of Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Due to the overlap of recreational fishing for Pacific halibut and state-managed species off Alaska, NOAA Fisheries collaborates with the State in the management of the recreational Pacific halibut fisheries. The State's

role in the management of recreational fisheries (including Pacific halibut) encompasses licensing of anglers; registration of fishing guides, businesses, and charter vessels; administering the charter vessel logbook program; estimating recreational harvest and effort; and managing fisheries for species other than Pacific halibut.

The three core objectives for the Alaska Region Engagement Plan include are visibility, understanding, and collaboration.

**Establish a visible agency presence among the recreational fishing community, particularly halibut anglers**

NOAA Fisheries in Alaska seeks to connect recreational anglers with fishery scientists and managers in a variety of ways in the coming years. The large amount of coastline and numerous remote communities in Alaska present a unique set of challenges when trying to engage with anglers. NOAA’s Office of Law Enforcement regularly engages anglers in these remote communities and on the water, where officers provide outreach and education on regulations. These interactions, along with regular attendance at public events and trade shows, provide important recreational fishing outreach.

Strategy	Action
Actively engage the recreational community on the ground and on-line	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connect with anglers on the water through NOAA Fisheries Law Enforcement officers. During encounters with anglers on the water, OLE provides general information and compliance assistance. OLE will also be distributing fish release descending devices to recreational anglers.</li> <li>• Continue to expand the existing Alaska recreational fishing listserv, increase the content relevant to recreational anglers, and use multimedia tools to help distribute information.</li> <li>• Provide relevant NOAA information in an efficient and consistent manner and follow up with anglers about resulting agency actions or decisions.</li> </ul>

**Develop mutual understanding of priorities, concerns, and challenges**

NOAA Fisheries is committed to including the recreational fishing community in Council decisions regarding Pacific halibut resources in Alaska. Charter fishery representatives on the Council’s Charter Pacific Halibut Management Implementation Committee are directly involved in the management process, recommending their preferred management measures to the Council and the International Pacific Halibut Commission as well as participating in the Pacific Halibut Catch Sharing Plan process. Continued outreach and interactions with the recreational fishing community will help inform, educate, and explain management decisions that will ultimately result in a better engaged and informed constituency

Strategy	Action
Seek and create opportunities for consistent open dialog with the recreational community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional recreational fisheries coordinator will attend the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) meetings, as well as other recreationally relevant meetings to be available to constituents.</li> <li>• Continue direct engagement with for-hire vessel owners and operators to ensure industry awareness of programs and processes for electronic reporting.</li> <li>• Explore ways to integrate habitat and other divisions into our recreational fishing engagements.</li> <li>• Host an annual roundtable discussion with recreational fishing constituents</li> <li>• The Office of Law Enforcement will continue to attend public events and industry trade shows to provide outreach, education, and regulatory compliance assistance to the general public.</li> </ul>

### Enhance collaboration with the recreational fishing community

Protecting and restoring anadromous fish habitats is essential for ensuring healthy salmon populations in Alaska. Ecosystem-based fishery management represents the future for ensuring sustainable fisheries continue. This is especially important in Alaska, where the loss of sea ice and effects of climate change are impacting marine resources. Ensuring the recreational fisheries community is included in conservation efforts is a key step toward fulfilling NOAA's commitment to successful ecosystem-based fishery management.

Strategy	Action
Identify and pursue opportunities to jointly address challenges facing recreational fisheries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve coordination with state partners with regard to the saltwater effort, catch, and harvest survey program.</li> <li>• Continue to provide funding opportunities and increase outreach efforts to inform stakeholders of funding sources such as the NOAA Cooperative Research Program, NOAA Bycatch Reduction Engineering Program, Saltonstall-Kennedy Act, Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and Marine Recreational Information Program grant programs, among others.</li> <li>• NOAA Restoration Center, in partnership with USFWS, ADF&amp;G and Kodiak Soil and Water Conservation District, will restore fish passage at 20 culvert barriers (10 through removal and 10 through replacement) with three supportive landowners, the U.S. Coast Guard, the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities, and the Natives of Kodiak.</li> <li>• Continue the partnership between NOAA Restoration Center and the Tyonek Conservation District to fund restoration of fish passages, perform a road reroute, and ongoing improvements for fish habitat and access to subsistence and recreational fisheries in Tyonek.</li> <li>• Distribute deepwater release devices to anglers for rockfish conservation. Distribution will occur through a partnership with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and directly by NOAA Fisheries.</li> </ul>

As recreational fisheries programs evolve, the Alaska Regional Office and Alaska Fisheries Science Center will work to continue our work to enhance engagement and collaboration with the recreational fishing community. Please contact us if you have ideas on ways to enhance our engagement, or collaboration.

### Contact

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