



NOAA
FISHERIES

Greater Atlantic Region



Engagement and collaboration are vital to the success of recreational fisheries management. The Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office and the Northeast Fisheries Science Center are committed to fostering these ideals with our regional fishery management partners, including the New England and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Councils, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, and the states, as well as with our partners in the recreational fishing community and research community.

The purpose of this 2019–2020 Engagement Plan is to highlight core engagement activities with the recreational fishing community for the next 2 years. The three core objectives for this plan are visibility, understanding, and collaboration.

Establish a visible agency presence among the recreational fishing community

When fishermen know, trust, and collaborate with scientists and managers, the potential for success grows. Enhanced engagement among all these groups leads to mutual understanding and encourages the exchange of knowledge. Successful collaborative efforts in the Greater Atlantic Region have led to expanded use of electronic fishery-dependent data capture systems and a broader understanding of fishery science and management through outreach, roundtable meetings, attendance at saltwater recreational fishing shows, and educational programs such as the Recreational Modules in the Marine Resource Education Program (MREP). Additionally, NOAA has funded studies to better understand efficacy of descending devices to mitigate barotrauma and use of recreational platforms in fishery-independent surveys.

Strategy	Action
<p>Actively engage the recreational community on the ground and on-line</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in fishing and boating shows, especially the New England Sporting Fishing Show and the Saltwater Fishing Expo in New Jersey. • Connect with anglers on the waterfront through NOAA Fisheries port agents. • Develop “Fishing is Fun” type educational and outreach materials, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video series on New England recreational fishing; • Monofilament recycling; and • Activities for schools and fishing show outreach for kids. • Support national Fishing and Boating Week and the Annual Go Fishing Day. • Support “Get in Your Sanctuary” efforts by promoting fishing opportunities in regional sanctuaries. • Work with the Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary on a joint outreach event/campaign. • Develop social media campaigns around regionally relevant recreational fishing issues (e.g., Marine Recreational Fisheries Program transition for regional stocks, fishing season openings, etc.). • Continue conducting Highly Migratory Species Recreational Tournament coordination. • Provide information on Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office involvement in hydropower and dam removal projects increasing migratory fish passage at outreach and fishing/boating events. • Attend recreational fishing clubs and anglers’ organization meetings to present recent regulation changes, discuss collaborative research ideas, and have local fishing guides present ways to catch more fish. • Explore cooperative research ideas with anglers to develop ways they can enhance their contribution to fishery dependent data using personal cell phones with applications such as iAngler and FishRules.

Develop mutual understanding of priorities, concerns, and challenges

Communication and a common understanding of issues, priorities, challenges, and potential solutions is critical to fisheries management. Cultivating and maintaining an open dialog with the recreational community with all levels of the Regional Office and Science Center are fundamental to that strategy. The actions listed below include high-level engagement, as well as ongoing and consistent interaction between Regional Office staff and anglers.

Strategy	Action
<p>Seek and create opportunities for consistent open dialog with the recreational community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan and host at least two regional recreational roundtable discussions. • Plan and host annual Regional Administrator and Science Director Town Hall style calls. • Regional recreational fisheries coordinator will attend the NEFMC Recreational Advisory Panel meetings and recreationally relevant MAFMC and ASMFC meetings to be available to constituents. • Participate in the annual River Herring Festival in Plymouth, MA in April of each year. • Continue direct engagement with for-hire vessel owners and operators to ensure industry awareness of programs and processes for electronic Vessel Trip Reporting. • Developed a focused education program for the for-hire industry that builds the industry’s knowledge base on important issues. • Participate and support 2019 Marine Resource Education Program (MREP) for Recreational Anglers. • Seek long term funding sources for the MREP recreational fishing modules. • Support and expand fishery independent hook and line (CPUE/abundance) surveys conducted on party fishing boats. • Support more studies to better understand the efficiency of descending devices to mitigate barotrauma and explore and study devices that may be used on party/charter vessels that facilitates returning fish to depth of capture by large groups of anglers. • Explore ways to integrate habitat and National Marine Sanctuary Divisions into our recreational fishing engagements, including oyster restoration in the Chesapeake region and outreach related to habitat restoration and improved fishing opportunities.



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Enhance collaboration with the recreational fishing community

NOAA Fisheries recognizes the knowledge and expertise within the recreational fishing community can help us with science and management challenges. And to maintain sustainable fisheries and positive recreational fishing experiences for generations, we need to work with the recreational community to develop practical and meaningful solutions to the issues they face. The actions below include working with the recreational community to solve difficult problems and working to minimize the impact of the recreational community on the ecosystem.

Strategy	Action
Identify and pursue opportunities to jointly address challenges facing recreational fisheries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve coordination with state partners, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual pre-fishing show season coordination calls; • Site visits with Access Point Angler Intercept Survey interviewers; • Improved coordination on issues important to recreational fisheries; and • Support research among state, Federal, and local governments to address recreational fishing science needs. • Collaborate on outreach with research partners relating to the results of federally funded research focusing on recreational fisheries, including four projects funded by NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office studying black sea bass and summer flounder habitat use. • Support MRIP transition into stock assessments and into the management process. • Plan and implement New England Recreational Management Workshop Series (planned for Fall 2019). • Provide support for recreational catch reporting efforts through eVTR expansion and explore individual angler reporting through smart phone applications. • Collaborate with other regions/HMS and state partners to streamline electronic reporting for for-hire vessels. • Develop a plan for implementation of recreational fishing/sea turtle survey in the region. • Continue to collaborate with the NOAA Marine Debris program, fishing clubs, and other waterfront groups (e.g., Harbormasters) on monofilament recycling efforts. • Develop and publish specific materials where needed, including ethical angling demonstrations and literature and safe handling education for headboat trips. • Explore “Citizen Science” initiatives in the Greater Atlantic Region and Chesapeake Bay estuary. • Search for “Teaming and Networking” scenarios with anglers, state/federal marine scientists, and academic/private sector scholars to promote collaborative research teams and funding opportunities.

As recreational fisheries programs evolve, the Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office and the Northeast Fisheries Science Center will work to continue our work to enhance engagement and collaboration with the recreational fishing community. If you have ideas on ways to enhance our engagement, or research on for potential collaboration, please contact us.

Contact

NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Region Recreational Fishing Coordinators

Moira Kelly (GARFO)

978 281-9218

moira.kelly@noaa.gov

Earl Meredith (NEFSC)

978 281-9276

earl.meredith@noaa.gov

