

# National RecFish Engagement Highlights Document 2019-2020

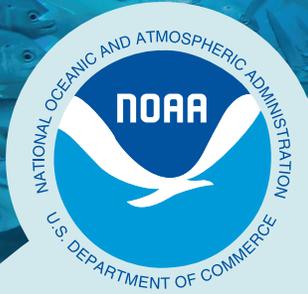


## Introduction

From Alaskan halibut to Atlantic blue marlin and Pacific ulua, the U.S. saltwater recreational fishing community is as diverse and widespread as the species it pursues. With the largest and most diverse recreational fisheries in the world, millions of us spend billions of dollars each year pursuing our passion and supporting coastal economies.

Effectively engaging the marine recreational fishing community is fundamental to successful fisheries management, yet is highly challenging with nearly 10 million saltwater fishermen out on the water. In 2017, NOAA Fisheries held nine public roundtable meetings with recreational fishermen across the country as part of an ongoing dialogue. The findings from these conversations provided the basis for discussions with fishermen at the 2018 National Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Summit. Major topics—from alternative management to conservation—were covered at the Summit, and participants made it clear that anglers want more engagement and two-way dialogue with NOAA Fisheries.

As a result, NOAA Fisheries is sharpening our focus on engaging recreational fishermen where they live and fish. Recognizing that effective engagement leads to greater transparency and better decision making, NOAA Fisheries is dedicated to enhancing or establishing a visible presence among the recreational fishing community; developing mutual understanding of priorities, concerns, and challenges; and enhancing collaboration.



# NOAA FISHERIES

## National Engagement Focus

- Alternative management approaches.
- Advancing recreational fisheries socioeconomic work.
- Citizen science and electronic data collection programs.
- Conservation work to improve fishery stability and sustainable fishing opportunities.



This document highlights a small fraction of our planned engagement activities around the country for 2019–2020. Region-specific engagement plans (Greater Atlantic, Southeast, West Coast, Pacific Islands, Alaska, and Atlantic Highly Migratory Species) provide more detailed information. Together these documents represent the latest actions by NOAA Fisheries to support and engage recreational fishermen.

## National Engagement Focus

At the national level, agency leadership and staff will continue to directly engage recreational fishing community leaders, facilitate recreationally focused work of headquarters offices, and support our regional offices and science centers as they fulfill their commitments. We also will maintain our focus on priorities identified at the Summit, including:

- Alternative management approaches.
- Advancing recreational fisheries socioeconomic work.
- Citizen science and electronic data collection programs.
- Conservation work to improve fishery stability and sustainable fishing opportunities.

NOAA Fisheries is addressing many of the topics covered at the Summit. We will continue to support collaborative actions to improve opportunity and stability in our recreational fisheries. For example, since the Summit we have:

- Signed a Memorandum of Agreement with four private sector organizations (the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, the American Sportfishing Association, the National Marine Manufacturers Association, and the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation) formalizing a public-private partnership to promote sustainable recreational fishing and boating within federal waters, including national marine sanctuaries.
- Certified four Gulf State saltwater recreational catch surveys.
- Participated in an Alternative Management workshop hosted by the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, the American Sportfishing Association, Yamaha, and the Coastal Conservation Association.
- Partnered with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and others to fund restoration of 36 intertidal oyster reefs in the Beaufort, North Carolina, area that will provide habitat for recreationally important species.

NOAA Fisheries is expanding engagement in these areas and many others. For instance, the Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office is hosting a series of workshops on alternative management approaches in 2019. The Marine Recreational Information Program is embarking on a 2019 constituent listening tour to improve how we communicate with fishermen. The Office of Science and Technology and the Southeast Fisheries Science Center will undertake a survey of anglers to better understand how they react to changing regulations and trip costs. The Office of Protected Resources will solicit public input during development of guidelines for non-lethal deterrence of marine mammals. The Office of National Marine Sanctuaries will continue collaborating with NOAA Fisheries to promote recreational activities in our marine sanctuary system.

Habitat conservation and restoration was identified as a priority by anglers and NOAA Fisheries at the Summit. As a result, the Recreational Fisheries Initiative has made collaboration with the Office of Habitat Conservation and the recreational fishing community a top priority over the next 2 years. The Office of Habitat Conservation has responded to this priority with a robust engagement plan. A few project highlights on which our offices will partner over the next two years include:

- Host habitat-focused roundtable discussions with national recreational fishing interests.
- Work to increase engagement of recreational fishing interests within the National Fish Habitat Partnership and hydropower program.
- Engage with recreational anglers to disseminate results of NOAA-funded research on habitat use by federally managed species, such as summer flounder and black sea bass.
- Host events in the Chesapeake Bay watershed with local recreational fishing partners and NOAA leadership to showcase habitat restoration efforts and highlight fishing opportunities.
- Create and publicize opportunities to engage in the Natural Resources Damage Assessment restoration and planning process to inform the selection of projects benefiting recreational fisheries.

### Regional Engagement Focus

NOAA Fisheries’ Regional Offices, Science Centers, and the Office of Sustainable Fisheries’ Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Division have developed a set of six focused engagement plans detailing activities over the next two years. The plans follow our objectives to establish a visible presence, develop mutual understanding, and enhance collaboration. The regional projects highlighted below represent a subset of the work identified for 2019–2020. Complete plans can be found on the [NOAA Fisheries website](#).

#### Establish a Visible Presence Among the Recreational Fishing Community

Actively engage the recreational community on the ground and online	
West Coast Region	Promote veterans’ and kids’ fisheries conservation education and hands-on experiences through fishing trips and participation at outreach events. Build partnerships with existing recreational fishing non-profits to accomplish these goals (e.g., Fish for Life, Los Angeles Rod and Reel Club, Rollo Kids Fishing, etc.).
Southeast Region	Support and share information about recreational fishing programs that encourage responsible angling such as the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Blue Star Fishing Guides.
Pacific Island Region	Produce, post, and maintain a web-based listing of recreational and non-commercial fishing infrastructure and shoreline access in each of the island areas to provide useful general site information; and allow for public input on the condition of the infrastructure.
Greater Atlantic Region	Participate in fishing and boating shows, especially the New England Sporting Fishing Show and the Saltwater Fishing Expo in New Jersey.
Alaska Region	Continue to expand the existing Alaska recreational fishing listserv; increase the content relevant to recreational anglers; and, use multimedia tools to help distribute information.

## Develop Mutual Understanding of Priorities, Concerns, and Challenges

Seek and create opportunities for consistent open dialog with the recreational community	
Highly Migratory Species Division	Engage recreational fisheries constituents and other stakeholders on international fisheries management issues via active participation with the ICCAT Advisory Committee and other means such as education/outreach through media outlets.
Southeast Region	Host public conference calls with the Regional Administrator and the Regional Science Director with recreational anglers to discuss current topics and issues with recreational fishing.
Greater Atlantic Region	Participate and support Marine Resource Education Program for Recreational Anglers.
Pacific Islands Region	Continue Scientist and Fishermen Exchange meetings throughout the year.
Alaska Region	Continue direct engagement with for-hire vessel owners and operators to ensure industry awareness of programs and processes for electronic reporting.

## Enhance Collaboration with the Recreational Fishing Community

Identify and pursue opportunities to jointly address challenges facing recreational fisheries	
West Coast Region	Partner with industry/charter vessels to conduct biological sampling and other surveys (e.g., NWFSC Southern California Shelf Rockfish Hook and Line Survey) and collect information about the abundance, biology, ecology, and genetics of species for use in stock assessments.
Alaska Region	NOAA Restoration Center, with partners U.S. FWS, Alaska Department of Fish & Game and Kodiak Soil and Water Conservation District, will restore fish passage at 20 culvert barriers, 10 through removal and 10 through replacement, in partnership with three supportive landowners, the U.S. Coast Guard, Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities and the Natives of Kodiak.
Greater Atlantic Region	Explore “Citizen Science” initiatives in the Greater Atlantic Region and Chesapeake Bay estuary.
Highly Migratory Species Division	Promote participation in and partner with recreational fishermen on tagging programs such as Atlantic Ocean Tropical Tuna, Northeast Fisheries Science Center Apex Predator Cooperative Shark Tagging Program, and Atlantic billfish cooperative tagging program.
Pacific Islands Region	Collaborate with NOAA Marine Debris Program to promote responsible disposal of fishing line and trash, identify best practices to prevent the loss of gear, and increase participation in the removal of debris from the shoreline and in the ocean including installation and maintenance of appropriate trash receptacles.

## Moving Forward

NOAA Fisheries is committed to increasing engagement with the recreational fishing community, particularly at the regional level, to improve stewardship and anglers' experiences on the water. Please contact the national or regional recreational coordinators for more information on these actions or to share your ideas for additional actions.

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