

**NOAA**  
**FISHERIES**

## Southeast Region



Recreational fishermen in NOAA Fisheries' Southeast Region enjoy some of the best and most diverse fishing in the world. Ranging from black sea bass, tuna, and cobia along the Southeast Atlantic coast to marlin and dolphin in the Caribbean, and up to the Gulf of Mexico for grouper and snapper, there is no shortage of angling opportunities in our part of the country. Recreational fishing is open and accessible every day of the year for many species. With more than 9.6 million anglers taking tens of millions fishing trips each year, anglers spend significant amounts of time and money pursuing their favorite quarry. These numbers demonstrate the importance of recreational fishing to coastal economies and resource health. It also means that NOAA Fisheries needs to be consistent in reaching anglers with easily understood regulations, readily available information, and timely communication for season openings and closings.

In the Southeast Region, NOAA Fisheries is working with anglers to increase and maintain fishing opportunities. Part of doing so is ensuring that anglers' voices are heard when it comes to informing both the science and management of fisheries, and providing anglers with opportunities to share their knowledge and experiences on the water to benefit management.

## Establish a visible agency presence among the recreational fishing community

NOAA Fisheries Southeast Region actively engages the recreational fishing community on the ground and online in a variety of ways. In 2019 and 2020, we expect to:

Strategy	Action
Actively engage the recreational community on the ground and on-line	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in local and national fishing and boating shows such as the Tampa Boat Show, the Miami Boat show and the International Convention of Allied Sportfishing Trades and a variety of fishing clubs throughout the region.</li> <li>• Connect with anglers where they are in marinas, docks and tackle stores through in person meetings and casual conversations about fishing. In addition to engagement opportunities associated with regularly scheduled travel events, NOAA Fisheries Southeast Region Recreational Fishing Coordinators have a goal of monthly engagements (12 per year) throughout the Southeast region.</li> <li>• Improve communications with fishermen, including through the Southeast Region’s Recreational Fishing webpage, to alert them of upcoming opportunities to provide input, engage in dialogue, and address questions through meetings, town halls, and gatherings with NOAA Fisheries staff</li> <li>• Develop and expand our social media presence on platforms where anglers share information as well as pictures of their experiences and their catches after a successful day on the water. Examples include Rec Fishing Friday Instagram posts and text alerts.</li> <li>• Provide timely notifications for changes to fishing regulations, season openings and closures and other items of interest to the recreational fishing community.</li> <li>• Support and share information about recreational fishing programs that encourage responsible angling such as the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Blue Star Fishing Guides.</li> <li>• Promote awareness of fishing opportunities in our National Marine Sanctuaries by supporting the “Get in your Sanctuary” project, using social media and organizing a fishing event in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary.</li> </ul>

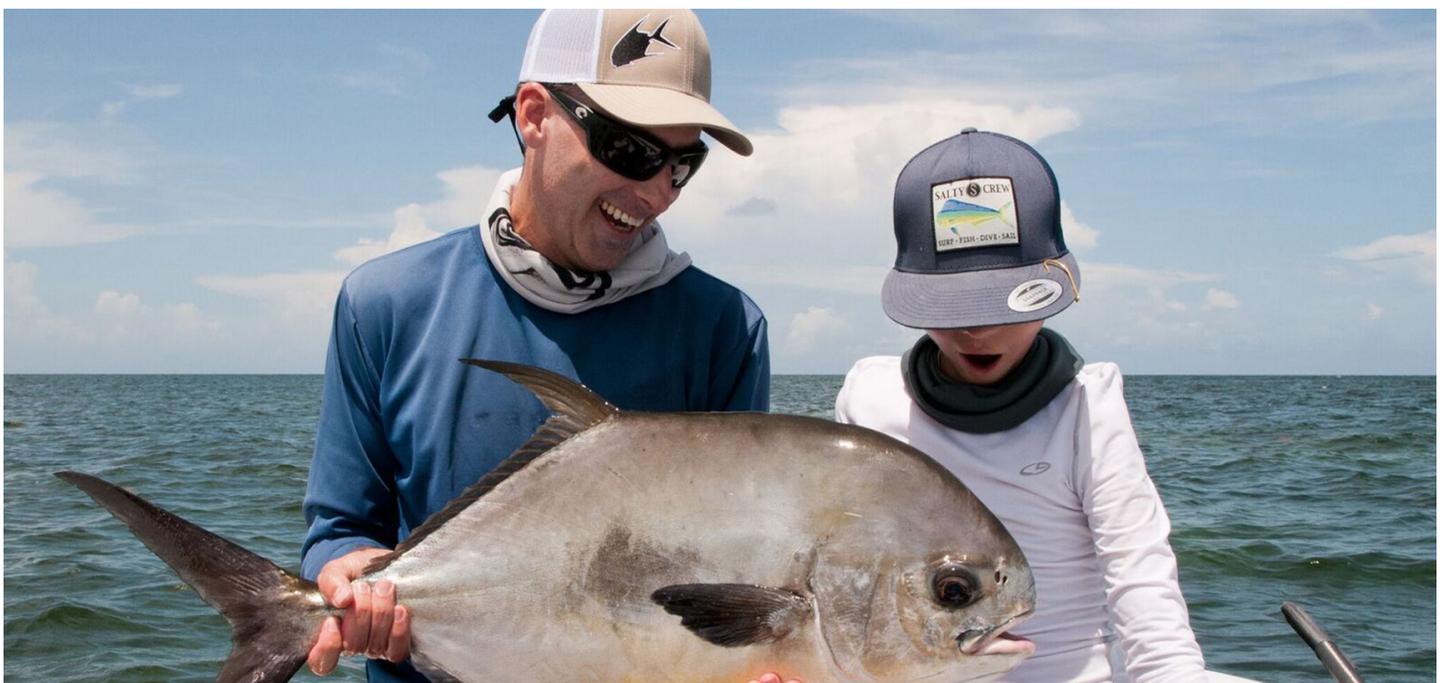


Photos are courtesy of Captain Ira Laks

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

Talking with fishermen is the best and most direct way to understand their position on important topics involving the science and management of recreational fisheries. NOAA Fisheries Southeast Region and Fishery Science Center realize the importance of communication and that information and ideas must flow in both directions. To help make fisheries management more transparent and fisheries science more understandable, we will:

Strategy	Action
<p>Seek and create opportunities for consistent open dialog with the recreational community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan and host regional recreational fishing roundtables in each of the three southeast regions (Gulf of Mexico, South Atlantic and Caribbean).</li> <li>• Provide opportunities to converse with the NOAA Fisheries Southeast Regional Administrator and the NOAA Fisheries Southeast Regional Science Director at Fishery Management Council meetings.</li> <li>• Participate in the Fishery Management Council’s Outreach and Education Advisory Panels to ensure that messaging from the management agencies is clear and consistent for fishermen.</li> <li>• Plan, support and participate in the 2019 and 2020 Marine Resources Educational Programs for the Southeast United States and Caribbean region when available.</li> <li>• Increase presence and visit with fishing tackle businesses and manufactures to help understand market trends and concerns that affect the fishing community.</li> <li>• NOAA Fisheries Southeast Regional Office and Southeast Fisheries Regional Science Center Recreational Fishing Coordinators will be core members of the Open Ocean Technical Information Group Fishing Descender Device Restoration Project. This project will educate anglers on techniques to improve the survival of released fish.</li> <li>• Host regular public conference calls with the Regional Administrator and the Regional Science Director with recreational anglers to discuss current topics and issues with recreational fishing.</li> <li>• Provide technical advice and support to the commonwealth of Puerto Rico to implement a recreational fishing license.</li> </ul>



## Enhance collaboration with the recreational fishing community

Fisheries management is a complex and challenging responsibility that relies on many people and massive amounts of information collected from many sources. Success depends on collaboration between state agencies, NOAA Fisheries, academic institutions, and fishermen. To increase involvement of the recreational fishing community in the science and management process, we will:

Strategy	Action
Identify and pursue opportunities to jointly address challenges facing recreational fisheries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase public awareness of the benefits of Agency projects to fisheries and fishing</li> <li>• Highlight projects, such as the Cape Fear River Partnership Fish Passage project providing removing obstacles and providing habitat for anadromous fishes in the Cape Fear River, to help recreational anglers connect and participate in similar efforts.</li> <li>• Provide support and technical advice to help rebuild the Marine Recreational Information Program in Puerto Rico due to impacts of hurricane Maria and establish a functional program in the USVI</li> <li>• Improve recreational data collection in the Caribbean by supporting the USVI as they develop a recreational data reporting system.</li> <li>• Support and improve citizen science opportunities to see how and where anglers can contribute their data to scientific and management efforts.</li> <li>• Support Marine Recreational Information Program by assisting with outreach products and recreational fishing events, as well as providing input from fishermen to improve efforts to inform anglers on catch and effort data collection.</li> <li>• Support outreach and training on electronic reporting for fishermen holding South Atlantic federal for-hire fishing permits in 2019.</li> <li>• Continue to work with the recreational angling community to achieve recovery actions of smalltooth sawfish.</li> </ul>

Recreational fishing is an important economic driver in coastal communities where it supports many businesses and livelihoods. This plan will help NOAA Fisheries improve transparency through effective communication and better engagement with the recreational fishing community.

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