

## NMFS Strategies and Implementation Plans (National & Regional)

This document summarizes the overall purpose and objectives of various national strategies, policies, and where applicable, the regional implementation plans. Highlights from sections are also included where information is specific to Council operations under consideration of this program review. Some of these strategies consist solely of policies and procedural directives. As these are already summarized in Reference Documents 1a-d, NMFS Policy Directives, information is incorporated by reference to reduce redundancy. In some cases, additional information is provided.

1. **NOAA Fisheries Ecosystem Based Fisheries Management Roadmap** (*see summary of NMFS 01-120-01 procedural directive, in document #1a*)  
<https://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/ecosystems/ebfm/creating-an-ebfm-management-policy>

### **Additional details on the Council-related principles:**

Guiding Principle 1 calls for the use of Fishery Ecosystem Plans (FEPs), or similar documents, to describe and integrate ecosystem goals, objectives, and priorities across multiple fisheries and the effects of various pressures on fisheries within an ecosystem. NOAA Fisheries cannot fully implement EBFM without significant engagement from its partners and interested stakeholders. To implement ecosystem-level planning, Guiding Principle 1 calls for NOAA Fisheries to:

- Facilitate continued participation of external federal, state (including territories), Council, Commission, tribal, industry, and other non-governmental partners in the EBFM process.
- Support and provide guidance or assistance to execute FEPs that are used as umbrella strategic planning documents to guide coordination and trade-off evaluation among Fishery Management Plans (FMPs), related documents, and other ecosystem components.

Guiding Principle 2 - NOAA Fisheries will work to better understand the broader suite of ecosystem processes, drivers, threats, status, and trends of the nation's marine ecosystems to inform all levels of management advice, including:

- Conduct science to understand ecosystems - The science programs within NOAA Fisheries are critically important for advancing the understanding of ecosystem processes—as are partnerships with universities, states, tribes, Councils, Interstate Fisheries Commissions, RFMOs, other NOAA Line Offices, and other federal agencies.
- Provide Ecosystem Status Reports for each Large Marine Ecosystem - Ecosystem Status Reports (ESRs) for specific LMEs will be produced periodically and are intended to provide a brief summary of the status of ecosystem dynamics, including pressures and responses. These are already being used by Councils in the development of SAFE reports and are expected to inform other management needs, including stock assessment reviews.

2. **National & Regional Saltwater Recreational Fishery Policy**
  - a. National Policy (*see summary of NMFS 01-118 policy, in document #1a*)  
<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/recreational-fishing/national-saltwater-recreational-fisheries-policy>
  - b. National Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Implementation Plan (2015-2018)

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/recreational-fishing/national-saltwater-recreational-fisheries-implementation-plan>

NOAA Fisheries will implement the National Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Policy through focused actions using its six guiding principles (described in Section 2.c.) as an organizational framework. The policy goals are supported by the guiding principles, and the specific actions identified in this plan support and link to one or more of the principles. In short, this document focuses on tangible actions to advance the six guiding principles.

**Additional details on the Council-related principles:**

**Guiding Principle #2**

*Access to quality fishing opportunities is a prerequisite to recreational fishing.* Working with management partners, fishing access is collectively determined through the Regional Fishery Management Council process. Promoting and supporting access can take many forms, from establishing healthy and abundant stocks of recreationally important fish, to improving the quota allocation process, to accounting for conservation gains when developing regulatory measures. In addition to supporting access to fishing opportunities through participation in the Council process, the Agency will take additional actions to support fishing access. Actions supporting this guiding principle include:

*Balance conservation, public access, and economic and social benefits.*

- Engage Regional Fishery Management Councils to review harvest allocations on a regular basis to ensure fishery management is achieving goals set forth in the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA), including issuing guidance developed in partnership with the Council Coordination Committee.
- Present information on conservation gains (e.g., improved post-release survival) to Councils, fostering consideration of expanded recreational fishing opportunities, when appropriate.
- Engage the recreational fishing community in habitat restoration projects (e.g., reef restoration) in NOAA Habitat Focus Areas and other areas to preserve and enhance fishing opportunities and improve ecosystem health.
- Evaluate whether revisions are needed to current regulations under National Standard 10 of the MSA to promote safe recreational access to fisheries.

**Guiding Principle #3**

*The complexity of natural resource stewardship requires effective coordination both with the public and also between involved management entities.* Strengthening partnerships with federal and state natural resource entities can provide insight and opportunities for effective and alternative approaches to many issues. Sharing scientific, communications, management and enforcement expertise along with aligning management priorities and goals can better leverage resources, eliminate waste, and improve recreational fishing overall. Actions supporting this guiding principle include:

*Improve delivery of services to fishermen through strengthened state–federal collaboration.*

- Evaluate annually Regional Fishery Management Council balance and communicate findings to state governors to advance equitable stakeholder representation.
- Develop materials addressing important fisheries science and management issues for recreational fisheries to support improved understanding by Regional Fishery Management Council members.

#### Guiding Principle #4

*Pursue management approaches that may better support recreational fisheries.*

- Investigate alternative management approaches to recreational fisheries management and satisfaction, specifically including methods based on fishing mortality rates.
- Issue revised guidelines for National Standard 1, addressing management flexibility and fishery stability and including guidelines for implementation of annual catch limits, ecosystem component stocks, and other issues.

#### Guiding Principle #6

Pull together NOAA Fisheries staff and our state and Council partners to create recreational fishing data communications teams in each region to improve stakeholder understanding and access to catch and effort information.

#### c. Greater Atlantic Regional Implementation Plan - <https://repository.library.noaa.gov/view/noaa/17052>

This implementation plan is specific to the role of NOAA Fisheries in the cooperative research and cooperative management of marine recreational fisheries in the Greater Atlantic Region. The goal of this implementation plan is to guide our actions related to recreational fisheries. It lays out our commitment to continue to take an active role in the collaborative development of management measures, to provide scientific expertise and data, and to implement regulations within our jurisdiction. Our partners from the Councils, Commission, and state management agencies each have responsibilities to manage recreational fisheries within their jurisdictions and this plan identifies pathways to improve collaboration and support for our management partners.

The Regional Implementation Plan is built around the six Guiding Principles in the National Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Policy. This plan describes how we intend to apply those principles to activities within our region.

1. Support ecosystem conservation and management: Particularly in this time of changing ecosystems, the Regional Office and the Science Center are involved in the advancement of ecosystem science and management. Ensuring our recreational fisheries partners are aware of and involved in these efforts is an important aspect of this plan.
2. Promote public access to quality recreational fishing opportunities: Broad sustained public access to recreational fishing opportunities comes from sound, science-based fisheries management.

- *Relevant example of an ongoing objective/project:* Ensure fishing opportunities are consistent with stock conditions. → Support the development of management measures that are consistent with scientifically sound limits that are designed to maximize recreational opportunity within catch limits.

3. Coordinate with State and Federal management entities: Successful recreational fisheries management is only possible when done collaboratively with our state partners, through the Council and Commission process, and with the recreational fishing community.

- *Relevant example on ongoing objective/project:* Support Council and Commission development of actions intended to increase success of recreational fisheries management in both state and federal waters. → Provide technical and policy assistance for Council and Commission actions, notably the Comprehensive Summer Flounder Amendment, a Black Sea Bass Amendment to address ongoing management challenges, and a limited entry Amendment for the New England groundfish for-hire fleet.

4. Advance innovative solutions to evolving science, management, and environmental challenges: Novel solutions start with an open mindset to new developments and approaches.

- *Relevant example:* Seek more balanced consideration of commercial and recreational sectors in fishery policy discussions. → Ensure recreational impacts are discussed with decision makers.

5. Provide scientifically sound and trusted social, cultural, economic, and ecological information: Our fisheries management programs are built on a requirement to use the best scientific information available. Science Center, Regional Office, and NMFS headquarters staffs all have key roles in ensuring this requirement is fulfilled.

6. Communicate and Engage with the recreational fishing public: Communication with and outreach to the recreational fishing public, including the for-hire industry, is key to the success of the implementation plan.

i. Appendix B - 2016-2017 GARFO Action Agenda

- Section 2 – Increase the flexibility of the bioeconomic model used to manage the Gulf of Maine recreational cod and haddock fisheries. → Explore the feasibility of adjusting the bioeconomic model to quantify monthly effects of different regulatory scenarios on angler effort, catch, expenditures, and welfare in the Northeast.
- Section 3 – Support Council and Commission development of actions intended to increase success of recreational fisheries management. Examples: Amendments on summer flounder, black sea bass, limited entry for the NE groundfish for-hire fleet.

3. **Recreational Fishing/Marine Recreational Information Program:**

- a. Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) Policy on Electronic Reporting (ER) Technologies and Fishery-Dependent Data Collection, Procedural Directive

#30-133-01, (also see summary of NMFS 03-133-01 policy, in document #1d) <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/laws-and-policies/science-and-technology-policy-directives>

In addition to the summary of this policy in document #1d, this directive lays out MRIP's priorities for the ER work it will support. In priority order, MRIP will:

- Support the work needed to develop and implement ER technologies for logbook reporting in the for-hire industry (or other census-based approaches), including the development of new reporting technologies and methods to validate reported information. More details on the planned approach to this work can be found in the For-Hire Electronic Reporting Road Map.
- Explore ER technologies that can be used by fisheries samplers in the field. These technologies have the potential to save time and money and to reduce errors in data collection.
- Collaborate with partners to examine the utility of supplemental angler reporting applications. This includes working with partners to develop and set standards for third-parties to use in development of their own applications. All MRIP-supported work on supplemental angler reporting applications must:
  - Meet the needs of MRIP partners, as expressed in the MRIP regional implementation plans.
  - Identify and address any limitations of data that are collected through nonprobability sampling designs.

b. For-Hire Electronic Reporting Road Map - (also see summary of NMFS 30-133-01-01 in document #1d) <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/laws-and-policies/science-and-technology-policy-directives>

- i. Task 1 – Complete and certify one or more for-hire electronic trip reporting designs, with validation and compliance assurance provisions.
- ii. Task 2 – Develop a clear and direct process for making MRIP-certified designs available to regional partners for implementation when identified as preferred methods.
- iii. Task 3 - Support development of electronic reporting systems that can be used to implement the MRIP-certified survey designs.
- iv. Ultimate Goal - Complete the process of developing and certifying census-based electronic trip reporting designs in for-hire fisheries to enable regional partners to implement these methods if they wish to do so, following necessary transition planning, benchmarking, and calibration.

c. MRIP Implementation Plan update (2016-2017) - [http://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/Assets/New-MRIP/FINAL\\_2016-17\\_IP\\_Update-11.21.16.pdf](http://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/Assets/New-MRIP/FINAL_2016-17_IP_Update-11.21.16.pdf)

- i. Development of an MRIP Strategic Plan
- ii. Receipt of the review of MRIP by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, and NOAA Fisheries' response to the review recommendations;

- iii. Completion of Regional Implementation Plans by MRIP's regional partners that identify data collection needs, preferred survey methods, and priorities for improvement for each region; and
- iv. Continuation of the transition to use of the Fishing Effort Survey to estimate fishing effort in the shore and private boat modes for the Atlantic and Gulf coasts.

#### **4. National & Regional Climate Science Strategy**

- a. NOAA Fisheries Climate Science Strategy – [https://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/Assets/ecosystems/climate/documents/NCSS\\_Final.pdf](https://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/Assets/ecosystems/climate/documents/NCSS_Final.pdf)

The goal of the NOAA Fisheries Climate Science Strategy ('Strategy') is to increase the production, delivery, and use of the climate-related information required to fulfill NOAA Fisheries mandates. Although the information needed to understand, prepare for, and respond to climate change impacts on living marine resources (LMRs) is diverse, this Strategy identifies seven common objectives to meet the science information requirements needed to fulfill NOAA Fisheries stewardship mandates in a changing climate. These objectives are:

- 1. Identify appropriate, climate-informed reference points for managing LMRs.
- 2. Identify robust strategies for managing LMRs under changing climate conditions.
- 3. Design adaptive decision processes that can incorporate and respond to changing climate conditions.
- 4. Identify future states of marine, coastal, and freshwater ecosystems, LMRs, and LMR-dependent human communities in a changing climate.
- 5. Identify the mechanisms of climate impacts on ecosystems, LMRs, and LMR-dependent human communities.
- 6. Track trends in ecosystems, LMRs, and LMR-dependent human communities and provide early warning of change.
- 7. Build and maintain the science infrastructure needed to fulfill NOAA Fisheries mandates under changing climate conditions.

*Review the Strategy for more information on how NOAA plans to achieve these objectives.*

##### Priority Near-Term Actions:

Three main products or activities consistently emerge across all seven priority objectives in the Strategy. We highlight these here as the prioritized actions that will best help NOAA Fisheries address its mandates in a more climate-ready manner. We recommend these be adopted and executed as soon as is appropriate, given the other, more time-constrained or infrastructural needs subsequently identified below.

- 1. Conduct climate vulnerability analyses in each region for all LMRs.
- 2. Establish and strengthen ecosystem and socio-economic indicators and status reports in all regions.
- 3. Develop capacity to conduct Management Strategy Evaluations regarding climate change impacts on management targets, priorities, and goals

Priority Medium-Term Actions: These are intended to be ongoing with significant progress (e.g., first phase completed) within 2 to 5 years after the release of this report). *This is a subset of the actions relevant to the Council, ‘Science to Inform Policy’:*

10. Work with partners to re-evaluate risk policies under changing climate and ocean conditions.
11. Establish science-based approaches for shifting biological reference points to account for changing productivities, distributions, and diversities.
12. Conduct Management Strategy Evaluations on climate scenarios in extant ecosystem and population models in conjunction with the NOAA IEA program, NOAA Fisheries Stock Assessment Improvement Plan Update/Next Generation Stock Assessment, NOAA Fisheries Protected Resources Stock Assessment Improvement Plan, and development of ESA Five-Year Status Reviews.
13. Establish science-based thresholds for exiting and entering fisheries.
14. Establish and implement clear policies and practices for incorporating climate change into all NEPA and ESA (i.e., listing, recovery planning, interagency consultations, and permitting) activities.
15. Establish and implement standards and guidelines for incorporating climate change information into Fisheries Management Plans and Fisheries Ecosystem Plans.

b. Northeast Regional Action Plan (NERAP) – NOAA Fisheries Climate Science Strategy  
[https://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/Assets/ecosystems/climate/documents/raps/tech\\_memos/NE\\_Regional\\_Action\\_Plan.pdf](https://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/Assets/ecosystems/climate/documents/raps/tech_memos/NE_Regional_Action_Plan.pdf)

NERAP Actions:

- 1 - Give greater emphasis to climate-related Terms of Reference and analyses in stock assessments.
- 2 - Continue development of stock assessment models that include environmental terms (e.g., temperature, ocean acidification).
- 3 - Develop climate- related products and decision support tools to support protected species assessments and other management actions.
- 4 - Increase social and economic scientist involvement in climate change research through multidisciplinary work on climate that includes both social and natural sciences.
- 5 - Develop Management Strategy Evaluation capability to examine the effect of different management strategies under climate change.
- 6 - Improve spatial management of living marine resources through an increased understanding of spatial and temporal distributions, migration, and phenology.
- 7 - Continue to build industry-based fisheries and ocean observing capabilities and use information to develop more adaptive management.
- 8 - Work with NOAA Oceanic and Atmospheric Research and academic scientists to develop short-term (day to year) and medium-term (year to decade) living marine resource forecasting products.
- 9 - Work with NOAA Oceanic and Atmospheric Research and academic scientists to develop and improve regional hindcasts and climatologies.

10 - Conduct research on the mechanistic effects of multiple climate factors on living marine resources with a goal of improving assessments and scientific advice provided to managers.

11 - Develop and implement vulnerability assessments in the Northeast U.S. Shelf Region.

12 - Continue production of the NEFSC Ecosystem Status Report, and other related products, and improve the distribution of information from the reports through the formation of an NEFSC Environmental Data Center.

13 – Maintain ecosystem survey effort in the Northeast U.S. Shelf ecosystem including the Bottom Trawl Survey, Ecosystem Monitoring Program, Sea Scallop Survey, Northern Shrimp Survey, Clam Survey, and Protected Species Surveys and expand where possible (e.g., data poor species).

14 – Initiate a Northeast Climate Science Strategy Steering Group (NECSSSG) to coordinate, communicate, facilitate, and report on issues related to climate change and living marine resource management.

15 – Coordinate with other NOAA Programs to link living marine resource science and management to climate science and research activities.

The following list highlights the primary coordinated efforts between NOAA and the NEFMC to implement this plan (some of these tasks are contingent on new funding resources):

- The NEFSC Climate, Ecosystem, Habitat, and Assessment Steering Group has developed a process for including climate, ecosystem, and habitat factors into benchmark and update assessments, and there are discussions underway with the Fishery Management Councils to include climate, ecosystem, and habitat Terms of Reference in update and benchmark assessments.
- The Ecosystem and Dynamics Branch within NEFSC is coordinating with other NEFSC programs to develop Annual Ecosystem Reports for the Fishery Management Councils.
- NERAP Action #1 - The terms of reference (TORs) for conducting an assessment establish the information required by managers and outline the types of models and analyses that should be included in the assessment. Prior to each assessment, the TORs are agreed to by the NEFSC, GARFO, and NEFMC (or other management body).
- 1 - In FY17, the NEFSC plans to hold a workshop to review previous efforts to incorporate climate, ecosystem, and habitat factors in assessments. The workshop would include participants from NEFSC, GARFO, NEFMC, MAFMC, and ASMFC, as well as scientists and managers from other institutions. Based on this workshop, a plan for climate, ecosystem, and habitat-related TORs should be presented at the NRCC for discussion and eventual consensus approval. These guidelines should then be used in subsequent assessments. A similar workshop would be held every three years, and in FY20, the guidelines will be reviewed. *This workshop was not held in FY17.*
- NERAP Action #4 - In addition, in cases when species are likely to move to areas under the jurisdiction of a different council or councils, encourage the relevant councils to determine the most effective structure for the management of those species using the best scientific and climatic

data, as well as existing community social and climate vulnerability indicators.

- NERAP Action #5 - A workshop would be held in FY18 to examine adaptive management responses to climate change across the NOAA Fisheries mission. This workshop would include NOAA Fisheries, NEFMC, MAFMC and ASMFC committee members and staff, and academic scientists and would seek to review the current state of use of MSE in the region, define various adaptive management responses, and discuss how these responses can be evaluated with MSE. This workshop would then guide NEFSC work related to this action from FY18-FY21.
- NERAP Action #6 - A workshop would be held in FY18 with NEFSC, GARFO, Council / Commission staff, and other experts to review regulatory and management barriers around stock structure and to develop potential processes and strategies for overcoming these barriers.
- NERAP Action #12 – Continue to produce and expand the NEFSC Ecosystem Status Report, Ecosystem Advisories, and State of the Ecosystem reports, which are designed specifically for the Councils.
- NERAP Action #14 – NEFSC and GARFO would coordinate with Councils (including their Scientific and Statistical Committees), ASMFC, Take Reduction Teams, Atlantic Scientific Review Group, NMFS HMS and other groups as applicable on the development and evaluation of climate information for living marine resource management. Initial steps involve an evaluation of staffing on Plan Development Teams, Fishery Management Action Teams, and other committee memberships. Additional steps include continue support for EBFM activities for MAFMC, NEFMC, ASMFC, and continue engagement with these partners on climate change issues including presentations and participation in meetings and workshops. Subsequent steps include linking climate-related MSE efforts with management agencies in the region.
- 14- Develop framework for dealing with emergent, climate-related NOAA Trust Resource issues including social and economic aspects. Encourage councils to adjust management programs in cases where species are changing their distribution.
- 14- Support NEFMC, MAFMC, and ASMFC inclusion of best available climate information in fishery management decisions.
- 14-Lead an annual Northeast Climate Change and Living Marine Resource Science and Management Workshop. The workshop will be coordinated with science and management partners in the Northeast. The workshop will cover a range of issues including science, assessment, management, and governance. This could be coupled with ongoing activities such as regional American Fisheries Society meetings, annual Regional IOOS Association meetings, or Fishery Management Council and Fisheries Commission related meetings.
- *In addition, the NEFMC EBFM Committee is described separately in Reference Document #6a. Staff from GARFO and NEFSC are members of this Committee.*

## **5. National & Regional Electronic Technology**

- a. Policy on Electronic Technologies and Fishery-Dependent Data Collection (*see summary of NMFS 30-133 Policy Directive, in Reference Document #1d*) - <https://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/Assets/advanced-tech/electronic-monitoring/documents/30-133.pdf>

It is the policy of NOAA Fisheries to encourage the consideration of electronic technologies to complement and/or improve existing fishery-dependent data collection programs to achieve the most cost-effective and sustainable approach that ensures alignment of management goals, data needs, funding sources and regulations. A list of actions to achieve this policy are listed in NMFS Policy Directive #30-133.

Other relevant section, Measuring Effectiveness:

(1) The consultations by the Regional Administrators and the Office of Sustainable Fisheries will be initiated in FY2013 with the goal of completing by the end of calendar year 2014 a schedule of where and how to adopt appropriate electronic technologies, if any, for all fishery management plans (FMPs). The following metrics will be used to evaluate progress towards the implementation of this policy:

- The number of FMPs with defined fishery-dependent data collection monitoring goals.
- The number of FMPs reviewed to identify fisheries where the adoption of additional electronic technologies would be appropriate for achieving data needs.
- For fisheries where additional electronic technologies are identified as appropriate, the number of FMPs with electronic technologies incorporated into fishery-dependent data collection programs. Status reviews of the metrics will take place twice a year by the Regulatory and Science Boards.

- b. Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office and Northeast Fisheries Science Center Electronic Technologies Implementation Plan - <https://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/mediacenter/2015/february/garfone/fscregionaletplan013015.pdf>

Purpose: The purpose of this plan is to modernize fishery dependent data collections to ensure collections are timely, correct/validated, optimally automated, vertically and laterally integrated/unified, adaptable to emerging needs, and capable of providing data at a scale that will support anticipated management and scientific needs of the agency and our partners.

Objectives: The monitoring programs in the northeast region are designed to fulfill many objectives, but the primary purposes are to provide information about the state and performance of the fishery (fish and fishermen) and full catch accounting for regional fisheries to support the region's scientific and management missions. Other objectives of the monitoring programs include:

- Provide stock-specific data needed for stock assessments on kept and discarded catch, including size and age composition by gear type.
- Characterize all aspects of the fishing industry.
- Quantify fishing effort
- Maintain fishing history at individual and aggregate levels
- Support evidentiary needs for enforcement.

- Provide the data needed by fishing industry members to facilitate their business planning.
- Facilitate research by independent organizations regarding fishery science and operation.
- Provide flexibility to ensure that data can be adapted to support future needs such as ecosystem-based management.

Other relevant sections: 4.1.4 – Council coordination and regulatory conformance (FDDC System Modernization), 4.2.3 – Council coordination and regulatory conformance (Electronic Monitoring), Appendix 2 – Summary of Fishery Management Council Engagement Process. *This plan is dated as it refers to a May 2017 implementation period. See Section 5(b)i below for May 2017 update.*

- i. GARFO & NEFSC Electronic Technologies Implementation Plan Progress Report (May 1, 2017)  
There are several areas of coordination between NMFS and NEFMC on Electronic Technologies, including the following:
  - NEFMC Industry-Funded Monitoring Omnibus Amendment (final action in April 2017), implementation will begin in the 2018 or 2019 herring fishing year.
  - NMFS staff will be engaging with both the NEFMC and MAFMC as to how to proceed with further implementation of eVTR, including the consideration of mandatory eVTR reporting, where appropriate, and a unique trip identifier.

## **6. Allocation of Fishery Resources**

- a. Fisheries Allocation Review Policy (see #01-119 policy summary in document #1a)
- b. Criteria for Initiating Fisheries Allocation Reviews (see #01-119-01 procedural directive summary in document #1a)
- c. Recommended Practices and Factors to Consider When Reviewing and Making Allocation Decisions (see #01-119-02 procedural directive summary in document #1a)

Fisheries Priorities and Annual Guidance for 2017 -

<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/aboutus/docs/fisheriespriorities2017.pdf>

All NOAA Fisheries programs, projects, and investments are designed and conducted in a manner that supports these three strategic goals:

1. Ensure the sustainability of fisheries and fishing communities.
2. Recover and conserve protected species.
3. Improve organizational excellence.

For each of these strategic goals, this document identifies NOAA Fisheries priorities, which are specific areas within these goals requiring a corporate focus in the coming fiscal year. *An example of a priority directly relevant to Council operations is included in this summary (FMI on priorities, see table on pages 8-9):*

- a. Goal #1 – Ensure the sustainability of fisheries and fishing communities

- i. Priority: Ensure the MSA is implemented in an effective, fair, flexible, and streamlined manner with effective National Standard 1 guidelines and other policies.
- ii. Anticipated results:
  - Finalize National Standard 1 guidelines and support regional implementation and coordination with the councils to effectively apply the National Standard 1 guidelines to end and prevent overfishing and rebuild fisheries.
  - Implement the Fisheries Allocation Review Policy.
  - Implement Catch Share 5–7 year review guidance.

## 7. NOAA's Marine Aquaculture Policy

*While the NEFMC doesn't currently have an aquaculture FMP, GARFO has requested that both NEFMC and MAFMC begin work on an aquaculture FMP. Thus far, the NEFMC has not committed the resources to begin this work. Currently, the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council is the only council that has implemented an aquaculture FMP.*

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to enable the development of sustainable marine aquaculture within the context of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) multiple stewardship missions and broader social and economic goals. Meeting this objective will require NOAA to integrate environmental, social, and economic considerations in management decisions concerning aquaculture. This policy reaffirms that aquaculture is an important component of NOAA's efforts to maintain healthy and productive marine and coastal ecosystems, protect special marine areas, rebuild overfished wild stocks, restore populations of endangered species, restore and conserve marine and coastal habitat, balance competing uses of the marine environment, create employment and business opportunities in coastal communities, and enable the production of safe and sustainable seafood.

### Statement of Policy

For purposes of this policy, aquaculture is defined as the propagation and rearing of aquatic organisms for any commercial, recreational, or public purpose. This definition covers all production of finfish, shellfish, plants, algae, and other marine organisms for 1) food and other commercial products; 2) wild stock replenishment for commercial and recreational fisheries; 3) rebuilding populations of threatened or endangered species under species recovery and conservation plans; and 4) restoration and conservation of marine and Great Lakes habitat.

It is the policy of NOAA, within the context of its marine stewardship missions and its strategic goals with respect to healthy oceans and resilient coastal communities and economies, to:

1. Encourage and foster sustainable aquaculture development that provides domestic jobs, products, and services and that is in harmony with healthy, productive, and resilient marine ecosystems, compatible with other uses of the marine environment, and consistent with the National Policy for the Stewardship of the Ocean, our Coasts, and the Great Lakes (National Ocean Policy).
2. Ensure agency aquaculture decisions protect wild species and healthy, productive, and resilient coastal and ocean ecosystems, including the protecting of sensitive marine areas.

3. Advance scientific knowledge concerning sustainable aquaculture in cooperation with academic and federal partners.
4. Make timely and unbiased aquaculture management decisions based upon the best scientific information available.
5. Support aquaculture innovation and investments that benefit the Nation's coastal ecosystems, communities, seafood consumers, industry, and economy.
6. Advance public understanding of sustainable aquaculture practices; the associated environmental, social, and economic challenges and benefits; and the services NOAA has to offer in support of sustainable aquaculture.
7. Work with our federal partners, through the Joint Subcommittee on Aquaculture and other avenues, to provide the depth of resources and expertise needed to address the challenges facing expansion of aquaculture in the United States.
8. Work internationally to learn from aquaculture best practices around the world and encourage the adoption of science-based sustainable practices and systems.
9. Integrate federal, regional, state, local, and tribal priorities along with commercial priorities into marine aquaculture siting and management and ensure aquaculture development is considered within other existing and potential marine uses to reduce potential conflicts.

FMI: [http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/aquaculture/docs/policy/noaa\\_aquaculture\\_policy\\_2011.pdf](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/aquaculture/docs/policy/noaa_aquaculture_policy_2011.pdf)

## **8. NOAA Fisheries Marine Aquaculture Strategic Plan (2016-2020)**

Vision: A robust U.S. marine aquaculture sector that creates jobs, provides sustainable seafood, and supports healthy oceans.

Mission: To provide science, services, and policies to support the significant expansion and sustainability of U.S. marine aquaculture.

Goal 1 – Regulatory Efficiency: Develop coordinated, consistent, and efficient regulatory processes for the marine aquaculture sector. *In federal waters NOAA Fisheries is taking on new and direct permitting responsibilities under federal fisheries management law. As regional fishery management councils develop aquaculture Fishery Management Plans (FMPs), NOAA Fisheries will develop regulations, issue permits, and conduct the necessary consultations to ensure essential fish habitats and protected species are adequately protected.*

Goal 2 – Tools for Sustainable Management: Encourage environmentally responsible marine aquaculture using best available science.

Goal 3 – Technology Development and Transfer: Develop technologies and provide extension services for the marine aquaculture sector.

Goal 4 – Informed Public: Improve public understanding of marine aquaculture.

FMI on specific objectives and strategies for each goal, refer to the Strategic Plan:  
<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/feature-story/noaa-fisheries-marine-aquaculture-strategic-plan>