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# National Bycatch Reduction Strategy

Informational Webinar

March 1 & 2, 2016



**NOAA**  
**FISHERIES**

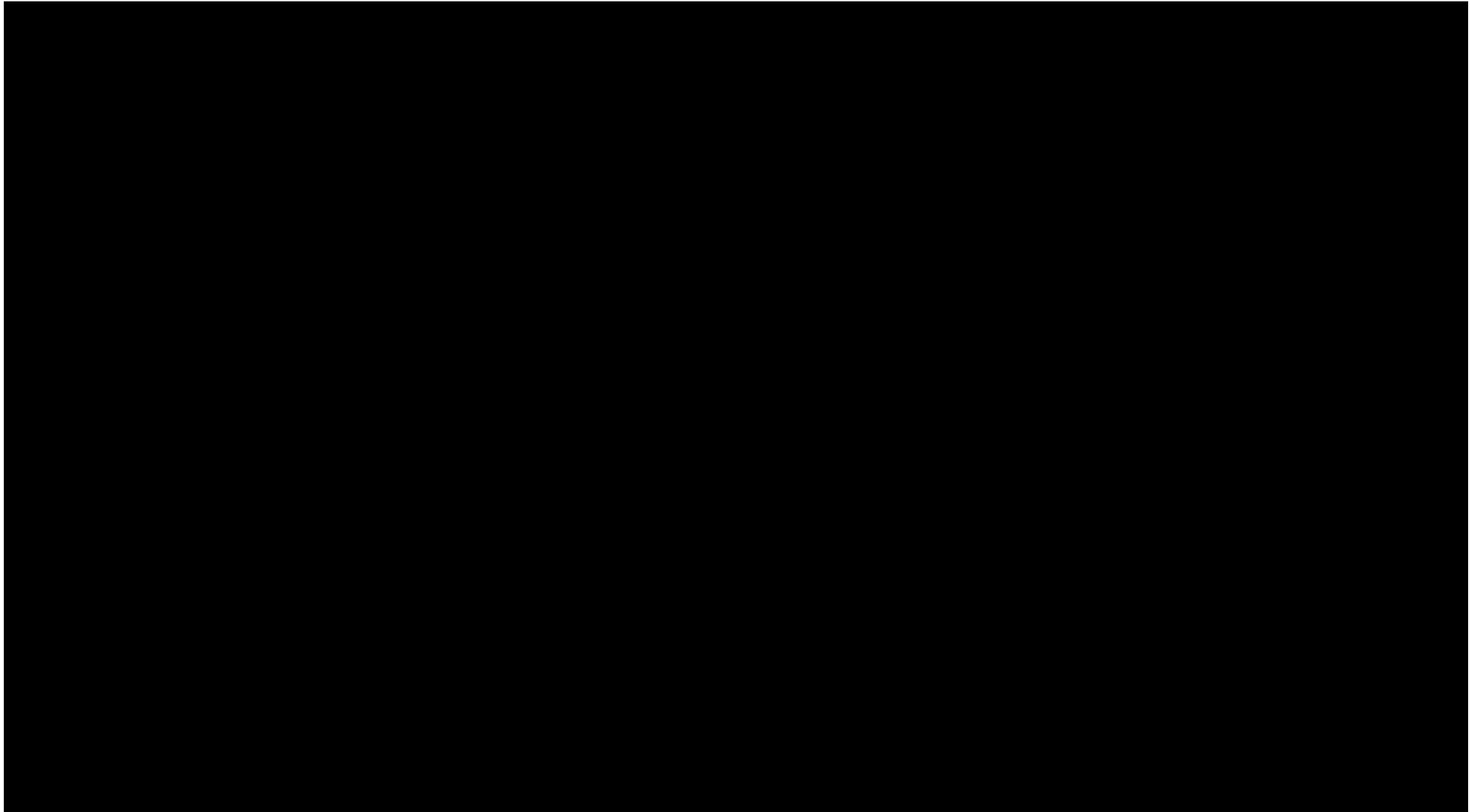


# Topics

- New NOAA Fisheries web content
- Overview and Discussion of Update to the National Bycatch Reduction Strategy



# Tackling bycatch in U.S. Fisheries



# Bycatch Breakthroughs

Bycatch Breakthroughs - A Brief History

NOAA Fisheries' 40 year commitment to addressing bycatch

NOAA Fisheries and our partners have over four decades of experience managing **bycatch** in U.S. fisheries. We've found success through a variety of innovative approaches. While bycatch remains a challenge in some fisheries, we continue to seek cooperative solutions to managing our ocean resources sustainably.

Here are a select few of the most important breakthroughs in bycatch reduction in U.S. fisheries over the last 40 years.

- 1972 - "Dolphin safe" movement helps usher in landmark protections
- 1982 - An industry first: fleet-wide bycatch limits
- 1989 - Introducing the TED (Turtle Excluder Device)
- 1994 - Creating a forum to develop bycatch solutions
- 1996 - Minimizing bycatch becomes a national standard
- 1999 - NOAA establishes National Observer Program

## 40 Years of Bycatch Reduction

**1970** NOAA FISHERIES is established

**1972** Congress passes the Marine Mammal Protection Act

**1973** Congress passes the Endangered Species Act

**1970s** New "Dolphin-Safe" standards for the tuna industry reduces dolphin bycatch by more than 99 percent.

**1980s** NOAA works with the commercial shrimp industry to develop "Turtle Excluder Devices" (TEDs).

**1982** Chinook salmon bycatch limits are put in place for foreign trawlers in the Bering Sea.

**1989** Federal regulations requiring the widespread use of TEDs go into effect.

**1994** Congress establishes the National Marine Mammal Take Reduction Program

**1996** Congress amends the Magnuson-Stevens Act to require bycatch be minimized to the extent practicable

**1997** NOAA Fisheries begins requiring groundfish hook-and-line vessels in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands and the Gulf of Alaska to use seabird avoidance measures.

**1999** NOAA establishes National Observer Program.

**2003** NOAA Fisheries and partners prove streamer lines to be nearly 100% effective in reducing seabird bycatch.

**2004** Based on NOAA research, the U.S. begins requiring the use of circle hooks and fish bait to reduce sea turtle bycatch.

**2006** The MSRA requires establishment of a Bycatch Reduction Engineering Program.

**2010** "Weak" hook reduces bluefin tuna bycatch in yellowfin tuna fishery.

**2010** U. of Mass. Dartmouth School for Marine Science and Technology helps scallop fishermen share real-time data to avoid yellowtail flounder bycatch "hotspots."

**2014** With funding from NOAA's Bycatch Reduction Engineering Program, scientists use LED lights to reduce bycatch of threatened Columbia River smelt by more than 90%.

# Perspectives on Bycatch



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## Bycatch Bites

*Bycatch—animals that fishermen don't want, cannot sell, or are not allowed to keep—comes in many different forms and affects people in different ways. We asked a few of these people for their perspectives on **bycatch**. Read them below.*



**Steve Witthuhn**  
Captain, Top Hook Fishing Charters  
New York

"Fishing is about bending the rods, education and giving my customers a good experience. If I don't have product in the water, I'm out of business. I care about bycatch because you can't just push a button and make more fish. So I make sure conservation is part of the experience. That means we don't take more fish than we need, and make sure the fish we release to swim away, don't float away. One thing we do is use release tools to make sure fish pulled up from deep water survive. I'm in this for the long-haul."



**Marydele Donnelly**  
Director of Int'l Policy, Sea Turtle Conservancy  
Florida

"Many fisheries produce bycatch when they accidentally capture non-target species like sea turtles. Bycatch is a terrible waste, and it's bad for the health of the oceans. I've worked to reduce sea turtle bycatch for more than 30 years because sea turtles are magnificent animals in their own right and integral to healthy marine ecosystems. Today many fixes to reduce sea turtle bycatch are available but not all are used as extensively as they should be. One thing the U.S. has done well is to push the..."

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# NMFS Bycatch Website



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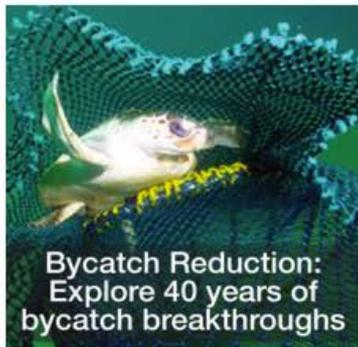
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## Bycatch



### Now Accepting Public Comment on the Draft National Bycatch Reduction Strategy

*\*Comment Period closes June 3, 2016*



## Hot Topics

- COMMENT NOW:** Proposed Rule: Standardized Bycatch Reporting Methodology  
*Comment period closes 4/25/2016*
- NEW:** National Bycatch Report Update 2
- NEW:** Action Plan for Fish Release Mortality Science
- NEW:** 2014 BREP Report to Congress
- 2016 BREP Funding Opportunity now open!
- Perspectives on Bycatch
- About the Bycatch Reduction Engineering Program



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# Overview of the Strategy



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## Draft National Bycatch Reduction Strategy

### INTRODUCTION

NOAA Fisheries' core mission is to promote productive and sustainable fisheries and improve the recovery and conservation of protected resources—all backed by sound science and an ecosystem-based approach to management. One key aspect of fulfilling this mission is reducing bycatch. This National Bycatch Reduction Strategy is intended to guide and coordinate our efforts to reduce bycatch and bycatch mortality in the coming years.

#### *What is bycatch?*

Bycatch occurs when fishing operations unintentionally catch and discard fish, cause unobserved injury and mortality, or interact with living marine resources such as marine mammals, sea turtles, seabirds, protected fish,



# Strategy Goal

To guide and coordinate NOAA Fisheries' efforts under the MSA, MMPA, ESA, and other relevant mandates to reduce bycatch and bycatch mortality and encourage utilization of discards to maintain sustainable fisheries while conserving and recovering protected species.

# Objectives

1. Strengthen monitoring and data collection programs
2. Clarify bycatch research needs and support research programs



# Objectives



3. Improve discard and take estimates
4. Improve management measures

# Objectives

5. Strengthen coordination with law enforcement
6. Improve communication and engagement



# Implementation

- National and Regional Action Plans will be developed in coordination with partners and stakeholders.
- Action plans will guide efforts across the agency to ensure a coordinated, transparent effort to achieve goal of the Strategy.

# National Bycatch Strategy Next Steps

- The draft Strategy is available online.
- Comments will be accepted until June 3, 2016.
- You can submit comments to [nmfs.bycatch@noaa.gov](mailto:nmfs.bycatch@noaa.gov)

The screenshot shows the NOAA Fisheries website page for the National Bycatch Strategy. The page features a navigation menu on the left with categories like 'Fisheries Home', 'About Us', 'Programs', 'Regions', 'Science Centers', 'Partners', 'News & Multimedia', 'Fisheries Resources', 'Congress', 'Educators and Students', 'Get Involved', and 'Forms'. The main content area is titled 'National Bycatch Strategy' and includes a commitment statement: 'NOAA Fisheries is committed to minimizing bycatch in U.S. fisheries. While we've made great progress, there is more to do. We have developed a draft National Bycatch Reduction Strategy, and we want your input. Efforts to address bycatch fall into six broad program areas.' A circular diagram illustrates these six areas: Monitor & Estimate, Research & Develop, Implement, Enforce, Evaluate & Improve, and Communicate. Below the diagram, there is a 'Submit Comments' section with a text box and a 'GO' button, and a 'Public Webinars' section. The page also includes social media icons and a search bar.

# Questions???

Submit Public Comment on the  
Draft National Bycatch Strategy at  
[nmfs.bycatch@noaa.gov](mailto:nmfs.bycatch@noaa.gov)

More info --

[www.fisheries.noaa.gov/sfa/bycatch](http://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/sfa/bycatch)