

# Recreational Fisheries Year in Review

2012



**NOAA**  
**FISHERIES**

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# Recreational Fisheries Year in Review

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**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
National Marine Fisheries Service**



**NOAA  
FISHERIES**



# Letter from Assistant Administrator for Fisheries

April 2013

## Recreational Fishers:

NOAA recognizes the important role anglers play as stewards of our marine resources, contributors to our coastal economies, and in enriching the lives of millions of Americans. It is rewarding to see our relationships with the recreational fishing community improving as we move forward, working together.

The many actions we have taken since 2010 under the Recreational Fisheries Engagement Initiative are making a difference, and as we report in this Recreational Fisheries Engagement Initiative 2012 Update, we continue to make progress. Nearly 80 percent of the National Action Agenda is complete or well underway. However, even as we see progress through our work together **and** improvements in fish stocks as we execute plans to end overfishing and rebuild depleted stocks, I recognize our work is far from finished. This is especially true with the complex and longstanding challenges related to data quality and allocation, and with the needs to sustain and increase access to rebuilding stocks.

We recognize these issues remain as priorities for fishermen, and they do for NOAA as well. We are committed to working through our scientific, management and public engagement processes to continue addressing these issues. I appreciate and remain encouraged by the recreational community's continued engagement and willingness to work with us to address these and other challenges.

The Engagement Initiative is creating positive momentum. While many changes are incremental, with sustained attention, change is becoming more obvious. I am confident that the positive outcomes of our collective, focused attention will increase as we continue forward together. I am a firm believer in collaboration, and sustainably managing our common ocean resources is a job best accomplished in a partnership. Thank you for all your ideas and cooperation in 2012, I look forward to continuing our work with you in 2013.

Sincerely,



**Eric Schwaab**

*Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, performing the functions and duties of the Assistant Secretary for Conservation and Management*

# Recreational Fisheries Engagement Initiative 2012 Update

Three years have passed since NOAA embarked on the Recreational Fisheries Engagement Initiative—a focused effort to establish stronger and more trusting relationship with the recreational fishing community. The Engagement Initiative is about listening to anglers, taking action to address critical issues of concern, following through on commitments, and empowering anglers to be responsible stewards and resource users.

Ideas provided by anglers at the 2010 Saltwater Recreational Fishing Summit and since have resulted in specific tasks outlined in the national and subsequent regional Action Agendas. These planning documents serve as our annual activities roadmap.

With the guidance and input of the recreational fishing community, we have fulfilled many of the Action Agendas' commitments and are making substantial progress on the rest. This document takes stock of the important steps taken by NOAA Fisheries to act on key issues of concern, strengthen ties with the recreational fishing community, encourage participation in the management process, and ensure a satisfying recreational fishing experience today and for generations of anglers to come.

## **Team Approach**

Recreational fisheries issues are a critical factor in our day-to-day considerations and decisions. Our partnerships have been vital to the progress we have made thus far. However, to be fully successful, we need the continued support of anglers in these efforts, including conservation action on the water, constructive input, guidance, and feedback.

NOAA has adopted a team approach to engage on recreational activities, both externally and internally. NOAA Fisheries' National Policy Advisor for Recreational Fisheries coordinates these efforts. The National Policy Advisor provides input on all recreational issues directly to the Assistant Administrator and the NOAA Fisheries Leadership Council, where the Agency's senior decision makers provide long-term policy, programmatic, and budgetary advice.

The Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee (MAFAC) and its Recreational Fisheries Working Group serve as a critical resource to the agency. This group of fishermen and conservation and industry leaders provides seasoned input on a wide variety of topics from an array of national, regional and sector perspectives. NOAA Fisheries' team of regional recreational coordinators—often the face of NOAA



Fisheries to their region's fishermen—is responsible for much of the on-the-ground progress in the Engagement Initiative. The regional coordinators provide feedback to NOAA Fisheries leadership on key recreational fishing issues in their region, allowing the agency to more effectively address national recreational challenges.

NOAA Fisheries National program offices, including Sustainable Fisheries, Habitat Conservation, Protected Resources, Science and Technology, and Communications are active participants in Engagement Initiative efforts and have committed staff to support the engagement initiative.

### **Building Trust**

We have worked to improve the relationship between NOAA and the angling community through improving communication, following through in commitments, and maintaining a sustained focus on the priorities of anglers. Creating a stronger relationship requires perseverance, dedication, and an ongoing commitment to work together. Such efforts are difficult to quantify in the short term, but are fundamental to creating lasting change.

One marker of change is a strengthened recreational fisheries perspective in the NOAA and NOAA Fisheries planning processes, ranging from the broad NOAA Next Generation Strategic Plan down to the focused NOAA Fisheries Regional Action Agendas.

### **Taking Action**

Sustainably managing our common ocean resources is a job best accomplished in partnership. The Recreational Saltwater Fishing Summit sought to strengthen the important relationship between NOAA Fisheries and the recreational fishing community. With more than 100 participants from across the nation, the Summit focused attention on the most pressing issues facing our recreational fisheries, including the quality and timeliness of recreational catch and effort data, concerns over catch shares, and recreational representation in the management process. Equally important, Summit participants told us that follow-through would be the critical measure of success.

*“As Americans, we value recreational fishing as a fundamental part of our nation’s outdoor heritage. For millions of people, fishing is about spending quality time with friends and family. Fishing helps people connect not only with each other, but also with our natural world. Through these connections, anglers have become active leaders in conservation. Not only are anglers stewards of our oceans, they contribute greatly to the economic and cultural vitality of our coastal communities.”*

**—Dr. Jane Lubchenco**  
September 2009

## Importance of Recreational Fishing

NOAA Fisheries appreciates that recreational fishing is part of the history and fabric of our nation and wants to continue to improve upon this great tradition. Fishing has always been an important social activity promoting stronger families and communities, providing both employment and a way of life for many, and serving as a large economic driver at all levels—locally, regionally, and nationally.

Recent estimates indicate there are approximately 12 million saltwater recreational anglers taking about 85 million trips a year. Combined, expenditures total \$31 billion dollars, representing an \$82 billion dollar impact and supporting half a million jobs.

Just as important is the legacy of recreational fishermen as conservationists concerned about the health and sustainability of the marine environment. By practicing catch and release techniques, advocating for and participating in the development of better fisheries data and science, improving habitat, and engaging in the policy process, recreational anglers continue to effect positive change and ensure their voice is heard.

The 2010 Recreational Saltwater Fishing Action Agenda described NOAA's path forward in response to the ideas expressed by Summit participants. It identified a number of preliminary engagement actions and continues to serve as our roadmap for efforts to address priorities and concerns identified by leading members of the recreational fishing community.

The updates below highlight our steady progress. Some efforts, such as the FishSmart workshops, are highly visible and result in immediate benefits to the community at large. Others, such as our internal work to include recreational fishing issues in policy discussions at all levels, are less visible outside NOAA, but equally far-reaching and important to the future of fishing.

### Highlights

**Greater Regional Engagement.** In December 2011, we released Regional Action Agendas for each NOAA Fisheries region and for Atlantic Highly Migratory Species. Each agenda was prepared by regional NOAA Fisheries staff in consultation with members of MAFAC's Recreational Fisheries Working Group and other members of the fishing public. Each agenda is individually tailored to address the priorities and issues expressed by regional recreational stakeholders and focuses on measurable actions that can be achieved within the year.

Some of the regional highlights during 2012 included:

- Hiring a full-time recreational fisheries coordinator and convening a regional recreational fishing summit (Pacific Islands).
- Conducting thresher shark hooking mortality research in cooperation with outside scientists and recreational fishermen (Southwest Region).
- Implementing recreational web pages and other communications tools in regional offices to provide anglers with up-to-date information.
- Collaborating with anglers to host a series of workshops to improve survival of recreationally released fish.

NOAA Fisheries is again working with constituents to update the regional Action Agendas in 2013. Please see Appendix A for a detailed summary of on-the-ground progress in each region.

**Improved Data.** Quality data must be the basis for our shared understanding of the status of stocks and informed decision-making, and anglers identified this as a top priority. NOAA Fisheries actively engaged in numerous collaborative projects with the community aimed at providing improved biological, social, and economic information including:

- Supporting the Marine Recreational Information Program's (MRIP) efforts to improve how recreational data are collected and reported. A major milestone was implementation of an improved method for calculating catch estimates in early 2012. This improved method removed sampling bias, resulting in more accurate estimates. Other notable progress included:
  - Completion of an electronic logbook pilot program in the Gulf of Mexico for-hire fleet; study results are being finalized.
  - Assessment of a catch card program to monitor recreational billfish landings in Puerto Rico; Building on what was learned in Puerto Rico, NOAA Fisheries is currently conducting a pilot catch card study of bluefin tuna landings in Massachusetts.
  - Review of sampling and estimation designs for recreational data collection programs in California, Oregon, and Washington.
- Securing additional funding to increase the quantity and quality of stock assessments across the nation, with particular focus in South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico.
- Fielding a National Angler Expenditure Survey to document recreational fishing's economic contribution to the nation.

## More Fish Today and Tomorrow

After years of hard work and real sacrifice, benefits are beginning to accrue as stocks recover. In 2012, the number of fish stocks considered overfished or subject to overfishing declined, to 19% (41) and 10% (41) of assessed stocks, respectively. Six stocks were declared newly rebuilt, including Coho salmon in the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

Augmenting these conservation gains is NOAA Fisheries' work with FishSmart, an angler-led, NOAA funded effort to enhance fisheries by improving the survival of recreationally released fish. Through a series of science-based regional workshops involving the angling community, Fishery Management Councils (Councils), researchers, non-governmental organizations, and federal and state government agencies, participants generated research and management recommendations and angling best-practices. The workshops promoted development of new fish-friendly gears as well as widespread Council discussion of release mortality issues. NOAA Fisheries is now focusing on coordinating and refining the agency's scientific efforts regarding recreational release mortality. We are confident that this joint government-angler effort is the next step in the evolution of better ensuring the survival of released fish, enhancing time on the water for recreational anglers.

**More Fishing Opportunities.** We hear from many anglers about the importance of protecting and enhancing fishing opportunities. Based on questions or comments from anglers, NOAA Fisheries:

- Partnered with anglers and NOAA's National Ocean Service on the 2012 Sanctuaries Classic fishing tournament, a nationwide effort to encourage recreational fishing within NOAA's system of National Marine Sanctuaries.
- Initiated scoping on National Standard 1 to explore the concerns of anglers and others regarding implementation of annual catch limits and accountability measures, among other issues.
- Worked closely with the Councils to promote more adaptive management to allow for increased fishing opportunities, including:
  - Opening the South Atlantic red snapper fishery in September 2012.
  - Extending the 2012 Gulf red snapper season to account for poor weather conditions.
  - Providing additional red snapper allocation to the recreational sector in 2011 and 2012; and adjusting the 2010 fishing season to minimize the effects of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.
  - Initiating an amendment to address allocation issues in the Mid-Atlantic scup fishery.

- Opened the door to addressing allocation by commissioning an in-depth review of allocation issues (released Jan. 2013); produced a technical memorandum reviewing historic allocation decisions; and addressed allocation in the National Catch Share Policy by recommending all fishery management programs re-visit allocation on a regular basis. NOAA is now working with the Councils to develop a path forward.
- Engaged fishermen, scientists, and government agencies on the issue of oil platform removals in the Gulf of Mexico which contributed to a rapid and broad interagency effort to produce comprehensive federal Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on the issue, providing a common understanding of the facts on the water. NOAA continues to build an enhanced understanding among and between federal agencies and constituents on the issue.

Approximately 80 percent of the National Action Agenda is completed or seeing significant progress, but our work is far from finished. Important priorities, most notably catch and effort data collection and quota allocation, need continued attention and remain as Agency priorities. Further, continued focus on how to maximize fishing opportunities associated with rebuilding stocks remains a high priority. As catch rates increase, new management approaches will be required to sustain fishing seasons and time on the water for recreational anglers. NOAA Fisheries is encouraged by and appreciative of the community's continued engagement and willingness to work cooperatively with the Agency toward better managed, more productive, and more satisfying fisheries.

The Engagement Initiative is creating positive change and momentum, one step at a time. While some of the improvements may be small, these critical first steps provide the foundation for achieving our long-term goals. The impact of our collective, focused attention will grow as we continue to take these steps together.

## 2013 Priorities

In 2013, we will continue advancing our existing commitments outlined in the Action Agendas, while also laying the groundwork for the next generation of regional and national plans.

Specifically, we will:

1. Improve how NOAA collects and reports recreational fishing information by implementing a new method for collecting data from anglers and releasing results from the angler expenditure survey.
2. Continue to work toward recreational fishing experiences that reflect the needs and desires of the recreational community. We'll begin by undertaking new human dimension research, and responding to a new NOAA-funded report on allocation.
3. Fulfill NOAA's promises to make a difference at the regional and local levels through the continued implementation of regional action agendas, regular town-hall conference calls with regional leadership, and at least one constituent meeting in each region.
4. Identify opportunities for community engagement in fisheries policy discussions, such as participation in the Managing Our Nation's Fisheries III conference (May 2013) and regional roundtable discussions (Winter/Spring 2013).
5. Help anglers become better marine stewards by providing science-based information on barotrauma and catch and release techniques through the next phase of FishSmart.
6. Continue to strengthen science through the application of cutting edge stock assessment techniques, and improve survey data collection using advanced technologies and alternative survey platforms, and improved collection methodologies.

## Conclusion

As demand for our ocean resources continues to increase, the importance of accurate information, sound decision-making, honest conversation, and collective action will also grow. Our commitment to action and trust-building through the Recreational Fisheries Engagement Initiative will help us meet these challenges.

# Regional Update: Northeast

GOAL	OBJECTIVE	PROJECT(S)	RESULTS
Improve Recreational Fishing Opportunities	Reduce user conflicts on artificial reefs in Federal waters.	Special Management Zones (SMZs) for sportfish funded artificial reefs.	Participated in the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) Special Management Zones (SMZ) process to provide data and ensure the recreational perspective was integrated into planning.  The Council has developed several options for 5 proposed SMZs that are being taken to public hearings in 2013.
	Ensure that proposals to allocate scup fully consider the needs of all stakeholders.	Evaluate recreational/commercial allocation in the scup fishery under the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council process.	Provided an evaluation of scup allocations to the Council management for consideration.
	Ensure recreational allocation in the Atlantic mackerel.	Provide for a recreational allocation in the Atlantic mackerel fishery.	Implemented a recreational allocation through Amendment 13 to the Atlantic Squid, Mackerel, and Butterfish Fishery Management Plan.
	Increase spawning and nursery area for anadromous species.	Improve fish passage for the Saco River, ME, and Hudson River, NY.	Undertook consultations on Federal Actions to improve Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) for Atlantic salmon, striped bass, shad, and other species.
		Dam removal and fish passage projects in the Northeast Region.	In late 2011 through 2012, the Northeast Restoration Center completed 10 of the 15 anticipated dam removal and fish passage projects, began construction on two of the projects, and continued the planning and design of the remaining three projects.
	Protect important recreational fish habitat.	Improve Essential Fish Habitat designations and review of areas of high habitat vulnerability.	Provided technical assistance to both the New England and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Councils for EFH on all major fisheries regulatory actions. Work groups and initial review of data for designation of areas of high habitat vulnerability have begun.
	Prevent overfishing on recreational fish stocks.	Protect recreational fish stocks by instituting Annual Catch Limits/Accountability Measures to prevent overfishing.	Annual catch limits (ACLs) and Accountability Measures (AMs) are in place for all federally managed stocks in the northeast, except squid species that are exempt from ACLs and /AMs because of their short life span.
	Protect forage species and monitor and reduce bycatch of recreational species.	Protect forage species and monitor and reduce bycatch of species important to the recreational fishing community.	Annual specifications for Atlantic herring and Atlantic mackerel have taken into account recreational fisheries and forage issues. Amendment 13 to the Atlantic mackerel established a recreational catch limit that was higher than recent reported landings.  In cooperation with the New England Council, began development of Amendment 14 to the Mackerel, squid, butterfish, and Amendment 5 to the Atlantic Herring Fishery Management Plans to maintain forage base fish populations.
	Reduce negative impacts of proposed projects on fish habitat.	Improve habitat protections through consultation with Federal agencies proposing to impact EFH and other living marine resources.	Participated in Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) Offshore Renewable Energy Task Forces in Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland and Virginia. Provided technical guidance on the development of Wind Energy Areas, and comments on BOEM's Site Assessment and Leasing actions throughout the Northeast.
Meet NOAA's regulatory responsibilities for managing recreational species under the Magnuson-Stevens Act.	Summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, and bluefish annual recreational fishing specifications and Northeast groundfish (cod, haddock, pollack etc.) regulations.	Monitored status of the stocks and fisheries for these species and annual management measures have been implemented in cooperation with the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, and Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) and with the New England Fishery Management Council for Northeast groundfish.	

## Northeast

GOAL	OBJECTIVE	PROJECT(S)	RESULTS
<b>Improve Recreational Catch, Effort, and Status Data</b>	Provide a more timely and efficient reporting system to party/charter vessels.	Implement electronic logbook reporting by for-hire vessels.	The option for expanded electronic logbook reporting for groundfish recreational party/charterboats was made available.  Also, northeast party/charter vessels can now send in required "did not fish" reports through the northeast electronic fish-on-line reporting program.
	Design a project that will involve party/charter vessels in cooperative research.	Host a workshop on fixed-gear survey techniques and the potential to conduct a cooperative research party/charter marine recreational based survey.	The workshop was held in Narragansett, RI, on July 12–13 2011. The Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC) is pursuing other means to fund this project.
	Keep users of MRIP data informed of program updates and changes.	Create a Northeast MRIP user group.	Created a Northeast MRIP user group and have begun annual meetings. A coordination group to look into improved integration of the Northeast charter/party boat recreational log book and MRIP For-Hire data collection programs has been formed.
	Provide advice and information on data needs for the management of Federal recreational fishing programs.	Atlantic Coast Cooperative Statistics Program Recreational Fisheries Technical Committee.	Supported recreational data outreach efforts, and participated on the Atlantic Coast Cooperative Statistics Program Recreational Fisheries Technical Committee.
	Provide the scientific information necessary to assess and manage recreational fish stocks.	Survey and research to understand the biology and stock dynamics of important species supporting marine recreational fisheries.	Conducted the Northeast spring and fall fish trawl surveys, the cooperative research Northeast Area Monitoring Program trawl survey, and have implemented a black sea bass cooperative research stock monitoring survey, and a cooperative research back sea bass tagging study of New Jersey.
	Produce accurate stock status assessments for recreational fish stocks.	Conduct improved stock assessments for black sea bass, Gulf of Maine cod, and three stocks of winter flounder.	Completed the stock assessments and these data were the basis for 2012 catch limits. Additionally an Atlantic cod discard mortality workshop was held that gathered input from fishermen (including recreational fisheries representatives) and scientists.
	Give priority to conducting stock assessments on the recreational fish stocks with the most important immediate needs.	Prioritize stock assessments for important recreational stocks.	Annual updates were scheduled for bluefish, summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass, and groundfish stocks (cod, haddock, pollock, winter, and yellowtail flounder) in 2012. New assessments or stock updates scheduled for 2014 are striped bass, bluefish, summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass, Georges Bank cod and haddock, and tilefish.
<b>Improve Social and Economic Data</b>	Obtain improved economic information on party/charter recreational fishing boats.	Complete a For-Hire cost/earnings survey in the northeast region.	Finalized a report on economic information related to Northeast party/charter boats in late 2011 and result was distributed in 2012.
	Obtain improved economic information on the recreational groundfish fishery.	Valuation and economic impact study of recreational anglers in the Northeast region.	Constructed an economic model to estimate the effects of regulatory changes on total angler effort for the groundfish fishery in 2010/2011. The modeling program was used in 2012 to estimate how proposed management changes could affect fishing mortality, angler effort, and the value anglers obtain from their fishing experience.
	Provide economic information on the recreational fishery to allow for informed management decisions.	Valuation and economic impact study of recreational summer flounder, black sea bass, and scup anglers in the northeast region.	Developed an economic model to estimate the effects of regulatory changes on angler effort, fishing mortality, and angler value for summer flounder, black sea bass, and scup fisheries in 2010/2011. The modeling program may be used in 2013 to help better understand the effects of proposed regulatory changes.
	Estimation of the "true" value of marine saltwater licenses in Massachusetts.	Measure the economic value of saltwater fishing licenses in Massachusetts.	Conducted a valuation survey of recreational anglers in Massachusetts. Analysis of the collected data is ongoing. Study results will be reported in 2013.

## Northeast

GOAL	OBJECTIVE	PROJECT(S)	RESULTS
<b>Improve Social and Economic Data</b>	Provide for an accurate and precise recreational use survey.	2011/2012 National Marine Recreational Use Survey.	Contributed expertise for the design of the 2011/2012 National Marine Recreational Use Survey, and developed a recreational fisheries management decision support model.
	Improve awareness and understanding of NOAA decisions and activities affecting recreational fishing through web-based information.	Develop recreational fishing web pages.	Built a regional recreational fishing web page, and access to it was placed on the front page of the Northeast Regional Office (NERO) web site.
<b>Improve Communications</b>	Direct interaction of NERO/NEFSC leadership with the recreational fisheries community.	Host a Northeast Region annual recreational fisheries forum.	The annual recreational fisheries forum was deferred due to 2012 pending Northeast Region and Science Center leadership changes. It will be replaced by a Northeast Recreational Fisheries Information meeting in 2013.
	Obtain direct sub-regional feedback on the action agenda.	Host Sub-regional Northeast region recreational fisheries information meetings.	The Sub-regional Northeast Region recreational fisheries information meetings were deferred due to 2012 pending Northeast Region and Science Center leadership changes. They will be replaced by 2 Northeast Recreational Fisheries Informational region-wide town hall calls in 2013
	Facilitate Information flow on recreational fishing data collection programs.	Support MRIP outreach and information activities within the Northeast region.	Gave a NERO internal recreational fisheries lecture describing MRIP activities to improve northeast recreational fisheries data collection, MRIP materials were passed out at recreational fishing outreach events, NERO staff assisted MRIP on planning a New England MRIP outreach road trip, and a northeast MRIP users meeting was held to improve communication among MRIP, Northeast Region, state and fishery management council personnel.
	Generate goodwill within the recreational fishing community by improving information flow to recreational fishing associations and clubs.	Develop an email list of Northeast recreational fishing associations and clubs.	Created an e-mail list-serve of recreational constituents. The list serve was used several times a quarter to send out key regulatory changes or announcements of high interest to the recreational fisheries community.
	Direct communication with the fishing and boating public.	Special outreach at recreational fishing/boating events.	NOAA Fisheries staff have attended eight club, association, or fishing/boating events.
	Provide information to the recreational fisheries community on how to identify and release sturgeon.	Sturgeon identification and release brochure.	Developed an informative sticker to identify and correctly release sturgeon, rather than a brochure. Over 2,500 have been distributed to anglers near likely areas for sturgeon interactions. The remaining stickers will be distributed at fishing shows and/or tackle/bait shops in 2013.
	Inform the recreational fishery community about marine aquaculture issues.	Educate and solicit input from recreational fishing groups on aquaculture.	Developed and distributed an aquaculture brochure.
	Inform the recreational fisheries community about the Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership.	Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership Outreach.	No action on this was taken in 2012.
	Develop Habitat Information Pamphlet.	Inform the recreational fisheries community on the importance of protecting marine habitat to maintain healthy fisheries.	Developed a pamphlet on the importance of protecting marine habitat, with information on how to set up a fishing line recycling program.

## Northeast

GOAL	OBJECTIVE	PROJECT(S)	RESULTS
<b>Institutional Orientation</b>	NOAA Fisheries regional personnel to be aware of the importance of the Action Agenda.	Conduct in-house recreational fisheries Action Agenda awareness meetings.	Gave an internal lecture on recreational fisheries issues including the action agenda to Regional Office staff. Regional Office leadership and division leadership were briefed on the action agenda.
	Improve communication between the USFWS and the NOAA Fisheries Northeast Region regarding marine fisheries grant funding programs.	Hold a NOAA Fisheries and U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service Northeast grants workshop to review grants that support recreational fishing.	It is planned that this action be repeated every 2 years. The next workshop will be conducted in 2014.
	Improve the understanding of the federal marine fishery management process by the recreational fishing community.	Give an in-house lecture on recreational fishing issues, science, and management.	Due to the success of this item. Annual lectures of this nature will be planned for 2013 and 2014.
	Inform other NOAA entities of the Action Agenda and partner with them to provide information on NOAA services and products to the recreational fishing community.	Coordinate recreational fishing outreach activities with the Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary.	Shared outreach materials from the Stellwagen Bank Sanctuary as part of Northeast Region activities at fishing shows.  The Northeast Recreational Coordinator briefed sanctuary staff, and the NOAA North Atlantic Coordination Team on the Action Agenda.

# Regional Update: Southeast

GOAL	OBJECTIVE	PROJECT(S)	RESULTS
<b>Improve Recreational Fishing Opportunities</b>	Extend Gulf of Mexico Red Snapper Fishery.	Reopen the recreational fisheries when excess quota is available, and work closely with the Gulf FMC to evaluate alternate seasons.	Extended Gulf of Mexico recreational red snapper fishing season six days in mid-July 2012 because severe weather reduced opportunity to fish during the pre-specified 40-day season. Preliminary data indicate the recreational fishery exceeded its catch limit by about 40 percent, which will be taken into account when setting limits for the 2013 season.
	Maximize recreational fishing opportunities while maintaining conservation objectives in the South Atlantic.	Provide recreational fishermen opportunities to target South Atlantic red snapper if sustainable.	Provided recreational fishermen two opportunities to target South Atlantic red snapper during three-day weekend openings in 2012, and supported South Atlantic Council action to develop a methodology to specify appropriate catch limits in future years based on discard and rebuilding data. Recreational fishermen targeted red snapper in the South Atlantic for the first time in over two years. NOAA Fisheries is currently reviewing the Council's proposed methodology for calculating future catch limits which, if approved, could lead to another reopening in summer or fall of 2013.
	Improve timeliness of management responses to data.	Respond quickly to new scientific information supporting annual catch limit increases.	Implemented the South Atlantic Council's proposed catch limit increase for golden tilefish and supported South Atlantic and Gulf Council action to increase catch limits of yellowtail snapper and Gulf of Mexico gag. NOAA Fisheries is currently reviewing the Councils' proposed increases for yellowtail snapper and Gulf of Mexico gag.
	Ensure regulatory measures minimize adverse impacts to extent possible.	Support Gulf Council action to further minimize the impact of shallow-water grouper accountability measures on harvest while still maintaining conservation objectives.	NOAA Fisheries is currently reviewing this Council action which, if approved, will expand recreational fishing opportunities in 2013.
	Enlist recreational community in improving data.	Approve an exempted fishing permit allowing recreational tournaments in the five Gulf Coast states to harvest red snapper for scientific purposes.	Approved an exempted fishing permit allowing recreational tournaments in the five Gulf Coast states to harvest red snapper for scientific purposes. The information collected during these tournaments will be used to further understand the age structure and reproductive status of red snapper in the Gulf of Mexico.
	Improve fishing flexibility within the for-hire industry.	Gulf Advisory Panels.	Received a request for a headboat cooperative EFP, which is under review.
<b>Improve Recreational Catch, Effort, and Status Data</b>	Evaluate Alternative data collection systems to improve timeliness of for-hire data.	Complete pilot Projects testing electronic logbook reporting on headboats in the South Atlantic and charter boats in the Gulf of Mexico.	These completed projects provide data and information to help fishery Scientists and managers better understand the benefits and limitations of electronic reporting.
	Implement an electronic logbook pilot program to improve catch and effort data for the for-hire fleet in the Gulf of Mexico.	Electronic logbook program	As of Jan 1, 2013, the Southeast Region Headboat Survey (SRHS) started collecting logbook data electronically in the U.S. south Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico. Headboat captains now have the ability to submit trip reports through a secure website and mobile app by using their personal computers, tablets, or smart phones.
	Better understand recreational fishery interactions with protected resources.	Implement pilot survey in South Atlantic to obtain information on sea turtle interactions in recreational fisheries in collaboration with the Marine Recreational Information Program.	This pilot project will help us to determine the feasibility of expanding the survey throughout the Southeast Region to better estimate and minimize sea turtle interactions in recreational fisheries.

## Southeast

GOAL	OBJECTIVE	PROJECT(S)	RESULTS
<b>Improve Recreational Catch, Effort, and Status Data</b>	Improve understanding of recreational catch and effort in the U.S. Caribbean.	Participate in marine recreational sampling workshops in the USVI and Puerto Rico.	The USVI workshop outcomes will guide the development of a sampling survey design for those islands. The Puerto Rico workshop considered pilot project design for adding queen conch and spiny lobster to the recreational harvest survey.
<b>Improve Recreational Catch, Effort, and Status Data</b>	Create a fishery-independent survey in the U.S. South Atlantic to index the abundance of red snapper and other reef fishes.	South East Fishery-Independent Survey.	Continued the SouthEast Fishery Independent Survey created in 2010 in collaboration with the Marine Resource, Assessment and Prediction program to improve reef fish sampling in the U.S. South Atlantic.
	Determine the frequency and extent of bottlenose dolphin interactions with recreational fishing gear and the impact these interactions have on bottlenose dolphins.	Development of survey on bottlenose dolphin-recreational fishery interactions.	Developed survey questions on dolphin-recreational fishery interactions to add on to the redesigned MRIP survey and are in communication with MRIP about next steps. Also received the final report of a 2-year research project in the northern Gulf of Mexico in which for-hire captains were employed to help assess/characterize the frequency of occurrence and geographic scope of depredation by bottlenose dolphins on recreational fishing gear and to develop preventative measures to reduce/eliminate interactions.
<b>Improve Social and Economic Data</b>	Improve understanding of the impact and value of recreational fisheries.	Conduct analysis evaluating economic efficiency of current commercial and recreational allocations for Gulf of Mexico red grouper, gag, black grouper and red snapper.	These completed analyses will inform Gulf Council deliberations on potential allocation adjustments.
	Improve the understanding of human dimensions of recreational fishing.	Improve the understanding of recreational fishing.	Socio-economic studies were completed to better understand sport fishing demand, angler value and cost/earnings in the in the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico recreational fisheries. The final reports include:  Holland et al. 2012. "The Operations and Economics of the For-Hire Fishing Fleets of the South Atlantic States and the Atlantic Coast of Florida"  Savolainen et al. 2012. "Economic and Atitudinal Perspectives of the Recreational For-hire Fishing Industry in the U.S. Gulf of Mexico"  Carter, D. W. and C. Liese. 2012. The Economic Value of Catching and Keeping or Releasing Saltwater Sport Fish in the Southeast USA. North American Journal of Fisheries Management 32(4): 613-25.
<b>Improve Communications</b>	Educate the media about marine conservation issues.	Participate in Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership Saltwater Media Summit at Mote Marine Laboratory in Sarasota, Florida.	Southeast Regional Administrator and Recreational Fishing Coordinator participated. This meeting provided fishermen and fishery managers the opportunity to engage the media on marine conservation issues.
	Provide regular opportunities for informal public question and answer sessions with the Regional Administrator and Science Center Director.	Host evening question and answer sessions for interested constituents at all Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Fishery Management Council meetings.	Southeast Regional Administrator and Southeast Science Center Director hosted informal discussions which enable NOAA Fisheries leadership to be knowledgeable about and responsive to constituent concerns.
	Educate recreational fishermen about the fishery science and management process.	Engage the Steering Committee for the Marine Resource Education Program.	Recreational Fisheries Coordinator served on the Planning Committee. This Committee developed agenda and speaker recommendations for science and management workshops to be held in 2013.
	Meet with constituent groups about recreational fisheries issues.	Constituent Issues.	Met with recreational organizations upon request, including American Sportfishing Association, Coastal Conservation Association, Clearwater Marine Association, Gulf of Mexico Charter Fisherman's Association, and the Orange Beach Fishing Association.

## Southeast

GOAL	OBJECTIVE	PROJECT(S)	RESULTS
<b>Improve Communications</b>	Expand engagement of the recreational fishing community in data collection programs.	Expand engagement of the recreational fishing community in data collection programs.	The Adopt-A-Billfish program enlists the help of billfish anglers in tagging operations throughout the Atlantic Ocean, Caribbean Sea, Bahamas and Bermuda. As part of this program, scientists maintain an Atlantic-wide constituent-based cooperative tagging program (Cooperative Tagging Center), as well as conduct electronic tagging of billfish using pop-up satellite archival tag (PSAT) technology. The Cooperative Tagging Center works in collaboration with NOAA Fisheries Service's SEFSC and Southwest Fisheries Science Center, University of Miami Center for Sustainable Fisheries, The Billfish Foundation, the Bermuda Department of Environmental Protection, and the International Game Fish Association.
	Improve communications with the recreational fishing industry on the issue of bottlenose dolphin interactions with recreational fishing gear.	Improve communications with the recreational fishing industry on the issue of bottlenose dolphin interactions with recreational fishing gear.	Sent targeted mailings of educational materials and letters to areas where there are documented entanglements and rescues. Outreach materials are geared toward providing information on how fishermen and the public can help prevent these interactions and steps to take when an interaction may occur (e.g., reporting). Our bottlenose dolphin experts also participated in the first FishSmart workshop April 11–13 on Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic fisheries, where workshop attendees discussed best angler practices, equipment ideas, provided guidance to management bodies, and identified gaps in current scientific knowledge about safe catch-and-release techniques.
<b>Institutional Orientation</b>	Reduce discards and discard mortality.	Engage in FishSmart activities.	Participated in Southeast FishSmart Barotrauma Workshop April 11–13 at Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's research facility in St. Petersburg, Florida. This workshop educated fishery managers, scientists and anglers about methods to reduce discards and discard mortality.
	Improve understanding of the stock assessment process i.e., SEDAR.	Provide an opportunity for stock assessment scientists, data collectors, fisheries researchers, and constituents to take part in the stock assessment and to collectively develop and review complex fisheries stock assessment analyses.	Participation of recreational constituents in the assessment process.
	Improve understanding of the federal fishery management process.	Marine Resource Education Program.	Assembled an executive steering committee consisting of NMFS and Council staff, fishing constituents and other experts in the field of fisheries management and research to plan the curriculums for science and management workshops to be held in 2013. The science workshop will be held April 2–4 in St. Petersburg, Florida. The management workshop has not yet been scheduled but will take place later this fall.
	Define recreational allocation in Puerto Rico.	Caribbean Fishery Management Council and NOAA Fisheries Service are working together on amendments to implement separate recreational and commercial catch limits.	Specified separate annual catch limits for commercial and recreational fisheries in Puerto Rico.

# Regional Update: Atlantic Highly Migratory Species

GOAL	OBJECTIVE	PROJECT(S)	RESULTS
<b>Improve Recreational Fishing Opportunities</b>	Provide fair and/or equitable access to recreational Atlantic HMS fisheries as consistent with legal obligations, stock health, and the goals and objectives of relevant fishery management plans.	Continue to provide fair and equitable access to recreational Atlantic HMS fisheries.	Atlantic HMS fisheries remain viable and very popular. Tournament registration numbers and landings of billfish have remained relatively consistent over recent years. Approximately 25,000 Recreational and 4,000 Charter/Headboat permits were issued in 2012.
	Provide for, and improve where practical, recreational opportunities for Atlantic HMS through management practices that ensure healthy stocks are available to the fishery.	Consider opportunities to increase access to the swordfish fishery that result in minimal bycatch of protected resources and non-target species.	Total U.S. swordfish landings through November 2012 are about 40% higher than the average for the same period from 2009–2011.
		Educate constituents about the inclusion of roundscale spearfish in the Atlantic HMS management unit with management measures identical to white marlin.	Outreach materials including the Atlantic HMS Recreational Compliance Guide have been distributed to the public.
		ICCAT Negotiations.	At the 2012 ICCAT meeting in Morocco, the United States successfully maintained its annual limit of 250 recreationally caught blue and white marlin.
		Provide for recreational opportunities to catch Atlantic tunas.	Atlantic tunas remain a popular target of recreational fishermen. Approximately 25,000 Recreational and 4,000 Charter/Headboat permits were issued in 2012. The recreational fishery for Atlantic tunas remained open throughout the entire 2012 season. Private, charter, and headboat vessels had opportunities to catch fish of various size classes, especially in the highly regulated Atlantic Bluefin tuna fishery.
		Support recreational fishing opportunities to catch sharks.	Atlantic sharks remain a popular target for many recreational fishermen and the fishery remains viable whether it is for sharks that are allowed to be retained or catch and release fisheries. A proposed rule for Amendment 5 to the 2006 Consolidated Atlantic HMS Fishery Management Plan was published in December 2012 that includes proposed changes for the recreational shark fishery. More information about Amendment 5 may be found at <a href="http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/index.htm">http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/index.htm</a> .
<b>Improve Recreational Catch, Effort, and Status Data</b>	Support the operation of Atlantic HMS tournaments and provide opportunities to obtain recreational catch and biological data on a variety of HMS species.	Implement the Recreational Bluefin Landings Tag (RBLT) Massachusetts Pilot Project.	Reviewing data collected during the 2012 pilot study, recovering unused tags for verification purposes, analysis and program evaluation currently underway, and will produce a final report with recommendations – expected early 2013.

# Atlantic Highly Migratory Species

GOAL	OBJECTIVE	PROJECT(S)	RESULTS
<b>Improve Recreational Catch, Effort, and Status Data</b>	Facilitate quick reporting of catch information by anglers through internet & phone reporting.	Invest in the reporting infrastructure for tournaments and individuals targeting billfish, and continues to investigate mechanisms that improve the timeliness of landings reports.	Data from tournament and non-tournament landings reports and other information are available in the 2012 Atlantic HMS Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation Report.
		Promote Live-release of shortfin mako and collect data from the public on catch and release location through shortfin mako web page and Android application of live-release maps.	To date, almost 200 active installs of the application have been conducted through which 13 releases have been reported. The shortfin mako release webpage is prominently displayed from the HMS home page.
<b>Improve Recreational Catch, Effort, and Status Data</b>	Improve timeliness of estimated landings from the Large Pelagic Survey (LPS) which will improve the availability of information for fishery management.	Develop and test Large Pelagic Survey improvements.	NOAA Science and Technology has initiated the process for the LPS program review and will explore updates similar to previous MRIP efforts.
		Support stock assessments of HMS species to provide a better picture of stock health and improve management of the fishery for recreational and commercial uses.	Collaborate with states, Atlantic HMS Advisory Panel, stakeholders, and NOAA Fisheries staff to improve data collection in the recreational yellowfin tuna fishery.
	Implementation of Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) HMS Actions and Priorities.	Test a billfish catch card pilot program and an HMS recreational phone survey in Puerto Rico.	Completed the pilot program and a final report.
		Finalize project results and reports for the HMS for-hire Survey- Florida Pilot Study.	Completed the pilot program and a final report.
		Conduct Pilot Phase-1 of a Massachusetts Recreational Bluefin Tuna Landings Census.	Reviewing data collected during the 2012 pilot study, recovering unused tags for verification purposes, analysis and program evaluation currently underway, and will produce a final report with recommendations – expected early 2013.
		Test for non-response bias in the Large Pelagics Telephone Survey.	Project has begun and is expected to continue in 2013.
		Conduct for-hire electronic logbook studies in the Gulf of Mexico.	Completed the projects and a report.
<b>Improve Communications</b>	Increase constituent awareness and understanding of Agency actions.	Implement and update the Atlantic HMS Recreational Fishing Action Agenda in cooperation with key stakeholders.	Provided NMFS with input to begin the process of updating the HMS Recreational Action Agenda following the HMS Advisory Panel during the Fall 2012 meeting. A dedicated discussion is scheduled for the May 2013 HMS Advisory Panel.
		Include recreational information on the HMS website.	In addition to having species specific links on the HMS home page that include recreational, as well as commercial, information, the HMS Management Division has included Careful Catch and Release, Compliance Guides, and non-tournament landings reporting links.
		Regularly update and distribute HMS News, Recreational compliance guide, Bluefin tuna guide, and shark identification placard for recreational stakeholders.	HMS News is updated and distributed each time the division takes an action or release a notice. The compliance guides that pertain to recreational and charter/ headboat fishing for HMS are updated annually and are readily available from the HMS website as well as in hard copy. Species identification guides are updated as needed and are readily available from the HMS species links from the HMS home page.

## Atlantic Highly Migratory Species

GOAL	OBJECTIVE	PROJECT(S)	RESULTS
<b>Improve Communications</b>	Conduct on-the-ground communication efforts with constituents.	The collection of shortfin mako release data is underway via online and Android applications.	To date, almost 200 active installs of the application have been conducted through which 13 releases have been reported.
		Conduct outreach at boating, recreational, and species-specific events.	HMS staff regularly participates in various events that actively engage the recreational public at large. For example, New England Saltwater Fishing Show or the Massachusetts Striped Bass Association Annual Sport fishing Show to name a few. These opportunities are capitalized on when timing and funding allow.
		Identify constituents and constituent groups through Atlantic HMS tournament registration for distribution of outreach materials; facilitate biological data collection on landed HMS; and provide on-the-ground outreach to anglers.	This project is conducted annually. Tournament registration and other information may be found at <a href="http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/Tournaments/index.htm">http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/Tournaments/index.htm</a> .
	Communicate information regarding major NOAA initiatives with constituents. Tournaments, and various associations that represent fishermen.	Collaborative outreach.	Information about major NOAA initiative is distributed through Atlantic HMS News (an e-mail news notice). Sign up for HMS News at <a href="http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/index.htm">http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/index.htm</a> .
Explore the feasibility of updating the benchmark analyses used to analyze socio-economic impacts of rules on recreational and commercial fishing communities.	Identify funding opportunities for benchmark socio-economic analyses.	NMFS strives to identify and facilitate funding through various sources.	
<b>Improve Social and Economic Data on Recreational Fisheries</b>	Balanced recreational and commercial representation on the Atlantic HMS Advisory Panel.	Ensure balanced constituent representation.	Under the Magnuson-Stevens Act the HMS Advisory Panel must be balanced in its representation of commercial, recreational, and other interests. This is accomplished by having dedicated seats on the panel reserved for the various representation types. As individual terms expire they are filled from that same representation group.
<b>Institutional Orientation</b>	Improve institutional awareness.	Annual In-house planning sessions by the HMS recreational action agenda coordination team. This will include soliciting feedback from HMS leadership and HMS team members who interact regularly with constituents.	The HMS recreational action agenda coordination team is constantly interacting with from the HMS Management Division both through standing weekly divisional calls as well as more focused issue specific meetings.
		Briefing and discussion on the Atlantic HMS Recreational Action Agenda and activities with the Atlantic HMS AP during public meetings, as appropriate.	Agenda items with the HMS Advisory Panel during the Fall 2012 meeting provided NMFS with input to begin the process of updating the HMS Recreational Action Agenda. A dedicated discussion is also scheduled for the May 2013 HMS Advisory Panel. In addition, specific recreational issues/items are discussed in specific public meetings.
		Atlantic HMS Regional coordinators will coordinate with leadership within NMFS Office of Sustainable Fisheries to evaluate Atlantic HMS Action agenda on an annual basis. This includes regular meetings with the MAFAC working group for feedback.	Atlantic HMS Recreational Coordinators attended NMFS annual recreational coordinators meeting in Saint Petersburg, FL to discuss national and regional recreational fisheries initiatives.

# Regional Update: Southwest

GOAL	OBJECTIVE	PROJECT(S)	RESULTS
<b>Improve Recreational Fishing Opportunities</b>	Participate in fishing events with a broad spectrum of stakeholders to improve stewardship and adoption of ethical recreational fishing practices.	Ethical Angler Program participation at fishing events.	Participated in over ten fishing events on board Commercial Passenger Fishing Vessels (CPFV(s)) and at piers with youth, families, and veterans.
	Conduct research on best fishing practices to reduce post-release mortality in an effort to facilitate more sustainable fishing opportunities through higher survivorship of released fish.	Conduct Thresher Shark Post-release Mortality Study.  Promote methods to reduce rockfish barotrauma mortality.	NMFS and the Pflieger Institute of Environmental Research (PIER) were featured in an episode of the World Fishing Network's (WFN) IGFA Saltwater Adventures with Bill Boyce showcasing thresher shark research.  Participated in the Pacific FishSmart Workshop in Portland, OR, May 8–9, 2012. The Sportfishing Association of California and the Golden Gate Fisherman's Association have provided fish descending devices to their member vessels.
<b>Improve Recreational Catch, Effort, and Status Data</b>	Improve recreational fisheries monitoring data for use in management.	Support the California Recreational Fisheries Survey.	Completed a relational database for Oregon's historical on-board Commercial passenger for hire vessel observer data. Development of the historical database for California's CPFV observer data is underway, with a current focus on error checking and database design.
	Conduct research on methods for reducing depredation and marine mammal interactions with anglers.	Research and Test Sea Lion Depredation Methods.	Created a one page flyer on pinniped deterrence for anglers.
	Conduct cooperative research projects with local anglers to improve understanding of recreational fishery effects and the importance of data collection, and monitoring.	Encourage HMS Biological Sample Donation.	Collected stomachs, fin clips, otoliths, gonads or other organs, with help from over 50 individual anglers, from: 75 albacore, 381 bluefin tuna, 199 yellowfin tuna, 159 yellowtail, and 50 rockfish.
		Encourage and support sighting reports – basking sharks.	Received reports of 78 basking shark sightings since 2011.
	Continue rockfish surveys.	Continued rockfish surveys.	
	Encourage and support HMS billfish tagging.	The billfish tagging program sent out about 2,200 billfish newsletters and received 487 billfish survey responses representing 416 tags for 2010, and 873 tags for 2011.	
<b>Improve Social and Economic Data on Recreational Fisheries</b>	Conduct socio-economic research to determine how recreational fishing activities contribute to the California economy and jobs.	Conduct 2011 Angler Expenditure Survey.	The 2011 Angler Expenditure Survey data collection is complete and analysis is underway.
	Conduct socio-economic research and develop tools that can better inform management decisions and other factors affecting the recreational fishing sector.	Develop Decision-Making model of CPFV Operators & Anglers.	Research is underway for development of decision making models for CPFV operators and anglers.

# Southwest

GOAL	OBJECTIVE	PROJECT(S)	RESULTS
<b>Improve Social and Economic Data on Recreational Fisheries</b>	Conduct socio-economic research and develop tools that can better inform management decisions and other factors affecting the recreational fishing sector.	Conduct assessment of dam removal on salmon and steelhead in Klamath River.	Wrote technical reports on economic effects of Klamath River dam removal on saltwater and in river recreational salmonid fishing.
		Develop Valuation Model: Ocean Salmon Recreational Fisheries.	Developed a valuation model for the ocean recreational salmon fishery in California and Oregon, currently expanding the model to include groundfish.
		Develop Valuation Model: In-River Salmon and Steelhead.	Postponed.
<b>Improve Communication</b>	Engage with sportfishing and outdoor media to improve communications on recreational fisheries issues; discuss issues with and provide information to constituents.	Participate in sportfishing radio shows and print media.	Several articles throughout the year featuring NMFS research in Western Outdoor News, and Pacific Coast Sportfishing.
		Develop and Distribute Fact Sheets.	Developed and distributed basking shark and thresher shark fact sheets.
	Engage with stakeholders to hear concerns, share information, and collaborate on efforts, as appropriate.	Engage with Recreational Fishing Advisory Bodies.	Presented on the Southwest Action Agenda to the Channel Islands Sanctuary Advisory Committee.
		Attend Recreational Fishing Focused Conventions.	Staffed NMFS booths at two Fred Hall fishing shows and San Diego Day at the Docks.
	Demonstrate / Present Ethical Angling and Best Fishing Practices.	Presented on NMFS activities to several fishing clubs in southern, central, and northern California.	
Develop and maintain an informative website on recreational fisheries with current information and tools to inform and assist anglers about management, stewardship practices, and opportunities.	Enhance Current Recreational Fishing Websites – SWRO, SWFSC.	Postponed.	
<b>Institutional Orientation</b>	Demonstrate Agency commitment to collaborating with recreational fishing constituents on strategies for improved management, stewardship, and research.	Meet with constituents annually to discuss issues and opportunities.	Held several listening sessions to obtain feedback from constituents on the Action Agenda.
		Acknowledge constituents for exemplary Ethical Angling and Marine Resource Stewardship practices.	Postponed.
	Ensure that recreational fisheries issues are communicated and considered in research and management decisions.	Maintain effective internal communications.	Reporting regularly to the Regional Management Team on recreational fishing activities and increased awareness of recreational fishing issues in management decisions.

# Regional Update: Northwest

GOAL	OBJECTIVE	PROJECT(S)	RESULTS
<b>Improve Recreational Fishing Opportunities</b>	Consider means to incorporate barotrauma reduction devices into groundfish management.	Participate in FishSmart.	FishSmart led to an improved understanding of the engineering and performance of barotrauma reduction devices as well as the potential for their use by managers. On the West Coast, specific attention was paid to using barotrauma reduction devices to provide additional recreational opportunities in the context of overfished rockfish species.
	Incorporate barotrauma reduction devices into groundfish management.	PFMC groundfish management process.	PFMC is developing management alternatives for crediting recreational fishermen with reduced harvest rates when barotrauma reduction devices are utilized.
	Develop and evaluate an abundance-based harvest management approach for ESA-listed Columbia River natural Tule fall Chinook Salmon.	A proposal, if found technically feasible, for an abundance-based harvest management approach to the Tule fall Chinook salmon for consideration by the Pacific Fishery Management Council and other co-managers.	Work on an abundance based harvest management plan for Tule Chinook salmon was completed in 2012 including review by the PFMC. NOAA Fisheries completed its ESA review of the plan and the plan was implemented for the first time in 2012.
	Establish and utilize the Snake Basin Harvest Forum to assist co-managers with reconciling fisheries to meet conservation and harvest objectives.	Reconciled tribal and recreational harvest plans in the Snake River and its tributaries for consideration and ESA determinations under Section 4(d).	NOAA Fisheries has worked with the Snake Basin Harvest Forum to complete review of state and tribal fisheries for spring/summer Chinook in the Salmon River Basin and northeast Oregon.
	Implement hatchery reform at programs funded through the Mitchell Act.	Provide funding for more than 20 salmon and steelhead hatchery facilities in the Columbia River through the Mitchell Act.	NOAA Fisheries has continued to provide funding for 20 Mitchell Act hatchery programs. Congress appropriated additional money in recent years to implement reforms. NF is working with the operators to prioritize and implement those reforms. NF is also scheduled to complete an EIS related to the Mitchell Act programs in 2013.
	Reduce pinniped and human conflicts in the Rogue River, OR.	Continue implementation of cooperative program in Gold Beach, OR.	In Gold Beach, Oregon, NMFS is a cooperator on a project to reduce nuisance pinnipeds from (1) taking angler-hooked fish, and (2) damaging Port of Gold Beach property (e.g., docks, marina). This project, in its seventh year of implementation, has been extremely effective in reducing conflict between humans and pinnipeds in the Rogue River estuary and marina. Local, state, and Federal government agencies, along with Gold Beach business leaders, pool their authorities, resources and expertise to humanely discourage seal and sea lion use of the estuary during a twelve week period each summer/fall when the town of Gold Beach experiences a large influx of recreational boaters and fishers. Keeping the negative interaction between humans and pinnipeds to a minimum serves the agency's mission to recover, rebuild and sustain living marine resources, and to sustain coastal communities and economies.
<b>Improve Recreational Catch, Effort, and Status Data</b>	Explore cooperative research projects with recreational fishermen in Puget Sound.	Work with SeaDoc Society to identify cooperative research opportunities.	This work is ongoing. The expected results are for recreational fishermen and scientists to develop and participate in research projects on a collaborative basis.
	Conduct scientific workshops on the relationship of Chinook salmon harvest to Chinook abundance as prey for ESA-listed killer whales.	Co-host bi-lateral workshop to review the science relating to the effects of Chinook salmon fisheries to killer whales.	The workshop resulted in a better scientific understanding of the relationship between Chinook salmon harvest, including in recreational fisheries, to recovery of Southern Resident Killer Whales. A formal report by the Southern Resident Killer Whale Science Panel is expected in early Spring 2013.

# Northwest

GOAL	OBJECTIVE	PROJECT(S)	RESULTS
<b>Improve Recreational Catch, Effort, and Status Data</b>	Review Lower Columbia River coho salmon harvest metric.	Host meetings among co-managers to discuss tasks and outline responsibilities for implementing the review.	Met with Oregon and Washington States to outline issues that would need to be addressed in a new LCR coho harvest matrix. The states are currently working on a new matrix that NOAA Fisheries is prepared to review once received.
<b>Improve Social and Economic Data on Recreational Fisheries</b>	Improve understanding of recreational constituent perspectives on rockfish recovery in Puget Sound.	Assess recreational fishing and rockfish recovery in Puget Sound using social science methods.	Published and made available to managers involved in ESA rockfish recovery efforts, "Angling for Insight: Examining the Recreational Fishing Community's Knowledge, Perceptions, Practices, and Preferences to Inform Rockfish Recovery Planning in Puget Sound, Washington" by J. Sawchuk. The report has improved managers understanding of varied perspectives on rockfish recovery in Puget Sound.
	Maintain and make available current estimations of economic effects of recreational salmon fishing activities.	The Northwest Region will maintain, update, and publish a variety of documents containing information about the economic value and effects of marine and freshwater recreational salmon fishing.	The Pacific Fishery Management Council publishes the Review of Ocean Salmon Fisheries every year that updates an extensive record of recreational salmon fishery data for the ocean and Puget Sound.
<b>Improve Communication</b>	Conduct outreach to Northwest recreational fishing stakeholders.	Identify and coordinate with key recreational fishing stakeholders in the Northwest to target outreach.	NOAA Fisheries will be meeting with recreational fishery representatives on January 31 and the Seattle Boat Show to discuss issues of interest. The Boat Show has been used in recent years for annual meetings to maintain a close working relationship.
	Highlight Northwest activities in support of recreational fisheries.	Develop and distribute informational materials on Northwest activities in support of recreational fisheries.	New webpage to be launched in early 2013. Expected results are improved awareness and understanding of the NWR RecFish Initiative.
	Establish a constituent-led process for updating the NW Recreational Action Agenda.	Form Steering Committee with MAFAC RFWG and develop update strategy.	The representatives from the MAFAC RecFish Working Group are playing a leadership role in updating the NW Recreational Action Agenda.
<b>Institutional Orientation</b>	Reflect hatchery reforms in approved Hatchery Genetic Management Plans for the nearly 300 hatchery programs in the region.	Approve HGMP and Resource Management Plans, with associated NEPA compliance.	This work is ongoing. NOAA Fisheries has worked with the co-managers to identify and implement hatchery reforms through the HGMP consultation process. A number of these reviews have been completed, more are in process, and all are scheduled for completion over the next two years.
	Improved internal awareness of recreational fisheries issues and priorities.	Internal Communications.	The NWR staff has an ongoing focus on recreational fishery issues that arise through their review of harvest and hatchery related actions.

# Regional Update: Alaska

GOAL	OBJECTIVE	PROJECT(S)	RESULTS
<b>Improve Recreational Fishing Opportunities</b>	Ensure quality recreational fishing habitat.	Work on restoration projects for coastal, marine, and anadromous fish habitats.	NMFS conducted a foot survey to assess marine debris. As of August 2012, this survey has covered 220 km and has categorized Tsunami debris from Japan. In addition, NMFS continues work with fish habitat partners throughout the State of Alaska to restore coastal wetlands.
<b>Improve Recreational Catch, Effort, and Status Data</b>	Create reporting system for tracking halibut caught under the proposed Guided Angler Fish Program (GAF).	Create a web and phone based application to allow electronic reporting.	The project is ongoing due to a delay in implementation of the final rule for the guided angler catch sharing plan.
	Grant the State of Alaska funds to improve coded wire tag recovery for sport-caught Chinook salmon.	Increase port sampler presence to improve data collection of coded wire tags.	The port sampler presence has been increased by 8 staff, and a report by the State of Alaska about coded wire tag data collection is anticipated in 2013.
	Improve accessibility and quality of recreational catch and effort data reported in the sport charter logbook program.	Grant federal assistance to the State of Alaska to improve data access and quality control by using image recognition software.	The assistance has been provided to the state, which is now using image recognition software.
<b>Improve Social and Economic Data on Recreational Fisheries</b>	Economic and social survey.	Conduct a social survey about angler fishing behavior in Alaska.	The voluntary survey is currently in the field.
	Create an Alaska recreational charter vessel guide and owner data collection system.	Create data instruments for gathering cost and earnings information in the saltwater charter fishing vessel sector in Alaska.	The survey has been tested and being fielded.
<b>Improve Communication</b>	Create recreational fishing constituent database to help establish regular and better communication.	Develop recreational fishery list-serve and newsletter.	Anglers were encouraged to provide e-mail information at the Anchorage sport show and a signup portal was added the NMFS Alaska Region website.  An angler database was created and a newsletter sent out to constituents in 2012. This list will be used in the future for communication with constituents
	Create recreational-fishing themed booth and educational material to be on display.	Design a booth and educational materials and presented at a recreational fisheries events.	In partnership with the NOAA Office of Law Enforcement, outreach was conducted at the Anchorage Sport Show in March 2012.
	Develop a website hosted by NMFS Alaska Region that is designed specifically for recreational fishers.	Publish a user-friendly website designed to provide fishing information.	Major changes were made to the website in 2012 and further changes are planned for 2013.

# Regional Update: Pacific Islands

GOAL	OBJECTIVE	PROJECT(S)	RESULTS
<b>Improve Recreational Fishing Opportunities</b>	Reduce post-release mortality of recreationally-caught fish.	Barbless Circle Hook Project.	Successful and thorough outreach to promote and educate the public on the use of barbless circle hooks for recreational fishing; to improve condition and reduce post-release mortality of catch-and-released fish to increase their numbers to enhance recreational fishing opportunities for the future.
	Maximize benefits of recreational tagging programs.	Tagging program coordination and collaboration.	Information gathering and compilation of tagging program details (species, tag type, tag legend, reward, contact #s, etc.) for dissemination to public to increase recapture reporting rates. Promotion of materials and methods to minimize stress and maximize post-release survival. Promotion of data analyses for information useful for sustainable management.
	Improve FAD programs and efficiency.	Workshop to investigate FAD issues.	Organized a PI regional meeting on FADs with an emphasis on minimizing costs, evaluating advances in mooring systems and FAD design and maximizing deployment times and aggregation efficiency. Scheduled February 13–14, 2013.
	Prevent overfishing on recreational fish stocks.	Protect recreational fish stocks by instituting Annual Catch Limits/Accountability Measures to prevent overfishing.	Annual catch limits and Accountability Measures are in place for all federally managed stocks.
<b>Improve Recreational Catch, Effort, and Status Data</b>	Improve collection of non-commercial fishery data.	A memorandum of understanding on the exchange of confidential fisheries information between Hawaii State and NOAA Fisheries.	Completed, and being used for data exchange
		Collaborate with/support the State in modifying its Vessel Registration System, Division of Boating and Ocean Recreation (DBOR), to serve as a vehicle for fisheries data collection.	Executed a grant to the Hawaii DBOR for the modification of vessel registration forms and database, established public online registration access at boat harbor offices, and improved the online vessel registration system to allow differentiation of vessels used for recreational fishing. Ongoing. The vessel registration database will be used in future boat-based catch and effort sampling to support a proposed Hawaii regional survey. The regional survey will support a Hawaii request for exemption to the National Saltwater Angler Registry Program.
		Improve collection of catch information from Hawaii for-hire sector.	Developing an outreach brochure to notify/remind for-hire vessel owners and operators of existing State and Federal requirements for charter fishing vessels, including requirement to obtain State licenses and submit fishing reports.
		Improve data quality and ability to utilize data collected by the Hawaii Marine Recreational Fishing Survey (HMRFS).	Project reviewed existing HMRFS program to evaluate possible improvements. MRIP consultants provided a review and recommendations to the program and a HMRFS review was conducted July 16–19, 2012 that provided the State with a set of recommendations.
	Understand the universe of non-commercial fishermen in federal waters and select trip attributes.	Mail Survey of Hawaii's Registered Boaters.	A working group of managers, scientists, and fishermen developed the survey instrument and protocol in 2012. The survey will be fielded in 2013.

## Pacific Islands

GOAL	OBJECTIVE	PROJECT(S)	RESULTS
<b>Improve Social and Economic Data on Recreational Fisheries</b>	Collect information about the main issues impacting recreational and subsistence fishermen in American Samoa and Guam.	American Samoa & Guam Fishing Community Profile Updates.	Interviews were conducted and these data will be included in the upcoming American Samoa Fishing Community Profile Update Administrative Report and the Guam Fishing Community Profile Update Administrative Report.
	Collect information about fishermen's (and other stakeholders') perceptions regarding the condition of coral reef resources, threats to those resources, and the extent to which they would support various management efforts.	Survey of Hawaii Resident Resource Users' Knowledge, Attitudes and Perceptions of Coral Reefs in Two Hawaii Priority Sites.	Surveys are currently being conducted in South Kohala on the Big Island, and will begin this spring/summer in Kahekili on Maui.
	Document past and contemporary trips to the Islands Unit of the Marianas Trench Marine National Monument & collect data regarding the historical and cultural connections of CNMI and Guam residents to the islands and waters of the Islands Unit.	Documenting Traditional Fishing in the Islands Unit of the Marianas Trench Marine National Monument.	Interviews completed, outreach brochure published, and final report being compiled (Jan 2013).
	Describe recreational, sport, and subsistence fishing in Hawaii and CNMI, and document the islands' connection to and dependence on fishing.	CNMI and Hawaii Fishing Community Profiles.	Final drafts of these reports are being edited and will be published soon.
	Collection of accurate and comprehensive information on the value of marine recreational fisheries.	2011 National Marine Recreational Fishing Expenditure Survey.	Results of the National Marine Recreational Fishing expenditure survey are being finalized. A brochure of Hawaii results has been designed and will be printed and distributed once regional impact assessments are published by NOAA headquarters.
	Obtain improved economic information on charter fishing fleet.	2012 Hawaii Charter Cost-Earnings Survey.	Undertook a 2012 Hawaii Charter Cost-Earnings Survey.
	Increase understanding of the social importance of fishing to Hawaiian communities that can also be used as a model for conducting similar research throughout the region.	Conduct a study to Understand the flow of non-commercial catch in Hawaiian communities at University of Hawaii, Hilo.	Social science researcher contracted to conduct study on flow of non-commercial catch through small Hawaiian communities. Surveys and fieldwork are completed and a report will publish soon.

## Pacific Islands

GOAL	OBJECTIVE	PROJECT(S)	RESULTS
<b>Improve Communication</b>	Enable recreational fishermen from American Samoa, CNMI, Guam, and Hawaii to participate in NMFS activities in fisheries, habitat conservation, and protected species programs and to help develop recreational fisheries initiatives.	Hold a Pacific Islands regional recreational summit in 2012.	NOAA Fisheries hosted a three-day meeting of 28 invited fishery constituents from American Samoa, the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam and Hawaii, August 21–23, 2012, to help the agency identify recreational fishery projects for possible implementation in FY-2013. Highlights of the summit included a poster session, digital polling, roundtable discussions, and consensus-based format. The delegates concluded the summit by proposing via real-time electronic polling, 21 potential projects for consideration by NOAA Fisheries.
	Improve quality of online information and resources for recreational fishing in the Pacific Islands Region.	Re-development of recreational fisheries web content.	In 2012 the website was updated to include new links to weather, buoys, tides, state and federal fishing regulations, and more. Content for recreational fishing statistics for the Pacific Islands Region, surveys, and National Angler Registry was also updated. Ongoing.
	Improve recreational fisheries outreach and education.	Develop useful outreach materials that discuss the importance of recreational fisheries.	Created an educational brochure that highlighted the importance of fishing in Hawaii, information on the top pelagic species caught in Hawaii, and local recipes for fish. Distributed widely to charterboat operators in the region.
	Engage public on the value and importance of recreational fishing in the Pacific Islands Region.	Participate in local fishing related events.	Developed fishing-related games and materials for children and families to engage in during fishing and ocean-related events, for example. The Hawaiian Fishing and Seafood Festival, October 7, 2012.
	Improving information flow and dialogue with recreational fishing associations, clubs and the fishing public.	Public outreach on recreational fishing issues.	Recreational Fisheries Specialist provided presentations and Q&A sessions to fishing clubs and to the fishing constituency at public meetings held in conjunction with Fishery Council meetings.
	Foster communication with the recreational fishing community.	Promoting outreach and contact with the recreational fishing sector.	Created a publicly accessible email address where the public can submit any and all concerns regarding recreational/non-commercial fisheries (PIRO.Recfish@noaa.gov). Published articles on recreational fishery issues for the Pacific Islands Region in fishing magazines and periodicals.

## Pacific Islands

GOAL	OBJECTIVE	PROJECT(S)	RESULTS
<b>Institutional Orientation</b>	Strengthen and then maintain NOAA Fisheries' ability to manage for the goals of Pacific Islands recreational/non-commercial fisheries.	Hire a Marine Recreational Fisheries Specialist.	Fishery Management Specialist (Recreational) recruited to NOAA Fisheries, Pacific Islands Regional Office (September 24, 2012).
	Establish dialogue and foster collaboration between the Marine Recreational Fisheries Specialist and regional personnel.	Internal outreach and collaboration.	Meet with and update PIR and Science Center programs/personnel on the goals and objectives of the recreational fisheries program within PIR/SFD and seek areas for collaboration and mutual benefit.
	Establish dialogue and foster collaboration between the Marine Recreational Fisheries Specialist and other NOAA entities.	External NOAA/PIR outreach and collaboration.	Meet with and update Fishery Council staff, Council advisory groups/committees, Council members and MAFAC Recreational Fisheries Working Group members on the goals and objectives of the recreational fisheries program within PIR/SFD and seek areas for collaboration and mutual benefit.
	Establish dialogue and foster collaboration between the Marine Recreational Fisheries Specialist and fisheries related research and educational institutions.	External outreach and collaboration.	Meet with and update representatives of fishery research programs, universities and fishery researchers on the goals and objectives of the recreational fisheries program within PIR/SFD and seek areas for collaboration and mutual benefit.
	Establish dialogue and foster collaboration between the Marine Recreational Fisheries Specialist and the recreational fishing constituency.	External outreach and collaboration.	Communicate with fishermen and representatives of all recreational fishing sectors through specific meetings, conference calls, fishing club meetings and workshops. Provide presentations to the public on issues impacting and important to recreational fisheries.



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**OFFICIAL BUSINESS**

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