

# Recommendations for Updating the NOAA National Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Policy

Prepared by the MAFAC Recreational Fishing Subcommittee

# MAFAC Recreational Fishing Subcommittee

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# Executive Summary

Comments highlighted the following:

- Continued focus of the socio-economic importance of recreational fishing to coastal communities and the nation.
- Importance of improved transparency in fishery management science and processes.
- The need to incorporate and address equity and environmental justice and climate impacts.
- Recognize that outreach and engagement continues to be important and is a two-way dialog.
- Understanding the universe of anglers is still a top priority.
- Importance of identifying and using metrics to monitor the effectiveness of the Policy.
- Continued focus on sustainably managing the impact of recreational fishing on the health of fisheries and ecosystems.

# Recommendations – Overarching Themes

- I. Incorporate Equity and Environmental Justice in the National Saltwater Policy
- II. The impacts of climate change on recreational management are comprehensive, and thus warrant comprehensive treatment within the Policy
- III. Improve Saltwater Recreational Harvest Data
- IV. Use Metrics to Monitor the Effectiveness of the Policy

# Recommendations to Existing Guiding Principles

## **Guiding Principle #1 - Support Ecosystem Conservation and Enhancement**

Recommendation 1: consider MAFAC's marine mammal work, once completed.

Recommendation 2: recognize that fishery management approaches are foundational to sustainable recreational fisheries management.

Recommendation 3: more directly acknowledge the need to address ecosystem interactions, like discards and depredation.

Recommendation 4: educate anglers on resource conservation practices to help increase their fishing opportunities.

# Recommendations to Existing Guiding Principles

## **Guiding Principle #2 – Promote Public Access to Quality Recreational Fishing Opportunities**

Recommendation: MAFAC supports this Guiding Principle and recommends retaining the section.

## **Guiding Principle #3 – Coordinate with State and Federal Management Entities**

Recommendation: retain this section, and examine how to improve its outreach to and partnership with Councils and state management.

# Recommendations to Existing Guiding Principles

## **Guiding Principle #4 – Advance Innovative Solutions to Evolving Science, Management, and Environmental Challenges**

Recommendation: retain this section, and develop an implementation roadmap and guidance for electronically reported recreational fishing data from private anglers.

## **Guiding Principle #5 – Provide Scientifically Sound and Trusted Social, Cultural, Economic, and Ecological Information**

Recommendation: revise this section to recognize ongoing necessary processes to improve data, and more directly commit to filling data gaps.

# Recommendations to Existing Guiding Principles

## **Guiding Principle #6 – Communicate and Engage with the Recreational Fishing Public**

Recommendation 1: continue the Regional Roundtables and support other venues and programs for local engagement.

Recommendation 2: expand opportunities that promote two-way dialog, mutual engagement, and engage anglers better in regulatory and science processes.