NOAA's National Seafood Strategy

NOAA FISHERIES

Purpose

The *National Seafood Strategy* outlines our direction over the next five years for supporting a thriving domestic U.S. seafood economy and enhancing the resilience of the seafood sector in the face of climate change and other stressors. Our vision is to ensure that:

- U.S. seafood continues to be produced sustainably
- The U.S. seafood sector contributes to the nation's climate-ready food production and to meeting critical domestic nutritional needs
- U.S. seafood production increases to support jobs, the economy, and the competitiveness of the U.S. seafood sector
- Supply chains and infrastructure are modernized with more value-added activity in the United States
- Opportunities are expanded to grow the size and capacity of the seafood workforce

Strategy Drivers

NOAA Fisheries' *National Seafood Strategy* supports the growing importance of seafood in meeting global needs and recognizes the unprecedented challenges faced by the U.S. seafood sector.

Seafood Is Good for People

Seafood is one of the best sources of nutrients essential for human health and well-being. It is also critical to providing food to a growing global population and is a foundational part of the identity of coastal communities.

Seafood Is Good for the Economy

The U.S. harvests about 10 billion pounds of seafood annually with a dockside value of $6.3 billion. Domestic seafood is also an economic engine that supports 1.2 million jobs and generates $165 billion in sales across the broader economy.

Seafood Is Good for the Planet

Harvested and grown responsibly, as it is in the United States, seafood is also an environmentally friendly way to produce a nutritious food given its relatively low carbon footprint and efficient use of resources, and is increasingly a critical part of food systems designed to reduce and mitigate the effects of climate change.

The U.S. seafood industry is facing unprecedented challenges.

Climate change is rapidly altering species location, size, and composition. It is also intensifying extreme events, storms, and impacts on infrastructure.

The **coronavirus pandemic** disrupted markets and trade, decreasing the economic viability of the seafood industry and limiting access to some seafood.

New technologies and other ocean uses, such as offshore wind energy, will affect use of ocean space and potentially result in conflicts.

Significant **labor shortages** plus aging harvesting, processing, and distribution infrastructure affect production, safety, and cost-effectiveness in the industry.

Strategy Framework

The *National Seafood Strategy* focuses on NOAA Fisheries' work to sustainably manage marine fisheries and produce seafood responsibly, based on sound science. It is one of a suite of strategies that describes how we will support the nation's fisheries and execute our mission in the face of climate change, market disruptions, and new ocean uses.

The *National Seafood Strategy* also allows NOAA Fisheries to address important national issues such as the resilience of coastal fishing communities to stressors like climate change and COVID-19 market disruptions; the financial viability of the seafood industry; the effects and opportunities of international trade; and the importance of seafood to nutrition, food accessibility, food security, subsistence fishing, cultural traditions, and tribal treaty rights.

To implement the strategy, NOAA Fisheries will partner with state, tribal, and other federal agencies, the National Sea Grant College Program, Regional Fisheries Management Councils, Interstate Commissions, academia, non-government organizations, harvesters, seafood farmers, and other partners or stakeholders to address the challenges facing the seafood sector, especially when resources are limited.

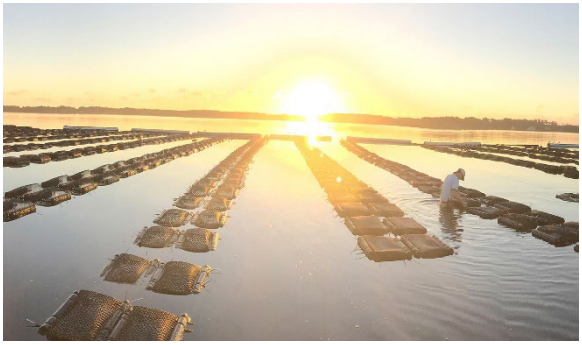
GOAL 1: Maintain or increase sustainable U.S. wild capture production

Changes in ocean conditions and the resulting shifts in distribution and abundance of marine resources, and the intensity of extreme events such as heat waves and damaging storms, are affecting access to fishing opportunities, production of seafood, and fishing to support local dietary needs, cultural traditions and tribal treaty rights. These factors, in addition to new ocean uses and advances in sampling technologies and data modernization, call for an evolution in science and management frameworks for a climate-ready seafood sector, including:

- **Fisheries Science.** Provide the natural and social science necessary for fisheries management to adapt under changing ecosystem dynamics.
- **Fisheries Management.** Optimize and diversify fishing opportunities and sustainable seafood production while ensuring the sustainability of fisheries through effective and efficient management. Identify and address bottlenecks in management to support the commercial fishing industry and fishing communities in their efforts to adapt to climate change and thrive in a changing ocean economy.
- **Habitat Conservation in Support of Fisheries.** Protect and restore habitat important to our nation's fisheries and support resilient coastal communities.

GOAL 2: Increase sustainable U.S. aquaculture production

Seafood is a healthy and climate-friendly nutrition choice and demand is increasing. Aquaculture of finfish, shellfish, invertebrates, and seaweed, is one effective way to significantly increase domestic seafood production—it is how the majority of growth in global and domestic demand has been met in the last 20 years. Supporting diverse and regionally-appropriate growth of the domestic aquaculture industry will depend on an efficient, strategic, and science-based regulatory approach that considers and mitigates impacts on protected resources, essential fish habitat, and marine ecosystems.



- **Marine Aquaculture Management and Regulatory Efficiency.** Accelerate progress on implementing an efficient, predictable, timely, and science-based regulatory framework for marine aquaculture.
- **Aquaculture Science.** Provide science-based advice and tools to minimize potential effects of an aquaculture operation on the environment and conduct coordinated, applied scientific research in support of sustainable industry development.

GOAL 3: Foster access to domestic and global markets for the U.S. seafood industry

A thriving domestic seafood industry—capable of competing at home and abroad—will translate into greater global seafood supply and food security from sustainable U.S. fisheries. It will also decrease our reliance on foreign fisheries that are at greater risk of overfishing, IUU fishing, and forced labor.

- **Communication and Promotion.** Increase public awareness of the availability, sustainability, and nutritional value of all U.S. seafood.
- **U.S. Market Development.** Work with federal partners and others to identify and develop U.S. seafood markets and put more U.S. seafood on U.S. plates, particularly for the underserved.
- **Fair Trade.** Promote fair seafood trade by combating IUU fishing and related harmful fishing practices around the world and by expanding access to foreign markets for U.S. seafood.

GOAL 4: Strengthen the entire U.S. seafood sector

Climate change, the COVID-19 market disruptions, and new ocean uses are highlighting systemic challenges to the U.S. seafood industry and the importance of supporting the entire seafood/fisheries value chain, including after seafood hits the docks. Addressing these challenges will help the seafood industry to rebuild more quickly and enable the industry to be more resilient and flexible in the face of potential future crises and market shocks.

- **Seafood as a Vital Part of the Blue Economy.** Support the U.S. commercial fishing, marine aquaculture, and other seafood communities to adapt and thrive in a changing ocean economy.
- **Seafood Infrastructure.** Work across federal agencies to modernize and maintain U.S. seafood infrastructure (e.g., vessels, hatcheries, port and dock facilities, processing, storage, and working waterfronts) in order to strengthen and enhance opportunities for coastal seafood communities and regional food networks.
- **Workforce Development.** Foster a growing and diverse seafood workforce, especially young harvesters and seafood farmers.
- **Reduce Barriers to Access.** Improve understanding of the economic and market-driven obstacles that prevent or reduce access to seafood, and impede recruitment and retention of the workforce across sectors.

Strategy Implementation

Informed by public comment and advice from our partners, NOAA Fisheries will prepare an implementation plan for the *National Seafood Strategy* with specific actions, timelines, partnerships, and milestones.

Related NOAA Fisheries Strategies and Plans

The **National Seafood Strategy** is nested within a suite of policies and guidance that directs NOAA Fisheries' activities. The directives are complementary and may overlap in their goals and sometimes actions. They are woven together by cross-agency coordination and priority setting. The other directives also address areas outside the purview of the National Seafood Strategy, such as recreational fishing, a comprehensive plan for climate change science and modeling, and protected resources.

NOAA **Fisheries Strategic Plan** for 2022–2025 outlines the agency's goals and key strategies around climate, sustainable fisheries and seafood, and protected species.

The **NOAA Climate, Ecosystems, and Fisheries Initiative** is a cross-NOAA effort to build the end-to-end, operational ocean modeling and decision support system needed to safeguard the nation's marine resources and resource-dependent communities in a changing climate.

The **NOAA Aquaculture Strategic Plan (2023–2028)** lays out the framework to support a thriving, and resilient U.S. aquaculture industry as part of a resilient seafood sector.

The **National 5-Year Strategy for Combating Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing 2022-2026** establishes interagency priorities to combat IUU fishing, curtail the global trade in seafood and seafood products derived from IUU fishing, and promote global maritime security.

NOAA Fisheries and National Ocean Service **Guidance and Best Practices for Engaging in Incorporating Traditional Ecological Knowledge in Decision Making** provides best practices designed to ensure that the collection and use of TEK is responsible, effective and mutually beneficial.

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