



**NOAA  
FISHERIES**

# **National Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Policy**

**Greater Atlantic**

**Regional Implementation Plan**

**2016-2017**

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# National Saltwater Policy Recreational Fisheries

## Greater Atlantic Regional Implementation Plan 2016-2017

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

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



**NOAA  
FISHERIES**







## Foreward

Recreational saltwater fisheries are an important component of our regional identity. Annually, millions of recreational fishing trips take place throughout the region. Recreational fishing contributes \$4.8 billion to our regional economy each year (\$1.3 billion across New England and \$3.5 billion across the mid-Atlantic in 2013). For-hire vessels, private vessels, and shore-based anglers harvest more than 75 million pounds of fish. The [Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office](#) and the [Northeast Fisheries Science Center](#) are responsible for the science-based stewardship of our nation's living marine resources in the northwest Atlantic Ocean. Together with our management partners, we are responsible for maintaining healthy marine and coastal ecosystems, sustainable and productive fishery resources, and commercial and recreational access to those fishery resources for the long-term use and benefit of the nation.

On a national level, NOAA Fisheries has been refocusing some of our efforts to better support saltwater recreational fishing and recreational fisheries issues. The [National Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Policy](#) was published in 2015 and highlights six key principles intended to guide us in considering the development and promotion of sustainable high-quality saltwater recreational fisheries.

In the northeast, our vision for the future includes thriving fish stocks, healthy fish habitats, vibrant coastal communities, and world-class fisheries. Achieving this goal requires a foundation of trust between NOAA and recreational anglers; therefore, collaboration with the recreational fisheries community is essential. This implementation plan is the next step toward making recreational fisheries a key focus of regional activities. While the plan will be a basic roadmap for action in the region, it is a living document that can accommodate new challenges and opportunities as they arise. We intend for this plan, and the activities described here, to embrace a wide range of partners and stakeholders to allow for successful recreational and for-hire fisheries.

This implementation plan is built on engagement with the recreational fishing public. Prior to developing this plan, we reached out to the recreational community for input to help us focus on their issues of greatest concern, as well as suggestions on how best to address those issues. Based on that input, we developed a draft implementation plan that we presented at meetings of the New England and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Councils for further public input. The Councils provided comments that we have incorporated in this final version. The result is this Greater Atlantic Region Recreational Fisheries Implementation Plan for 2016 and 2017.

See you on the water,

John Bullard, Regional Administrator  
Dr. William Karp, Science Center Director

# GREATER ATLANTIC REGIONAL OVERVIEW

The Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office manages fisheries that predominantly occur in federal waters from Maine through North Carolina.<sup>1</sup> This covers the jurisdiction of two regional fishery management councils and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. The Northeast Fisheries Science Center is responsible for providing the Regional Office and Councils with the best scientific information available to support the sustainable management of commercial and recreational fisheries.

## *New England*

In collaboration with the [New England Fishery Management Council](#), we manage the recreational fisheries in federal waters for cod, haddock, pollock, winter flounder, and other groundfish species throughout their range from the Gulf of Maine to Georges Bank and into southern New England. Recreational fishing in New England waters includes many other species, notably striped bass, bluefish, summer flounder, and others; however, these fisheries are managed by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and/or the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council. In the Greater Atlantic Region, possession of striped bass is prohibited in federal waters, with states managing the fishery in state waters through the Commission. On average, 1 to 1.5 million saltwater anglers fish every year in the New England states. Overall, \$1.3 billion was spent on fishing trip and equipment expenditures across New England in 2013.



A number of challenges face recreational management in New England. The Gulf of Maine is warming faster than most places on Earth, which is complicating the management of fisheries in the region. The recreational fisheries for cod and haddock in the Gulf of Maine have separate annual catch limits from the commercial fishery. The Regional Administrator establishes the cod and haddock recreational management measures for the upcoming fishing year to ensure that the recreational catch limits are not exceeded, in consultation with the Council. In the Gulf of Maine, balancing a cod stock at historically low size with a healthy and growing haddock stock has been a challenging process. The remaining groundfish stocks have recreational measures set by the New England Council or the Commission.

<sup>1</sup> NOAA Fisheries' Highly Migratory Species division manages tunas, sharks, and billfish outside of the Council or Commission process. The recreational activities for HMS can be found in the HMS Implementation Plan.



## ***Mid-Atlantic***

Recreational fisheries are a significant focus of the management process in the Mid-Atlantic. An average of 2.6 million anglers fished in the Mid-Atlantic annually from 2003 to 2013. Overall, total fishing trip and equipment spending across the Mid-Atlantic Region in 2013 was approximately \$3.5 billion. Summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, bluefish, mackerel, and golden tilefish are significant recreational fisheries managed by the [Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council](#). The Mid-Atlantic Council has identified recreational fishing objectives in its [Strategic Plan](#), and we will support the Council in achieving those objectives. Summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, and bluefish are managed cooperatively with the [Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission](#). Recreational fisheries for other species, including striped bass, croaker, and spot, are managed by the states through the Commission.

Summer flounder, also called “fluke,” is a highly prized commercial and recreational fish, and 40 percent of the allowable landings are allocated to the recreational sector. Both sectors of the fishery land nearly all of the fluke available to them. Scup, or “porgy” in some areas, is a healthy stock that contributes significantly to recreational fisheries in this region. Black sea bass is a sought-after food fish, that prefers structure on live-bottom and reef habitats, with an interesting life history (some black sea bass are born female and become male at some point in their lifetime). The population of this unique fish is difficult to assess, which has made determining an appropriate level of catch a difficult task. While recreational mackerel catches in the Mid-Atlantic have been lower in recent years, historically there are years when mackerel provide an important niche fishery.

Bluefish is one of the most popular and widely caught recreational fish along the U.S. Atlantic coast, with catches from Maine all the way to Florida. As fast-swimming predators, bluefish are well known for their strong fights on rod and reel. The Mid-Atlantic Council and Commission jointly manage the fishery, with up to 87 percent of the catch being allocated to the recreational sector. The remainder is allocated to commercial fisheries in each state that harvest bluefish as the population seasonally migrates up and down the coast.

Tilefish is typically caught in deeper waters, and is not as widely known as some other species. Two species of tilefish are caught in the Mid-Atlantic: Golden tilefish, also known as great northern tilefish or just “tilefish,” and blueline tilefish, which is also known as gray tile. The recreational fisheries for both of these species are relatively small and not well characterized by existing angler surveys. As they become more popular, party and charter vessels have been increasing the number of trips specifically targeting tilefish, and trips by private vessel owners are likely increasing as well. Because of increased targeting of blueline tilefish, new management measures are under development to help ensure the continued health of this stock.

## *Recent Accomplishments*

In recent years, we have expanded our work in recreational fisheries and fisheries engagement in a number of important ways. In 2015, we finalized a rule to establish special management zones off the coast of Delaware to reduce user conflicts between recreational and commercial fishing on artificial reefs. We also gave a number of presentations to angler groups on barotrauma reduction methods to improve survivability of recreationally released fish, and greatly expanded our outreach efforts by attending sportfishing shows and giving seminars on recreational management to recreational angler clubs. We continued to work on assessing, protecting, and improving essential fish habitat through our work with the fishery management councils, dam removals, and habitat restoration. In addition, we have expanded our outreach and research into minimizing recreational impacts to protected species like sea turtles and marine mammals. The Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC) has completed or substantially completed a number of studies in recent years that support the successful management of recreational fisheries. This includes an assessment of habitat in the Delmarva region, economic studies on recreational groundfish anglers, development of the bioeconomic models to estimate effects of regulatory changes on anglers in the mid-Atlantic fisheries, and stock assessments or assessment updates on bluefish, summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, cod, and haddock, among several other important recreational stocks. Please see APPENDIX A 2014-2015 Greater Atlantic Regional Recreational Fisheries Action Agenda for more information.





# SETTING THE STAGE

This implementation plan is specific to the role of NOAA Fisheries in the cooperative research and cooperative management of marine recreational fisheries in the Greater Atlantic Region. The goal of this implementation plan is to guide our actions related to recreational fisheries. It lays out our commitment to continue to take an active role in the collaborative development of management measures, to provide scientific expertise and data, and to implement regulations within our jurisdiction. Our partners from the Councils, Commission, and state management agencies each have responsibilities to manage recreational fisheries within their jurisdictions and this plan identifies pathways to improve collaboration and support for our management partners<sup>2</sup>. The actions detailed in the plan work within the framework of Council priorities, objectives, and management strategies to help guide the Agency in better incorporating recreational fishing issues into our responsibilities and decision-making.

The Regional Implementation Plan is built around the six Guiding Principles in the National Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Policy. This plan describes how we intend to apply those principles to activities within our region. Both the Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office and the Northeast Fisheries Science Center have 5-Year Strategic Plans that guide the [Regional Office](#) and [Center](#) in priority setting and overall direction. Recreational fisheries issues and integrating anglers into science programs are key components to these Strategic Plans across all of our divisions, particularly for the Regional Office's Sustainable Fisheries Division and the Center's Populations Dynamic Branch. Recreational outreach is also an important priority for the Stakeholder Engagement and Protected Resources Divisions, as well as being a part of our Habitat Conservation, Habitat Restoration, and Analysis and Program Support efforts. (See APPENDIX C for contact information.)

The Regional Action Agenda for 2016-2017 (APPENDIX B) provides specific detail on activities and milestones of this plan. Working from our 2014-2015 Regional Action Agenda, we have expanded upon the underlying principles for multi-year priorities and listed specific activities and milestones to guide our day-to-day work.



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<sup>2</sup> This implementation plan is not intended to supersede any Council or Commission responsibilities, priorities, or objectives.

We developed this implementation plan and the previous Action Agenda after soliciting public comment from members of the recreational fishing community, particularly targeting those actively engaged in the management process (e.g., Council and Commission members, Advisory Panel members, leadership from national and regional angler and for-hire vessel associations, etc.). We received comments from groups and individuals and incorporated their input in this plan. While many of the comments were focused on specific, current management measures, several themes emerged. As a result, many of the activities listed in the current Action Agenda are related to educating the public about the fishery data collection, cooperative research, and management processes to encourage anglers to more fully engage in the management of recreational fisheries. The implementation plan and the National Policy are intended to increase understanding of the management process for anglers, as well as for the agency to have a better institutional understanding of recreational fisheries and the unique challenges associated with them.





# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

## *Support ecosystem conservation and management*

Particularly in this time of changing ecosystems, the Regional Office and the Science Center are involved in the advancement of ecosystem science and management. Ensuring our recreational fisheries partners are aware of and involved in these efforts is an important aspect of this plan.

### *Ongoing Responsibilities:*

- Restore habitat for both recreationally targeted fish stocks and for the forage fish upon which those species depend.
- Understand ecosystem services of habitat and forage species and climate change impacts.

### *Areas of Enhanced Effort:*

- Increase recreational angler stewardship activities and activities to support healthy ecosystems.
- Increase awareness of ethical angling practices for targeted and protected species by ensuring consistent and accurate information is being distributed to the public on barotrauma, other safe fishing practices, and protected species interactions.

Objectives/Strategy	Projects/Deliverables
<b>Areas of Ongoing Responsibilities</b>	
<i>Restore habitat for both recreationally targeted fish stocks and for the forage fish upon which those species depend.</i>	Provide financial and technical assistance to partners for dam removal and enhancement of fish passages.
<i>Examine ecosystem services of habitat and forage species and climate change impacts.</i>	River herring research and monitoring efforts will enhance our understanding of the importance of this forage species to recreationally important stocks. The NEFSC will work with partners to improve river herring bycatch monitoring and mitigation in commercial fisheries, improve fish passage infrastructure on New England streams and rivers, and work to improve our understanding of the importance of river herring ecosystem services.
<b>Areas of Enhanced Effort</b>	
<i>Increase recreational angler stewardship activities (e.g., ethical angling equipment) and other activities for public participation in restoration.</i>	<p>Increase barotrauma recovery equipment usage through educational programs.</p> <p>Increase outreach activities regarding seasons, bag, and size limit regulations.</p>
<i>Increase awareness of ethical angling practices near protected species by ensuring consistent and accurate information is distributed to the public on safe fishing practices and protected species interactions.</i>	<p>Increase awareness of protected species activities and responsibilities for recreational boaters and anglers to ensure safe fishing practices related to protected species.</p> <p>Increase awareness of “See a Spout, Watch Out” Program to educate recreational boaters about responsible whale watching from private vessels.</p>

## ***Promote public access to quality recreational fishing opportunities***

Broad and sustained public access to recreational fishing opportunities comes from sound, science-based fisheries management.

### ***Ongoing Responsibilities:***

- Ensure effective management measures for the recreational fishing sector of all fisheries consistent with the overall management strategy.

### ***Areas of Enhanced Effort:***

- Improve coordination between GARFO and the Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary (SBNMS).
- Increase the flexibility of the bioeconomic model used to establish recreational Gulf of Maine cod and haddock management measures.
- Increase understanding of the “true” value of saltwater recreational fishing.



Objectives/Strategy	Projects/Deliverables
<b>Areas of Ongoing Responsibility</b>	
<i>Ensure fishing opportunities consistent with stock condition.</i>	Support the development of management measures that are consistent with scientifically sound limits that are designed to maximize recreational opportunity within catch limits.
<b>Areas of Enhanced Effort</b>	
<i>Improve coordination between GARFO and Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary (SBNMS).</i>	Include Sanctuary materials at outreach events.  Develop an informational handout on fisheries management in Stellwagen Bank Sanctuary.
<i>Increase the flexibility of the bioeconomic model used to establish recreational Gulf of Maine cod and haddock management measures</i>	Explore the feasibility of adjusting the bioeconomic model to quantify monthly, rather than bimonthly, effects of different regulatory scenarios on angler effort, catch, expenditures, and welfare in the Northeast.
<i>Increase understanding of the “true” value of saltwater recreational fishing.</i>	Expand the information available to fishery managers by estimating the value anglers place on marine saltwater fishing rights in Massachusetts.

## ***Coordinate with State and Federal management entities***

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

### ***Ongoing Responsibilities***

- Support Council and Commission goals and the development of actions intended to increase success of recreational fisheries management in both state and federal waters.
- Collaborate on the development of critical science priorities and data needed to improve stock assessments and inform fisheries management.

### ***Areas of Enhanced Effort:***

- Improve coordination between GARFO, NEFSC, and states on recreational fisheries issues and activities, including data gathering, analytical techniques, and improved estimates of fishing effort and catch.

Objectives/Strategy	Projects/Deliverables
<b>Areas of Ongoing Responsibilities</b>	
<i>Support Council and Commission development of actions intended to increase success of recreational fisheries management in both state and federal waters.</i>	Provide technical and policy assistance for Council and Commission actions, notably the Comprehensive Summer Flounder Amendment, a Black Sea Bass Amendment to address ongoing management challenges, and a limited entry Amendment for the New England groundfish for-hire fleet.
<b>Areas of Enhanced Effort</b>	
<i>Improve coordination between GARFO and states on recreational fisheries issues, including data gathering, analytical techniques, and improved estimates of fishing effort and catch.</i>	Collaborate with ACCSP on smartphone application that complies with state and federal trip reporting requirements (i.e., eTrips/M).

## ***Advance innovative solutions to evolving science, management, and environmental challenges***

Novel solutions start with an open mindset to new developments and approaches.

### ***Ongoing Responsibilities:***

- Support development of additional electronic fishery-dependent data reporting.
- Continue to fund research on recreational fishing impacts, particularly on recreational discard mortality.
- Increase awareness of, and compliance with, federal recreational fishing regulations among private anglers.
- Continue to fund research on recreational fishing impacts, particularly on recreational discard mortality.
- Collaborate on the development of critical science priorities and data needed to improve stock assessments and fisheries management.

### ***Areas of Enhanced Effort:***

- Seek balanced consideration of both commercial and recreational sectors in fishery policy discussions at all levels.
- Establish a process for a communicating feedback from recreational industry.

Objectives/Strategy	Projects/Deliverables
<b>Areas of Ongoing Responsibilities</b>	
<i>Support development of additional electronic reporting systems for for-hire vessels.</i>	Develop universal web-based application for federally permitted vessels, including for-hire fleet.  Increase awareness of for-hire vessels eVTR reporting.
<i>Increase awareness of, and compliance with, federal recreational fishing regulations among private anglers.</i>	Support development of a “Fish Rules” smartphone application in the Greater Atlantic Region.
<i>Continue to fund research on recreational fishing impacts, particularly on recreational discard mortality.</i>	Support execution and consideration of studies of recreational discard mortality for cusk and haddock in the Gulf of Maine.
<i>Collaborate on the development of critical science priorities and data needed to improve stock assessments and fisheries management.</i>	Work closely with recreational anglers, fishing organizations, and shark tournaments to tag highly migratory pelagic sharks with the Cooperative Shark Tagging Program.
<b>Areas of Enhanced Effort</b>	
<i>Seek more balanced consideration of commercial and recreational sectors in fishery policy discussions.</i>	Ensure recreational impacts are discussed with decision-makers.
<i>Increase communication and feedback efforts between staff and fishermen.</i>	Establish a process for communicating feedback from recreational industry.

## ***Provide scientifically sound and trusted social, cultural, economic, and ecological information***

Our fisheries management programs are built on a requirement to use the best scientific information available. Science Center, Regional Office, and NMFS headquarters staffs all have key roles in ensuring this requirement is fulfilled.

### ***Ongoing Responsibilities:***

- Produce accurate stock assessments for recreationally important fish stocks.
- Support research on recreational fishing impacts on protected species and other species of concern.

### ***Areas of Enhanced Effort:***

- Enhance the working relationship and communication between the NMFS Headquarters Office of Science and Technology and the Regional Office, Science Center, and management partners.
- Increase multidisciplinary and cross-cutting science through greater investments in cooperative and collaborative research, as described in the NEFSC Strategic Plan.
- Enhance cooperative research integration throughout the NEFSC by incorporating more cooperative research and collaborate more with fishing industry, recreational anglers, and non-governmental science institutions.



Objectives/Strategy	Projects/Deliverables
<b>Areas of Ongoing Responsibilities</b>	
<i>Produce accurate stock assessments for recreationally important fish stocks.</i>	<p>Support development of benchmark black sea bass stock assessment.</p> <p>Complete stock assessments (or updates) as needed for other stocks.</p> <p>Support evaluation of blueline tilefish in the Mid-Atlantic.</p>
<i>Support research on recreational fishing impacts on protected species and species of concern.</i>	Develop and undertake a survey to better understand the extent of interactions with sea turtles in mid-Atlantic recreational fisheries.
<i>Understand economic contributions of recreational uses of ocean and coastal resources.</i>	<p>Assist in the estimation of the economic contribution of marine angler expenditures on durable goods in the United States.</p> <p>Assist in the development and analysis of the National Marine Recreational Use Survey.</p> <p>Assist in the estimation of the economic contribution of marine angler expenditures on trip-related goods in the United States.</p>
<b>Areas of Enhanced Effort</b>	
<i>Enhance the working relationship and communication between the Office of Science and Technology, other partners (ACCSP), and Regional Office and Science Center staff.</i>	<p>GARFO membership and active participation on MRIP Transition Team, RecTech Committee.</p> <p>Support MRIP outreach plan.</p>
<i>Increase multidisciplinary and cross-cutting science through greater investments in cooperative and collaborative research, as described in NEFSC Strategic Plan.</i>	<p>Work to develop similar self-reporting applications that may be used on smartphones and tablet computers.</p> <p>Studies are proposed to make comparisons among current recreational fishing estimates and catch gathered via mail, telephone, and face-to-face interviews conducted during access point surveys.</p>
<i>Enhance cooperative research integration throughout the NEFSC by incorporating more cooperative research and collaborate more with fishing industry, recreational anglers, and non-governmental science institutions.</i>	Collaborate with Rutgers University researchers on a recreational fishery-independent survey to estimate black sea bass distributions and abundance.

## ***Communicate and engage with the recreational fishing public***

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

### ***Ongoing Responsibilities:***

- Increase interaction and relationship building between the recreational fishing community and Regional Office and Science Center staff and leadership.

- Increase visibility of NOAA Fisheries in the recreational fishing community.

#### ***Areas of Enhanced Effort:***

- Improve awareness and understanding in the recreational fishing community of relevant scientific and management issues, including stock assessments, data collection and usage, and the management process.
- Increase institutional awareness of recreational fisheries.
- Demonstrate that the concerns of the recreational fishing community are incorporated when alternative management measures are considered and evaluated.

Objectives/Strategy	Projects/Deliverables
<b>Areas of Ongoing Responsibilities</b>	
<b><i>Increase interaction between recreational fishing community and Regional Office staff and leadership.</i></b>	<p>Formalize Regional Recreational Fisheries Team to enhance regional coordination of recreational issues.</p> <p>Increase port agent outreach to bait and tackle shops, etc.</p> <p>Leadership participation at recreational events.</p>
<b><i>Increase visibility of NOAA Fisheries in the recreational fishing community.</i></b>	<p>Attend and participate in recreational fishing, sporting, and boating shows.</p> <p>Increase social media presence for recreational fishing issues, news, and activities.</p> <p>Increase distribution of federal regulatory information at high-visibility points.</p> <p>Increase coordination with state partners for recreational outreach efforts.</p>
<b>Areas of Enhanced Effort</b>	
<b><i>Improve awareness and understanding in the recreational fishing community of relevant scientific and management issues, including stock assessments, data collection and usage, and the management process.</i></b>	<p>Develop information sheets or pamphlets for public distribution.</p> <p>Assist in planning and participate in at least one MREP workshop focused on recreational anglers.</p> <p>Maintain and utilize a recreational contacts database for focused recreational outreach.</p>
<b><i>Increase institutional awareness for recreational fisheries.</i></b>	<p>Provide GARFO and NEFSC staff training on MRIP and other recreational concerns.</p> <p>Publicize internal recreational fishing activities to GARFO and NEFSC staff.</p> <p>Demonstrate that the concerns of the recreational fishing community are incorporated when alternative management measures are considered and evaluated.</p>







# SUMMARY

This Implementation Plan is designed to highlight the importance of recreational fisheries for the Region and Center. We intend for this plan to be a living guidance document to better focus our efforts in supporting and enhancing recreational fisheries and their management. The success of the plan requires collaboration and participation of our management partners and the entire recreational fishing community, including both the for-hire and private angler sectors.

# APPENDIX A - 2014-2015 Action Agenda Greater Atlantic Regional Recreational Fisheries Action Agenda

Goal	Objective	Projects	Details	Status
<b>Goal 1 - Improved Recreational Fishing Opportunities</b>	Objective 1: Reduce user conflicts on artificial reefs in federal waters.	Project 1: At request of the Mid-Atlantic Council, determine the extent that special management zones (SMZs) for sportfish-restoration-funded artificial reefs can be implemented.	Deliverable: Measures to reduce user conflicts between recreational and commercial fishing on artificial reefs.  Timing: GARFO anticipates issuing a proposed rule for upto five SMZs in 2014. More requests from Mid-Atlantic Council for SMZs can be expected for 2014-2015. Review and implementation will be handled on a case-by-case basis.	<b>Complete.</b>
	Objective 2: Reduce release mortality in recreational fisheries.	Project 1: Improve survival in recreationally released fish. (Develop an angler-focused presentation on the best practices for releasing fish.)	Deliverable: At least five presentations to anglers on techniques to improve survival of released fish.	<b>Complete.</b>
	Objective 3: Provide habitat-related information in support of management decisions to protect fish and invertebrate species that occupy Delmarva reef habitats.	Project 1: Assess habitat of Delmarva reefs.	Deliverable: Final technical report characterizing geological and biological features of benthic reef habitats.	<b>Final report pending.</b>
	Objective 4: Increase spawning and nursery area for anadromous species.	Project 1: Assist dam removal and improve fish passage. These projects will restore access to approximately 478 stream miles and 9,200 acres of historic spawning habitat.	Deliverable: Thirty-two dams and fish passage projects (Appendix 1) throughout the Northeast Region.	<b>Substantial progress, as funding allowed.</b>
	Objective 5: Protect habitat areas important for recreational fish species through Council actions.	Project 1: Work with Councils to improve Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) designations and review of areas of high habitat vulnerability.	Deliverable: Technical assistance and general support for consideration in both the New England Council's EFH Omnibus Amendment and Mid-Atlantic Council's Atlantic Bluefish Fishery Management Plan.  Timing: Council actions will be considered during 2013-2015.	<b>NEFMC work on EFH Omnibus - complete. Rulemaking in development; MAFMC starting EFH FW.</b>

	Objective 6: Improve conservation of protected species.	Project 1: Evaluate fishing practices to help protect sea turtles.  Recreational anglers occasionally hook sea turtles by accident. To improve the release of sea turtles, we will evaluate the available information on sea turtle interactions with recreational gear and recommend best practices for anglers, in cooperation with the Southeast Region.	Deliverable: Assessment of how, when, and where recreational fishing impacts to sea turtles occur, identification of data gaps, and next steps.  Timing: Completed in 2015	<b>Complete.</b>
<b>Goal 2 - Improved Recreational Catch, Effort, and Status Data</b>	Objective 1: Provide a more timely and efficient reporting system to party/charter vessels.	Project 1: Electronic logbook reporting by for-hire vessels.	Deliverable: Options for electronic logbook reporting by for-hire vessels in the Northeast multispecies fishery.	<b>Complete for all commercial and for-hire vessels.</b>
	Objective 2: Improve quality of recreational fishing catch and effort information for the Northeast Region.	Project 1: Participate in the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP).  Several regional staff members are involved in MRIP decision-making and provide technical guidance on pilot project selection and regional assessments.	Deliverable: MRIP project selections and evaluations that address Northeast Region concerns and issues.  Timing: Ongoing through 2014–2015.	<b>Ongoing</b>
	Objective 3: Produce accurate stock status assessments for recreational fish stocks.	Project 1: Conduct improved stock assessment for Atlantic bluefish.  The last full benchmark assessment for Atlantic bluefish was in 2005. Atlantic bluefish is the second most commonly caught recreational species on the Atlantic coast. The NEFSC will conduct a benchmark peer-reviewed stock assessment on bluefish for use in the development of fishery management actions.	Deliverable: Stock assessments and stock status reports for bluefish.	<b>Complete. SAW 60, August 2015</b>
<b>Goal 3 - Improved Social and Economic Data on Recreational Fisheries</b>	Objective 1: Improved economic information on recreational fisheries to allow for informed management decisions.	Project 1: Update a valuation and economic impact study of recreational groundfish anglers in the Northeast Region.  New data will be collected to feed a bio-economic model used to quantify the effects of different regulatory scenarios on angler effort, catch, expenditures, and welfare in the Northeast. The model is currently being used by the New England Fishery Management Council to develop recreational fishing measures for Gulf of Maine cod and haddock.	Deliverable: More accurate models based on the latest data.  Timing: Data will be collected in 2014–2015.	<b>Data for a pilot study was collected in 2014-2015. This survey and similar socioeconomic studies are ongoing.</b>



# APPENDIX A - 2014-2015 Action Agenda Greater Atlantic Regional Recreational Fisheries Action Agenda

	<p>Project 2: Conduct a valuation and economic impact study of recreational summer flounder, black sea bass, and scup anglers in the Northeast Region.</p> <p>NOAA Fisheries scientists will construct a bio-economic model that estimates the effects of regulatory changes on total angler effort, catch, expenditures, and economic benefit.</p>	<p>Deliverable: An economic model to estimate the effects of regulatory changes on total angler effort for summer flounder, black sea bass, and scup fisheries.</p> <p>Timing: The models will be developed in 2014.</p>	<p>The models were developed in 2014 and continued analysis is ongoing.</p>
<p>Objective 2: Understand economic contributions of recreational uses of ocean and coastal resources.</p>	<p>Project 1: Assist in the development and analysis of the National Marine Recreational Use Survey.</p> <p>This national survey will help identify the contributions of ocean-related uses to local and national economies, coastal communities, and associated businesses.</p>	<p>Deliverable: A statistically sound national survey that will also meet information needs for the Northeast Region.</p> <p>Timing: A final report will be available in 2014.</p>	<p>A final report was made available in 2014 and continued analysis is ongoing.</p>
<p>Objective 3: Estimate the value anglers receive from saltwater fishing in Massachusetts waters.</p>	<p>Project 1: Release saltwater fishing license valuation study.</p> <p>This economic study will help us better understand the value that saltwater anglers obtain from being able to fish in Massachusetts waters. Such information is important for evaluating investments to support the recreational fishing industry, for damage assessments, and for ocean zoning planning.</p>	<p>Deliverable: Report on the value anglers place on having saltwater fishing licenses in Massachusetts.</p> <p>Timing: A final report will be available in 2014.</p>	<p>A final report was made available in 2014, and continued analysis is ongoing.</p>

<b>Goal 4 - Improved Communication</b>	Objective 1: Increase interaction between regional NOAA Fisheries leadership and the recreational fisheries community.	<p>Project 1: Host Northeast Region annual recreational fisheries forum.</p> <p>Work with community representatives to host an annual in-person recreational fisheries forum to encourage dialogue among NOAA Fisheries regional leadership and members of the recreational fishing community.</p> <p>Project 2: Host town hall conference calls.</p>	<p>Deliverable: Annual Northeast recreational fisheries forum.</p> <p>Timing: The forums will take place in early 2014 and 2015.</p>	<b>Complete.</b>
	Objective 2: Increase visibility of NOAA Fisheries in the community.	<p>Project 1: Participate in recreational fishing and boating events.</p> <p>In cooperation with other NOAA offices and state agencies, conduct outreach on the National Saltwater Angler Registry, regional NOAA programs, ocean literacy and ethical angling at fishing and boating shows, and other recreational fishing-related events in New England and the Mid-Atlantic.</p>	<p>Deliverable: Participation in a minimum of five recreational fishing and boating events each year.</p>	<b>Complete. 19 shows attended.</b>
	Objective 3: Improve awareness and understanding of relevant issues.	<p>Project 1: Support MRIP outreach and information activities within the Northeast Region.</p> <p>Serve as an information resource about the National Saltwater Angler Registry and other MRIP activities that affect Northeast recreational fisheries.</p>	<p>Deliverable: Outreach products (e.g., fact sheets and flyers) and other information resources on MRIP.</p> <p>Timing: Ongoing during 2014–2015.</p>	<b>Ongoing.</b>

# APPENDIX A - 2014-2015 Action Agenda Greater Atlantic Regional Recreational Fisheries Action Agenda

<b>Goal 5 - Institutional Prioritization</b>		Project 2: Inform the recreational fishery community about marine aquaculture issues.  Provide information to the recreational fishing community on the possibilities and challenges aquaculture development poses for the recreational fishing industry.	Deliverable: Provide information at community events.  Timing: Ongoing during 2014–2015.	<b>Complete.</b>
		Project 3: Provide information on safe fishing practices to protect protected species.	Deliverable: Distribute outreach materials to the recreational fishing community, including sturgeon sticker and sea turtle brochure, sticker, and poster.	<b>Complete.</b>
	Objective 1: Integrate recreational fishing activities into NOAA Fisheries' regional strategic planning processes.	Project 1: Align the Action Agenda with the NOAA Fisheries regional strategic planning process.	Deliverable: Strategic planning documents that reflect recreational priorities.	<b>Complete.</b>
	Objective 2: Increase awareness and understanding of recreational fishing issues among NOAA Fisheries regional staff.	Project 1: Conduct internal lectures on recreational fishing issues.  Host a speaker on a recreational fishing issue as part of the Region's evening public lecture series and monthly in-house lecture series.	Deliverable: A minimum of two recreational fishing-related lectures each year.  Timing: Lectures take place monthly. Recreational fishing-related lectures will be integrated into the program.	<b>Complete.</b>



		<p>Project 2: Build understanding of the recreational fisheries community perspective.</p> <p>Conduct an internal NOAA Fisheries presentation on recreational community perspectives on the Magnuson-Stevens Act, and develop a presentation on the Northeast federal marine fishery management process that includes recreational fishing perspectives on key provisions.</p>	<p>Deliverable: PowerPoint presentations. Timing: Ongoing in 2014.</p>	<b>Complete.</b>
		<p>Project 3: Create an Angler Stewardship Award.</p> <p>Develop a regional NOAA Fisheries annual award program to honor individuals and organizations for their contribution to the conservation, restoration, and enhancement of Northeast recreational fisheries and their habitat.</p>	<p>Deliverable: Annual Recreational Angler Stewardship Award recognition.</p> <p>Timing: Annual award beginning in 2014.</p>	<b>Dropped.</b>
Objective 3: Increase collaboration between NOAA Fisheries staff, partners, and the angling community.		<p>Project 1: Conduct a grants workshop.</p> <p>Organize a grants meeting to discuss and review U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA Fisheries Northeast fisheries grant program priorities as they relate to recreational fisheries.</p>	<p>Deliverable: A running list of available grant opportunities on the Region's website.</p> <p>Timing: Information will be posted online beginning in 2014.</p>	<b>Complete.</b>
		<p>Project 2: Encourage cooperative research and monitoring on recreational species.</p> <p>Work with the Councils and the Commission to include recreational fishing research needs in appropriate cooperative research programs, such as the Mid-Atlantic Research Set-Aside (RSA) Program.</p>	<p>Deliverable: Increased consideration of recreational fishing projects in cooperative research programs.</p> <p>Timing: Ongoing in 2014–2015.</p>	<b>Complete (and ongoing)</b>



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