

**NOAA
FISHERIES**

The background image shows a white boat docked at a pier. In the foreground, there is a wooden dock with a small table and some equipment on it. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds. The text is overlaid on a dark blue rectangular area.

National Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Policy Southeast Regional Implementation Plan 2016-2017

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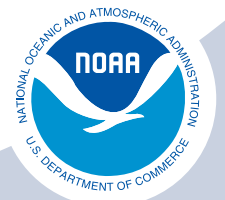
National Saltwater Recreational Fisheries

Southeast Regional Implementation Plan

2016-2017

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

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



**NOAA
FISHERIES**



Foreward

The 2016-2017 Southeast Recreational Fishing Implementation Plan was developed collaboratively between the Southeast Regional Office and the Southeast Fisheries Science Center. This regional plan is aligned with both the National Saltwater Recreational Fishing Policy and the plan to implement that policy. The intent of this plan is to have the national goals and objectives largely identified by the saltwater recreational fishing community considered throughout our region-specific initiatives.

We encourage you to read this plan and reflect upon the progress made in building sustainable fisheries over the years that resulted from the dedication of anglers like you, NOAA Fisheries experts, and our partners including fishery management councils, marine fisheries commissions, academia, and state agencies. For example, within the past few years catch levels for South Atlantic yellowtail snapper, vermilion snapper and black seabass, as well as Gulf of Mexico gag grouper and red snapper were increased—some to the highest levels ever seen since the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act was implemented in 1976.

Over the past few decades we've seen significant changes in saltwater recreational fishing. We've also seen some of these changes present as management challenges, especially as technology has progressed and more anglers are introduced to this great sport. After all, the Southeast is home to more than half of the nation's saltwater anglers, and innovations in fish finding technologies and fishing gear continue to improve anglers' ability to find and catch fish.

Despite these challenges, we must continue generating success stories together as conserving our saltwater fish populations and habitats will ultimately provide recreational fishing opportunities for generations to come. This plan is one way NOAA Fisheries is reaching out to the recreational fishing community to continue moving in such a positive direction. The plan highlights strategies to support ecosystem conservation and management; promote public access to quality recreational fishing opportunities; continue state-federal coordination; advance innovative scientific and management solutions; and continue to improve communication and engagement with the recreational fishing public.

In closing, recreational fishing is an economic driver for the Southeast United States. Anglers come from all over the world to hook up on that long-awaited billfish off the Carolinas and South Florida, land a giant grouper off Florida's west coast, or take their children to a favorite reef for red snapper in the northern Gulf of Mexico. It is an amazing sport that we must work together, now more than ever, to preserve because it is not only a pastime in the Southeast, but it's a way of life.

Dr. Roy Crabtree, Regional Administrator
NOAA Fisheries Southeast Regional Office

Dr. Bonnie Ponwith, Director
Southeast Fisheries Science Center

SOUTHEAST REGIONAL OVERVIEW

NOAA Fisheries' Southeast Region includes federal waters in the Gulf of Mexico, the South Atlantic from North Carolina to Florida's East Coast, and the Caribbean including Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. It is made up of some of the most varied habitats and climates, as well as numerous recreationally important fish species and fishing traditions. In 2014, the region boasted the largest recreational fishery in the country with more than 4.9 million anglers taking more than 40 million fishing trips.

Marine fish and fisheries have been vital to the prosperity and cultural identity of coastal communities in the southeastern United States. Recreational fishing is an important social activity for individuals, families, and communities, and is a critical economic driver of and contributor to local and regional economies, as well as the national economy.

Fishing has enormous cultural value as well. Anglers are some of the greatest conservationists and voices for fisheries and NOAA strives to work in concert as fellow stewards to protect and preserve fisheries and fishing opportunities. Scientists and specialists at NOAA work continuously to manage fish and fishing as part of the fishery management council process, as mandated by Congress under the Magnuson-Stevens Act, with current and innovative science as well as input from the fishing community. This collective approach has produced a number of increased recreational fishing opportunities in the region.

NOAA Fisheries in the southeast region is composed of the Southeast Regional Office (SERO) and the Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC). The Southeast Regional Office is made up of multiple divisions whose collective goal is the successful management of fisheries. NOAA's SERO office manages federal fisheries and conserves and protects protected species and habitat throughout the South Atlantic, Caribbean, and Gulf of Mexico regions. SERO also works closely with each of the fishery management councils to apply science-based management approaches to maintain healthy fish stocks important to commercial, recreational, and subsistence fisheries. NOAA Fisheries also focuses on the protection and conservation of listed species such as marine mammals, corals, sea turtles, and smalltooth sawfish. Together, NOAA's SERO manages more than 160 species through 17 Fishery Management Plans (FMPs). Although not all of these species are targeted or harvested by recreational anglers, their protection and sustainable management contribute to the overall health of the marine environment, thus enhancing the availability of those species most prized by recreational anglers. In concert with the SERO, the SEFSC manages multidisciplinary research, data collection, and stock assessment programs to provide scientific information to support national and regional programs of NOAA Fisheries and to respond to the needs of regional fishery management councils, Interstate and International Fishery Commissions, Fishery Development Foundations, government agencies, and the general public. The SERO and SEFSC work closely on many recreational fishing initiatives and management issues and will continue to do so to achieve the objectives outlined in the National Saltwater Recreational Fishing Policy.

SETTING THE STAGE

Recreational fishery interests in the Southeast Region are represented through a variety of fishing organizations, non-government organizations, state and federal governments, marine fishery commissions, and fishery management councils. The Southeast Region consists of three separate fishery management councils— Gulf of Mexico, Caribbean, and South Atlantic. The Southeast Regional Office and Southeast Fisheries Science Center staff continue to have an open dialogue with the recreational fishing community through various mechanisms, including open question-and-answer sessions hosted by the regional administrator and science center director at fishery management council meetings, recreational constituent conference calls on Gulf of Mexico red snapper, meeting with Southeast recreational fishing representatives from each of the fishery management councils and members of the Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee’s Recreational Fisheries Subcommittee, and many other conversations. These types of forums are essential to gaining feedback on issues concerning or important to recreational fishermen.

This plan is designed to complement and support the National Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Policy, the Southeast Region’s Strategic Plan, and build on previous Southeast Region recreational fisheries action agendas. It is intended to help guide NOAA Fisheries’ actions pertaining to recreational fisheries in the Southeast Region. This plan will serve as a basic roadmap for action, but is a living document that can accommodate new challenges and needs as they arise. It is organized around the six guiding principles identified in the National Saltwater Recreational Policy. These principles allow for transparent understanding of NOAA’s goals and objectives working with the recreational fishing community and help frame the goals of successful fisheries management in the Southeast.



Guiding Principles

Support ecosystem conservation and enhancement

Marine and coastal ecosystems across the nation suffer impacts and loss of services from a variety of threats. In the Southeast some of these factors include habitat loss and degradation from coastal development, sea level rise, tropical storms and hurricanes, and invasive species fishing interactions. Protection and restoration of our valuable marine habitats benefit these ecosystems and the species that depend on them. NOAA Fisheries is required to conduct consultations for any project that may impact valuable habitats or protected species. An essential fish habitat (EFH) consultation is the process used by NOAA Fisheries to protect and conserve habitats determined to be especially important to commercial and recreational marine fish and shellfish. NOAA Fisheries also is required to conduct consultations under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) to ensure that actions they authorize, fund, or carry out do not jeopardize the existence of any species listed under the ESA, or destroy or adversely modify designated critical habitat of any listed species. Using the best science to monitor and understand these systems and including stakeholder input, NOAA strives to achieve this goal.

Ongoing Responsibilities/Activity:

- Improve understanding of ecosystems services of habitat and forage species and climate change impacts.
- Restore habitat for recreationally targeted fish stocks and/or for the forage fish upon which those species depend.

Areas of Enhanced Effort:

- Sentinel Site Cooperative.
- Increasing recreational angler stewardship activities and activities to support healthy ecosystems.

Objectives/Strategy	Projects/Deliverables
Ongoing Responsibilities/Activity	
<p><i>Improve understanding of ecosystems services provided by habitat and forage species and impacts of climate change.</i></p>	<p>Support targeted efforts to advance fisheries modeling to include ecosystem dynamics through small pilot efforts (e.g., Atlantis model under Habitat Blueprint) to inform fisheries management.</p> <p>In 2015-2016, NOAA Fisheries and partners will develop Regional Action Plans that identify strengths, weaknesses, priorities, and actions to implement the Strategy in each Region over the next 3 to 5 years.</p> <p>Develop regional climate change strategy.</p>
<p><i>Restore habitat for recreationally targeted fish stocks and/or for the forage fish upon which those species depend.</i></p>	<p>Improve habitat conditions for fisheries and coastal and marine life providing economic, cultural, and other ecological benefits in NOAA's Southeast Habitat Blueprint areas (Puerto Rico's Northeast Reserves and Culebra Island and Florida's Biscayne Bay).</p> <p>Continue to address increasing threats to coral reef fisheries caused by invasive species, such as lionfish in the Atlantic, Caribbean, and Gulf of Mexico.</p>
Areas of Enhanced Effort	
<p><i>Support Sentinel Site work to solve specific regional coastal problems affecting fishermen and communities.</i></p>	<p>Assess the impacts of sea level change and develop key conservation tools for local, state, and regional managers, including maps to define high- and low-risk areas at the North Carolina and Northern Gulf of Mexico Sentinel Sites.</p>
<p><i>Increase recreational angler stewardship activities and activities to support healthy ecosystems.</i></p>	<p>Charleston Harbor Watershed Habitat Conservation and Restoration. NOAA will pilot an interdisciplinary approach for prioritizing tidal creek restoration efforts. This approach will include criteria based on engineering feasibility, public perceptions, and the value of these habitats for fish and shellfish as well as for human health.</p>
<p><i>Contribute expertise to agency exploration of the potential role of artificial reefs.</i></p>	<p>Participate in the ASMFC-NOAA Fisheries Artificial Reef Workshop.</p>

Promote public access to quality recreational fishing opportunities

The SERO and SEFSC continue to strive to ensure healthy and robust fish populations are available for anglers to access and enjoy for generations to come. Recreational fishing opportunities are expanded through sound conservation and management principles, which include the regular review of allocations and regulatory measures, improving post-release survival, and enhanced habitat protection and restoration. These are the core tenets of the Magnuson-Stevens Act and are central goals in NOAA Fisheries management.

Ongoing Responsibilities/Activity:

- Collect and employ the best data to make sound management decisions to allow for increased public access for anglers.
- Safeguard the fishing experience by helping anglers avoid adverse interactions with protected species.

Areas of Enhanced Effort:

- Identify and highlight recreational fishing opportunities.



Objectives/Strategy	Projects/Deliverables
On-Going Responsibilities/Activity	
<p><i>Collect and employ sound data to support management decisions which may allow for increased public access for anglers.</i></p>	<p>Continue to conduct and support stock assessments for federally managed species, including red snapper, gag grouper, black sea bass, and other recreational target species in the South Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico, and Caribbean.</p> <p>Use the best available science to create consistent and predictable open seasons, while preventing catch limit overages, to allow recreational anglers to plan and pursue various species of fish throughout the year.</p>
<p><i>Safeguard the fishing experience by helping anglers avoid adverse interactions with protected species.</i></p>	<p>Expand programs like “Cast With Care” and “Dolphin Smart” to educate anglers about marine mammals and ESA-protected species like smalltooth sawfish and how to avoid causing injuries and takes while fishing.</p>
Areas of Enhanced Effort	
<p><i>Highlight recreational fishing opportunities.</i></p>	<p>Highlight recreational fishing opportunities in National Marine Sanctuaries in the Southeast Region (Gray’s Reef, Florida Keys and Flower Garden Banks).</p> <p>Create an “OPT IN” text system to notify anglers via text message of open and closed seasons and species in each of the three Southeast regions.</p>
<p><i>Support identification of potential alternative management approaches to stabilize recreational fishing opportunities.</i></p>	<p>Provide expertise in an upcoming alternative management workshop.</p>

Coordinate with state and federal management entities

Coordination and communication with all engaged partners is a hallmark of successful fishery management. Given the large geographic area of the Southeast Region and the numerous partners involved, sustainable fishery management depends on a collective effort with a common goal. NOAA works hand-in-hand with state, commonwealth, and territorial governments; fishery management councils and commissions; and NGOs, academic institutions, sister federal agencies, and the recreational fishing community.

Ongoing Responsibilities/Activity:

- Create and identify opportunities to work with fishery management partners and to allow for increased communication and collaboration.

Areas of Enhanced Effort:

- Provide agency expertise in support of partner projects.

Objectives/Strategy	Projects/Deliverables
Ongoing Responsibilities/Activity	
<p><i>Create and identify opportunities to work with fishery management partners, and increase communication and collaboration</i></p>	<p>Seek balanced stakeholder representation, including recreational fishing on the South Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico, and Caribbean Fishery Management Councils.</p> <p>Engage the Atlantic States and Gulf States Fisheries Commissions and state agencies in discussions to identify opportunities to collaborate on initiatives and research projects that benefit the science and management used to improve recreational fisheries.</p> <p>Maintain a culture of collaboration with the USFWS Ecological Services Office in the Southeast Region routinely during the regulatory review process.</p> <p>Continue to support the Fishery Management Councils and states to identify shared goals and develop management options that more equitably distribute rebuilding benefits.</p>

Areas of Enhanced Effort	
<i>Provide agency expertise in support of partner projects.</i>	<p>Support the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council to complete a Citizen Science blueprint, which will document the workshop recommendations for designing a Fishery Citizen Science Program.</p> <p>Work in cooperation with the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program and the Gulf Fisheries Informational Network to develop the necessary operational and funding plans for implementing the for-hire electronic trip reporting programs in the sub-regions where partners desire to implement them.</p>

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

NOAA scientists and experts within the SERO and the SEFSC endeavor to develop new and innovative approaches to fishery science and management, providing tools to better understand processes and events. These methods and techniques enhance our understanding of habitat conservation and restoration, fish populations, and dynamics and instill confidence in our constituents that we use the best science available to make the best management decisions for sustainable fishing.

Ongoing Responsibilities/Activity:

- Enhance data collection in the Southeast Region with sound scientific techniques and innovative approaches.
- Continue to encourage angler support for innovative solutions to fishery management challenges through a variety of tools and resources.

Areas of Enhanced Effort:

- Support the increase of electronic report of catches across various fishing sectors.
- Increase availability of educational opportunities to empower anglers to become part of the management process.

Objectives/Strategy	Projects/Deliverables
Ongoing	Responsibilities/Activity
<p><i>Enhance data collection in the Southeast Region with sound scientific techniques and innovative approaches</i></p>	<p>The SEFSC and SERO will continue to collaborate on CRP-funded projects that involve the fishing industry, stakeholders, and university scientists, in all phases of research programs, including survey/statistical design, conducting of research, analysis of results, and communication of results.</p> <p>Work to implement the Southeast Region Electronic Monitoring and Reporting Regional Implementation Plan.</p> <p>Work with the states of Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, and Texas to test supplemental angling survey solutions that could best meet management data needs.</p> <p>Work with the State of Louisiana to compare the results of MRIP and LA Creel, and complete an independent expert review of the state survey design.</p>
<p><i>Continue to encourage angler support for innovative solutions to fishery management challenges through a variety of tools and resources</i></p>	<p>Support Council work to evaluate allocation-based management approaches for red snapper in the Gulf of Mexico.</p>
Areas of Enhanced Effort	
<p><i>Advance data collection through support of electronic catch reporting.</i></p>	<p>Work with the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils, states, commissions, ACCSP, and the Gulf Fisheries Information Network (GulfFIN) to develop an implementation strategy to support electronic catch reporting in the for-hire sector.</p>
<p><i>Increase educational opportunities to empower anglers to become part of the management process.</i></p>	<p>Maintain agency participation in the Marine Resource Education Program and seek to expand opportunities throughout the Southeast Region.</p>
<p><i>Support new Congressionally directed research on Gulf red snapper.</i></p>	<p>Collaborate with state and federal partners and with academic and other private sector interests in developing a new Gulf of Mexico red snapper research program.</p>

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

The objective of science-based conservation and management is to use sound scientific data, information, and advice to achieve the management goals of NOAA Fisheries, fishery management councils, state commissions, and international organizations. At the same time the public must have confidence in this information and understand how it will provide long-term biological, ecological, economic, and social benefits to fishing, recreation, tourism, and other activities. These actions support this guiding principle.

Ongoing Responsibilities/Activity:

- Improve recreational catch and effort data for pulse and other rare event fisheries.
- Collect statistically valid, long-term recreational fisheries data in the USVI.
- Continue to evaluate the social and economic effects that recreational fishing has on coastal communities.

Areas of Enhanced Effort:

- Seek to improve through collaboration and scientifically valid methods data collection and sampling techniques to acquire data for better management decisions.

Objectives/Strategy	Projects/Deliverables
<p><i>Improve recreational catch and effort data for pulse and other rare event fisheries</i></p>	<p><i>On-Going Responsibilities/Activity</i> Execute directed projects to improve recreational catch and effort data for pulse and other rare event fisheries, specifically red snapper in the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico.</p>
<p><i>Collect statistically valid, long-term recreational fisheries data in the USVI.</i></p>	<p>Continue to explore opportunities to characterize recreational fisheries in the USVI through collaboration with territorial partners.</p>
<p><i>Continue to evaluate the social and economic effects that recreational fishing has on coastal communities.</i></p>	<p>Continue to evaluate the social and economic effects that recreational fishing has on coastal communities, along with the subsequent impacts management decisions have on them.</p>

Areas of Enhanced Effort	
<i>Seek to improve through collaboration and scientifically valid methods data collection and sampling techniques to acquire data for better management decisions.</i>	<p>Work to collect trip-level economic data pertaining to last trip revenues, expenses, and operating characteristics in a 2016 Economic Mail Survey.</p> <p>Transition to the use of new mail-based recreational fishing effort surveys on the Atlantic and Gulf coasts, including incorporation of new data into stock assessments.</p>

Communicate and engage with the recreational fishing public

Sustainable fishery management depends on two-way communication and input. NOAA realizes open and frequent dialogue with anglers is necessary to achieve successful fishing practices. Anglers provide information and insight that can guide and enhance the science needed to be effective. It also allows for understanding challenges and working collaboratively to seek logical answers and effective solutions moving forward.

Ongoing Responsibilities/Activity:

- Identify opportunities for angler engagement in major NOAA Fisheries actions and decision-making that affect recreational fishing.
- Actively communicate with recreational captains and anglers to ensure participation and understanding on the management process with the states, councils, commissions, and NOAA Fisheries.

Areas of Enhanced Effort:

- Work with stakeholders, anglers, resource managers, and scientist to evaluate methods and techniques and to engage in open and transparent communication and collaborative efforts to better serve the recreational fishing community.



Objectives/Strategy	Projects/Deliverables
Ongoing Responsibilities/Activity	
<p><i>Identify opportunities for angler engagement in major NOAA Fisheries actions and decision-making that affect recreational fishing.</i></p>	<p>Actively engage recreational captains and anglers with open and meaningful conversation to encourage dialogue and increase understanding of needs from all perspectives.</p> <p>Continue to support and participate in the Southeast and Caribbean Marine Resource Education Program designed to provide an informal, hands-on educational setting for fishermen to learn about the federal science and management process.</p>
<p><i>Communicate with recreational captains and anglers to ensure participation and understanding on the management process with the states, councils, commissions, and NOAA Fisheries.</i></p>	<p>Maintain strong working relationships and open lines of communication with community leaders to ensure regular dialogue and a policy of “no surprises,” by meeting with them, calling them, etc.</p> <p>Meet with recreational constituents upon request.</p>
Areas of Enhanced Effort	
<p><i>Actively connect with the fishing public to enhance awareness, understanding of, and participation in the federal fisheries management process.</i></p>	<p>Work with interested stakeholder groups to host regular roundtable discussions to strengthen relationships and share information.</p> <p>Work with and encourage fishermen and others to participate productively in the fisheries management process, to improve cooperation and trust among fishermen, scientists, and fishery managers.</p> <p>Communicate the scientific rationale for management actions to stakeholders by explaining the scientific methods and findings that support the resulting management decisions.</p> <p>Communicate legal obligations and process limitations to establish accurate expectations about potential agency action.</p> <p>Strengthen communication and coordination with new and existing Recreational Fishing coordinators across and within regions providing more consistent communication with the recreational angling communities in each region.</p> <p>Enhance outreach in the Southeast Region to reduce bycatch and release mortality by educating anglers about innovative approaches.</p>
<p><i>Facilitate internal agency understanding and awareness of recreational fishing issues.</i></p>	<p>Host internal agency discussion between regional recreational coordinators.</p> <p>Lead internal recreational fishing discussion with SERO and SEFSC staff.</p>

SUMMARY

NOAA Fisheries strives to be a leader in fisheries management in the Southeast Region. Increased communication and partnering with recreational fishing interests has advanced our understanding of ongoing fishing issues. This plan is an opportunity to share with recreational anglers that NOAA does more than simply open and close fisheries, but that we are engaged in many aspects to protect and preserve fishing including habitat restoration, enforcement of conservation laws, new and groundbreaking science, and new avenues of education and outreach to anglers. Together, we can work to provide sustainable saltwater recreational fisheries resources by maintaining healthy marine and estuarine habitats; promote saltwater recreational fishing for the social, cultural, and economic benefit of the region and nation; and advance enduring participation and enjoyment of saltwater recreational fishing through science-based conservation and management.

APPENDIX A - 2014-2015 Status Report

Goals	Objectives	Projects/deliverables	Status
Goal 1 - Improved Recreational Fishing opportunities	Objective 1: Reduce release mortality in recreational fisheries.	<p>Project 1: Improve scientific understanding of post- release mortality.</p> <p>A national working group of experts representing each region was assembled to develop a science strategy to improve our understanding of post-release mortality. This group will review practices to reduce barotrauma and other types of release mortality; focus on updating and improving post-release mortality assumptions for stock assessments; identify species for which better post- release mortality assumptions should be a priority; and identify next steps for addressing broader post-release mortality issues.</p>	<p>Deliverable: A white paper summarizing key findings. Timing:</p> <p>COMPLETED- NOAA Technical Memorandum. <i>Fisheries Release Mortality: Identifying, Prioritizing, and Resolving Data Gaps</i> L. R. Benaka, L. Sharpe, L. Anderson, K. Brennan, J. E. Budrick, C. Lunsford, E. Meredith, M. S. Mohr, and C. Villafana</p>
	Objective 2: Examine the role of artificial substrates, including oil and gas structures in Gulf of Mexico fisheries management.	<p>Project 1: Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council's Ad Hoc Artificial Substrate Advisory Panel.</p> <p>Participation in the Gulf Council's ad hoc panel along with state officials, the oil and gas industry, commercial fisheries, recreational fishing and diving sectors, and the Department of the Interior.</p>	<p>COMPLETED - Deliverable: A panel recommendation to the Gulf Council.</p> <p>Timing: The ad hoc panel is scheduled to meet in 2013 to continue discussions, and may be ongoing through 2015. White paper produced by the Gulf Council July, 2015. http://gulfcouncil.org/council_meetings/BriefingMaterials/BB-08-2015/A%20-%207(a)%20White%20Paper%20on%20Artificial%20Reefs.pdf</p>
	Objective 3: Characterize bottlenose dolphin interactions with recreational fishing gear and evaluate safe ways to prevent interactions.	<p>Project 1: Conduct a survey on bottlenose dolphin interactions with recreational fishing gear.</p> <p>Explore survey designs and methods to determine the frequency and geographic extent of bottlenose dolphin interactions with recreational fishing gear.</p>	<p>Ongoing - This potential project was a multi-year coordination effort to explore opportunities with S&T and OPR on adding a few bottlenose dolphin interaction questions onto the existing MRIP survey during their re-design process</p>
		<p>Project 2: Research bottlenose dolphin depredation on recreational rod and reel fishing gear and scavenging behaviors.</p> <p>Conduct a 2-year research project in the Gulf of Mexico to research bottlenose dolphin depredation on rod and reel fishing gear and scavenging behaviors, with an emphasis on developing and testing the effectiveness of safe methods to prevent or reduce fishing interactions.</p>	<p>Ongoing - Deliverable: Technical report.</p> <p>Timing: This project was extended until March 31, 2016 per the PI's request. The final report will be due shortly thereafter.</p>

Goal 2 - Improved Recreational Catch/ Bycatch, effort, and Stock Status Data	<p>Objective 1: Improve understanding of recreational fishing in the U.S. Virgin Islands.</p>	<p>Project 1: Conduct field surveys of recreational fishing activities on St. Croix.</p> <p>Gather information through in-person surveys about who is fishing, where, and what they are catching in order to create a more accurate picture of recreational fishing in the U.S. Virgin Islands. This program includes funding support from NOAA's Coral Reef Conservation Program.</p>	<p>COMPLETED - Deliverable: A technical report released in Jan. 2016</p>
	<p>Objective 2: Evaluate the applicability of electronic self-reported angler data for use in fish stock assessments.</p>	<p>Project 1: Conduct self-selected angler data collection pilot project.</p> <p>In partnership with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, NOAA Fisheries will evaluate the use of self-selected angler data collected via smartphones and online for use in fish stock assessments.</p>	<p>Ongoing - Deliverable: A final report detailing potential uses and next steps.</p> <p>Timing: Ongoing throughout 2014 and 2015.</p>
	<p>Objective 3: Improve understanding of recreationally important species in Puerto Rico.</p>	<p>Project 1: Evaluate options for queen conch and spiny lobster sampling.</p> <p>Evaluate options for how to effectively sample the recreational harvest of queen conch and spiny lobster in Puerto Rico, with the goal of designing a sampling program to add to the MRIP surveys.</p>	<p>Ongoing - Deliverable: Updated data for use in management and stock assessments.</p>
	<p>Objective 4: Improve understanding of scientific uncertainty.</p>	<p>Project 1: Create standards for target levels of uncertainty in recreational catch estimates.</p> <p>Participate in agency efforts to establish accepted standards for scientific uncertainty (measured as proportional standard error) in recreational catch estimates for use in creating stock assessments and assessing risk in management decisions.</p>	<p>Deliverable: White paper presenting acceptable standards.</p> <p>Timing: 2014.</p>
	<p>Objective 5: Create reliable recreational catch and effort estimates for the U.S. Virgin Islands.</p>	<p>Project 1: Conduct a feasibility study through a survey of recreational boat-based anglers.</p> <p>Characterize the boat-based recreational fishery of the U.S. Virgin Islands by using the boater registration lists maintained by the government of the Virgin Islands to conduct a pilot survey of registered boat owners.</p>	<p>Complete - Pilot Deliverable: Feasibility study regarding a specific approach for surveying anglers.</p> <p>Timing: 2014.</p>

Goal 3 - Improved Recreational Socio-economic Data	Objective 1: Improve the understanding of angler interactions with bottlenose dolphins.	<p>Project 1: Conduct bottlenose dolphin human dimensions surveys.</p> <p>Conduct surveys and focus groups in Panama City, Florida, and Corpus Christi, Texas, to improve understanding of the perceptions, attitudes, motivations, and behaviors of commercial businesses (including charter fishing businesses), tourists, and residents who interact with dolphins in the wild. These results will also inform future development of outreach and education products targeted to specific audiences and user groups.</p>	Completed - Deliverable: Technical report. Timing: 2014 - Project completed and final reports provided.
	Objective 2: Generate updated and improved economic value estimates for recreational anglers in the Gulf of Mexico.	<p>Project 1: Conduct economic mail survey.</p> <p>Conduct a mail survey of recreational anglers fishing from private and for-hire boats in the Gulf of Mexico. Data will be used to estimate the economic value of changes in saltwater fishing regulations for individual anglers—specifically the willingness to pay for bag limits for groupers, snappers, red snapper, dolphin, and king mackerel.</p>	<p>Completed- Deliverable: Survey development and implementation and final technical report.</p> <p>Timing: Survey implementation in 2014, final results in 2015. Completed - 09/30/2015</p>
	Objective 3: Improve economic data collection from headboats in the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic.	<p>Project 1: Expand Southeast Regional Headboat Survey to include economic information.</p> <p>Expand Southeast Regional Headboat Survey to include economic questions concerning input quantities and prices. Collect output prices (i.e., charter and headboat fees) annually from websites to create a for-hire fee database.</p>	<p>Completed - Deliverable: Implementation of socio-economic data elements .</p> <p>Timing: August 2014; socio economic data elements incorporated in the SRHS eLog data, collection continuous thereafter.</p>
	Objective 4: Improve understanding of the human dimensions of tournament fishing in the Southeast.	<p>Project 1: Prepare a proposal to collect data about tournament fishing.</p> <p>A research proposal will be developed for tournament data collection, using surveys and unstructured interviews to collect demographic, cultural, economic, and social information about those who organize and participate in fishing tournaments in the Southeast.</p>	<p>Ongoing - Funded through 2017</p> <p>Deliverable: Research report.</p>

Goal 4 - Improved Communication	Objective 1: Determine the effectiveness of recompression for barotrauma mitigation strategies and develop a video tailored to conditions in the southeast United States as an outreach tool to encourage fishermen to use the devices.	Project 1: Evaluation of reef fish recompression devices and outreach training video. Building upon previous work, produce a video to evaluate specific conditions (e.g., thermal shock) and species in the southeast United States subject to barotrauma. Snapper and grouper will be captured, evaluated for barotrauma symptoms, and recompressed using different recompression devices. Recompression will be filmed for evaluation of release condition and predation.	Completed - Deliverable: Video available to public and evaluation of various recompression devices. Timing: Completed. - 2015
	Objective 2: Improve recreational fishermen's access and knowledge of Caribbean fishing regulations.	Project 1: Produce recreational fishing brochure and waterproof fishing regulations. Develop a brochure and waterproof summary of federal fishing regulations pertaining to the U.S. Caribbean exclusive economic zone. These materials are part of a larger effort to increase fishermen's knowledge of the regulations governing U.S. Caribbean federal fisheries. English and Spanish language versions will be widely distributed throughout Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.	Completed - Deliverable: Brochure and handouts. Products were created and printed and distributed once in late 2013 and again in 2015.
	Objective 3: Improve communication with recreational fishermen through outreach and education on protected species interactions with recreational fishing gear.	Project 1: Improve fishermen's understanding of how to help reduce protected species interactions. Produce outreach materials geared toward providing information on how to help prevent protected resource interactions and minimize harm, and on steps to take when an interaction occurs. In addition, outreach materials will include phone numbers to stranding response organizations in an effort to increase reporting of injured, entangled, or stranded animals.	Completed - Deliverable: Targeted outreach efforts with constituents, including press releases, in-person educational visits, direct mailings of educational materials and letters, and development and distribution of Frequently Asked Questions. Timing: 2015.

		<p>Project 2: Cast with Care outreach program.</p> <p>Implement a Cast with Care program throughout the Southeast. Cast with Care will inform anglers on the conservation benefits of circle hooks to reduce and minimize accidental hooking of bottlenose dolphins, sea turtles, and small-tooth sawfish.</p>	<p>Completed - Deliverable: Small packages containing circle hooks, educational messages, and hotline numbers to report injured, stranded, or entangled animals will be provided to recreational fishermen free of charge at boat shows, tournaments, and other maritime events. In addition, Cast with Care posters and tackle box decals promoting ways to prevent interactions will be distributed at fishing piers, bait and tackle stores, and marinas.</p> <p>Timing: Ongoing through 2014.</p>
		<p>Project 3: Don't Feed Wild Dolphins and Protect Sea Turtles fishing pier outreach initiative.</p> <p>Implement a fishing pier initiative to increase the visibility of conservation messages at fishing piers to reduce potential for harmful interactions.</p>	<p>Completed - Deliverable: Small weatherproof placards will be affixed along the decks of fishing piers and permeate piers with legal and educational messages, hotline numbers (to report injured or entangled animals), and links to additional information.</p> <p>Timing: Ongoing through 2015.</p>
		<p>Project 4: Regional leadership and constituent conference calls.</p> <p>The Southeast Regional Administrator hosts conference calls, when appropriate, on issues garnering constituent concern.</p>	<p>Completed -Deliverable: Question-and answer conference calls.</p> <p>Timing: Ongoing through 2015.</p>
Goal 4 - Improved Communication	Objective 4: Improve understanding of the federal fishery Management process.	<p>Project 1: Conduct the Marine Resource Education Program.</p> <p>The Marine Resources Education Program educates fisheries stakeholders in the fundamentals of fisheries science and management. This education enables fishermen and others to participate productively in the fisheries management process, and leads to improved cooperation and trust among fishermen, scientists, and fishery managers.</p>	<p>Completed - Deliverable: Two invitation-only workshops annually, one on science and one on management.</p> <p>Timing: The 2014 workshops are scheduled for April and September. The plan is to conduct these workshops annually, provided funding is available.</p>
Goal 5 - Institutional orientation	Objective 1: Formally integrate recreational fishing projects into regional office planning documents.	<p>Project 1: Southeast Regional Office's Internal Annual Operating Plan.</p> <p>Incorporate this Southeast Recreational Fishing Action Agenda into the Southeast Regional Office's Internal Annual Operating Plan</p>	<p>Deliverable: Include a line item in the region's Annual Operating Plan.</p> <p>Timing: Annually beginning 2014.</p>



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