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# National Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Policy Update

Recreational Fisheries Initiative  
Russell Dunn, NOAA Fisheries

# Why are we updating the Policy?

March 29th & 30th, 2022

175 in-person participants & ~90 on-line/day

Steering Committee: Anglers & Interstate Fisheries Commissions

## Agenda Topics:

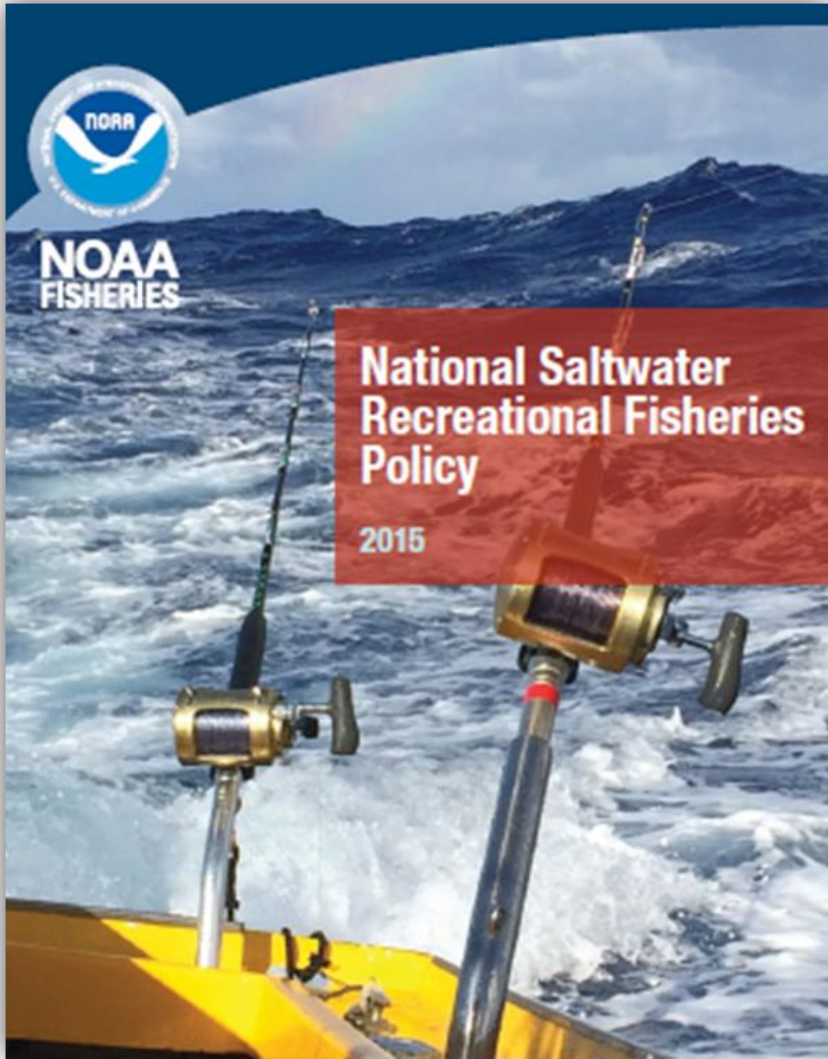
- Climate Resilient Fisheries
- Balancing Ocean Uses
- Data Collection & Use
- Management Flexibility & Optimum Yield



# General Discussion Questions

- How might the Policy statement be amended to better frame NOAA Fisheries' approach to recreational fisheries?
- How might the scope of the Policy be amended to include appropriate participants and activities?
- How might the Policy goals be added to, narrowed, or amended to better inform the Agency's focus for recreational fisheries?
- How might the guiding principles of the Policy, including implementation strategies, be added to, narrowed, or amended to better guide Agency objectives and actions?
- Are there concepts, such as climate change, that are either missing or should be considered for removal from the Policy that are not captured in your comments up to this point?
- What other suggestions do you have, if any, for NOAA to consider as we revise the Policy?

# 2015 Policy Purpose



- Provides guidance for Agency consideration in its deliberations pertaining to development and maintenance of enduring and sustainable high quality saltwater recreational fisheries.
- Identifies goals and guiding principles to be integrated into NOAA Fisheries' planning, budgeting, decision-making, and activities, and includes examples of implementation concepts and strategies supported by NOAA Fisheries.



# 2015 Policy Statement

“It is the policy of [NOAA Fisheries] to foster, support, and enhance a broadly accessible and diverse array of sustainable saltwater recreational fisheries for the benefit and enjoyment of the nation.”



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# Policy Scope

This policy pertains to non-commercial activities of fishermen who fish for sport or pleasure, as set out in the MSA definition of recreational fishing, whether retaining (e.g., consuming, sharing) or releasing their catches, as well as the businesses and industries (e.g., the for-hire fleets, bait and tackle businesses, tournaments) which support them.



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# 2015 Policy Goals

- Support and maintain sustainable saltwater recreational fisheries resources, including healthy marine and estuarine habitats
- Promote saltwater recreational fishing for the social, cultural, and economic benefit of the nation
- Enable enduring participation in, and enjoyment of, saltwater recreational fisheries through science-based conservation and management.



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# Six Guiding Principles

1. Support ecosystem conservation and enhancement
2. Promote public access to quality recreational fishing opportunities
3. Coordinate with state and federal management entities
4. Advance innovative solutions to evolving science, management, and environmental challenges
5. Provide scientifically sound and trusted social, cultural, economic, and ecological information
6. Communicate and engage with the recreational fishing public



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# 1. Support ecosystem conservation and enhancement.

NOAA Fisheries recognizes a wide range of approaches to restore, maintain, and build diverse healthy marine ecosystems that are foundational to high quality recreational fisheries.



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## 2. Promote public access to quality recreational fishing opportunities.

NOAA Fisheries recognizes the fundamental importance of broad public access to healthy and sustainable fisheries resources to recreational fishing.



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### 3. Coordinate with state and federal management entities.

NOAA Fisheries recognizes that improving fisheries science and management is best achieved through collaboration and partnership with state and federal management entities.



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

NOAA Fisheries recognizes its responsibility to lead and facilitate development of innovative approaches and solutions to evolving stewardship challenges in rapidly changing fisheries environments.



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

NOAA Fisheries recognizes its pivotal role in providing world class science to facilitate informed decision making and effective stewardship.



## 6. Communicate and engage with the recreational fishing public.

NOAA Fisheries recognizes the need to build public confidence and expand understanding of science and management processes.



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# Next Steps

- Comment period August 1st - December, 31st 2022 (inclusive)
- In-Person & Virtual sessions with Marine Fisheries Commissions, State Directors, Regional Fishery Management Councils, & Regional Advisory Panels
- Upcoming Management Partner Discussions:  
**SAFMC Sept. 12 | WPFMC Sept. 21 | NEFMC Sept. 29 | MAFMC Oct. 5 | GFMC\* Oct 12 | GSMFC Oct. 19 | Coastal State Directors Nov. 2nd | Future Dates TBD**
- Upcoming Public Webinar Meetings:  
**Sept. 22nd 6:00 - 7:30 PM est | Nov. 16th 6:00 - 7:00 PM est**
- Anticipated Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Policy Rollout: June 2023

Recreational  
Policy  
Website



Public  
Webinar  
Registration  
Website



Recreational  
Policy  
Comment  
Form



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# Comments received to date:

- Climate change
- Education
- Equity & Enviro Justice
- Access
- Agency accountability
- EEZ recreational permit
- Data reporting & collection
- Depredation
- Enforcement
- Transparency



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- How might the guiding principles of the Policy, including implementation strategies, be added to, narrowed, or amended to better guide Agency objectives and actions?
- Are there concepts either missing or that should be considered for removal from the Policy that are not captured in your comments up to this point (e.g., climate change)?
- What other suggestions do you have, if any, for NOAA to consider as we revise the Policy?

# Thank You



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# Back-up Slides



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## 1. Support ecosystem conservation and enhancement.

Examples of strategies that NOAA Fisheries supports include:

- Restoration and conservation of habitats that benefit recreational and other fish stocks
- Development and application of best practices to support anglers as stewards of a sustainable environment
- Science-based habitat restoration and enhancement activities (natural/habitats/artificial reefs) in accordance with Agency policy, which contribute to the conservation and management of recreational fisheries
- Conservation of abundant and resilient forage fish stocks integral to healthy ecosystems and recreational fisheries
- Development and application of aquaculture tools and technologies that support recreational fisheries consistent with existing agency policy (e.g., stock restoration, production of baitfish, shellfish seed for habitat restoration)





## 2. Promote public access to quality recreational fishing opportunities.

### Examples of strategies that NOAA Fisheries supports include:

- Decision-making that fully considers social, cultural, economic, and ecological factors
- Recurring evaluation of fishery allocations to facilitate equitable distribution of fishing opportunities as fisheries develop and evolve
- Expanding fishing opportunities (e.g., longer-fishing seasons, increased allowable catch levels), when appropriate, based on demonstrated conservation gains
- Understanding and addressing factors affecting angler participation and satisfaction



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### 3. Coordinate with state and federal management entities.

#### Examples of strategies that NOAA Fisheries supports include:

- Aligning program goals and implementation strategies in support of sustainable recreational fisheries
- Enhancing regulatory compliance by improving public awareness and understanding of recreational regulations and through effective enforcement
- Reducing redundancy, leveraging resources, and exploring opportunities for co-management of recreational stocks
- Supporting equitable representation of recreational fisheries interests in decision-making forums



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

Examples of strategies that NOAA Fisheries supports include:

- Developing and supporting cutting-edge scientific tools and approaches to increase knowledge of recreational fisheries and the marine ecosystems (e.g., acoustic and hi-resolution video surveys, next generation stock assessments)
- Exploring management approaches that have the potential to better accommodate the unique nature of recreational fisheries while achieving conservation mandates
- Encouraging and incentivizing development and use of new gear technology that provides conservation gains (e.g., improves release survival)
- Applying creative approaches to problem solving and embracing expertise outside of the Agency (e.g., crowdsourcing, on-the-water experience, external partnerships)

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

Examples of strategies that NOAA Fisheries supports include:

- Partnering with the fishing, academic, non-governmental, and management communities to develop and implement cooperative research activities on recreational fisheries and integrating defensible results into management
- Collecting recreational catch and effort, social, and economic data that support transparent and participatory management and conservation of saltwater recreational fisheries
- Considering recreational fisheries needs in the prioritization of Agency science activities



## 6. Communicate and engage with the recreational fishing public.

### Examples of strategies that NOAA Fisheries supports include:

- Communicating, in plain language, the basis for and implications of regulatory actions, and the details and results of relevant scientific programs and research
- Listening, understanding, and responding to recreational angler issues and perspectives
- Empowering recreational anglers with information to become resource stewards and effectively engage in the fishery management process



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