

# Priorities and Annual Guidance 2021



**NOAA**  
**FISHERIES**





[The NOAA Fisheries Strategic Plan \(2019-2022\)](#) was published in July 2019. Our priorities in this document are organized by national strategies of that plan.

The priorities in this plan are specific areas requiring a corporate focus. The identified priorities consider our major mission functions, fiscal support, external drivers, identified risks, and corporate opportunities. These priorities are intended to guide the execution of the FY 2021 Annual Operating Plan; steer the individual efforts of each NOAA Fisheries Science Center, Regional Office, and Headquarters Office toward the accomplishment of NOAA Fisheries' goals and strategies; and guide the agency's strategic resource management process.

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**NOAA Divers conduct diving operations at Pagan Island, in the Mariana Islands archipelago. Credit: NOAA/Andrew Gray.**

**Cover: A fishing port in Valdez, Alaska. Credit: NOAA Sea Grant.**

## GUIDANCE FROM CHRIS OLIVER

### Assistant Administrator for NOAA Fisheries



Dear Friends and Colleagues:

Going into my fourth year as Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, I am pleased to detail our strategic priorities and planned accomplishments for 2021. This annual guidance sets the course for NOAA Fisheries to prioritize our annual actions to manage fisheries and living marine resources, elevate seafood competitiveness, and improve our operations and customer service. The three strategic goals highlighted here have not changed. They reflect my practical approach to managing our fisheries and marine resources, which has been one of my top goals as the director of this agency. This document also reflects our support for the Department of Commerce and NOAA's Blue Economy vision to amplify the economic value of sustainable fisheries while recovering and conserving protected marine species and their habitat.

Before I tackle my expectations for 2021, I want to reflect back on last year. The emergence of the world-wide COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 affected our agency deeply. However, despite all of the challenges we faced in 2020, I remained impressed by the professionalism of Fisheries' employees as you juggled your personal and work life from home to deliver exceptional value to the American people.

COVID-19 significantly altered the environment related to the management of the nation's fisheries and the protection and recovery of living marine resources. The situation also required adding crisis-related activities to our portfolio in addition to normal operations. What remains though is our science-based management of U.S. fisheries as a global model for marine stewardship and sustainability. And, as we look to resume core missions, including at-sea operations in 2021, we will focus on the areas with the greatest need. Our challenges with at-sea data collection in 2020 demonstrate the need to improve and leverage unmanned systems and artificial intelligence technologies, to

advance analytical methods to analyze and enhance data collection, and to leverage cloud applications and services to further support a more agile and innovative culture.

Turning to 2021, we will continue to amplify the economic value of all U.S. fisheries. We will continue our focus—along with the Regional Fishery Management Councils, Interstate Marine Fisheries Commissions, and other close partners—on ensuring the recovery and long-term sustainability of the commercial and recreational fishing industries and support of aquaculture and the broader seafood supply chain. The 2020 Executive Order on Promoting American Seafood Competitiveness and Economic Growth is an important instrument strengthening NOAA Fisheries' leadership role among federal agencies to effectively streamline aquaculture regulatory processes and battle Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported fishing internationally.

In 2021, we will also continue to focus on protecting and recovering high-priority species, including one of the world's most endangered large whale species, the North Atlantic right whale, which is also one of our nine Species in the Spotlight. We will streamline processes and improve timeliness for ESA and MMPA consultation and permitting of essential governmental, economic, national security, and energy functions.

Improving our organizational performance and workforce diversity was a focus in 2020 and will remain a high priority in 2021. It is clear now that COVID-19 will continue to affect agency operations and decision-making through 2021, and I know I can count on all of you to continue your amazing commitment to our core missions as you balance new safety protocols with getting the job done.

I look forward to another successful year.



## STRATEGIC GOAL 1: Amplify the Economic Value of Commercial and Recreational Fisheries While Ensuring Their Sustainability

In 2021, we will continue to work closely with the Regional Fishery Management Councils and with commercial, recreational, and tribal fishermen, to ensure the supply of U.S. seafood. The Executive Order on Promoting American Seafood Competitiveness and Economic Growth strengthens NOAA's role in combating Illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing and balancing seafood trade. It also designates NOAA as the lead agency for permitting aquaculture projects in the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone, opening the way for NOAA to lead the growth of U.S. aquaculture. We will continue to assess the economic impact of COVID-19 on the U.S. commercial and recreational fisheries and the seafood industry, and adapt our management consistent with conservation mandates. We will work closely with the Councils to advance priority fishery assessments with the existing data, and continue to support sound management decisions in commercial and recreational fisheries, based on the best available science. We will balance NOAA's fishery-independent (fleet/charter) and fishery-dependent (industry) data collection and incorporate advanced technologies to augment vessel days-at-sea.

NATIONAL PRIORITIES FOR 2021	PLANNED ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR 2021
<b>National Strategy 1.1: Manage stocks for Optimum Yield</b>	
Implement the "Removing Barriers to American Fishing" actions in the Presidential Executive Order on Promoting American Seafood Competitiveness and Economic Growth.	Support Regional Fishery Management Councils and Secretarial efforts to identify regulations that should be removed or modified to expand seafood production consistent with conservation objectives. [OSF]
Support Regional Fishery Management Councils and the Secretary of Commerce to respond to impacts of COVID-19 on U.S. fisheries.	Implement priority actions from the Regional Fishery Management Councils and the Secretary of Commerce to respond to the impacts of COVID-19 on specific fisheries. [OSF]
Improve fish habitat where habitat limitations have been identified in Fishery Management Plans as a limiting factor to rebuilding the stock.	Identify and implement habitat restoration projects that conserve and recover Essential Fish Habitat currently limiting fishery productivity. [OHC]
Incorporate fishery considerations into the selection of, and participation in, Habitat Focus Areas.	Designate one or more new habitat focus areas that address fish habitat conservation priorities. [OHC]
Conserve Essential Fish Habitat for managed species to support the sustainability of fish stocks in the future.	Complete at least one new EFH programmatic consultation to streamline consultations that are repetitive in nature and reduce administrative burden. [OHC]  Streamline EFH consultations by conducting integrated ESA/EFH analyses. [OHC]



NATIONAL PRIORITIES FOR 2020		PLANNED ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR 2020	
National Strategy 1.2: Increase U.S. marine aquaculture production			
Conduct research to support regulatory efficiencies in federal aquaculture permitting and industry development (especially in support of Aquaculture Opportunity Areas), as prepared by the NSTC Subcommittee on Aquaculture.	Collaborate with NCCOS to develop atlas/siting tools for Aquaculture Opportunity Areas. [OAQ]  Develop and deploy tools to mitigate aquaculture impacts from escapes, water quality, and benthic impacts. [OAQ]  Develop and deploy tools to assess, reduce, and mitigate potential entanglements and other interactions with aquaculture operations that may affect protected species. [OAQ, OPR]  Conduct research and transfer technologies on key science priorities to support aquaculture industry development (e.g., sterility techniques, kelp genetics,		
Implement the aquaculture actions in the Presidential Executive Order on Promoting American Seafood Competitiveness and Economic Growth, and the interagency plans for regulatory efficiency prepared by the NSTC Subcommittee on Aquaculture.	Identify two Aquaculture Opportunity Areas through robust stakeholder engagement and initiate NEPA reviews for each AOA. [OAQ]  Establish protocols to apply a “One Federal Decision” approach and serve as lead NEPA agency for projects. [OAQ]  Collaborate with federal partners to develop and/or revise nationwide permits to support aquaculture development. [OAQ]  Develop a website and provide clear guidance on aquaculture permitting and grant opportunities, and provide updates on the status of aquaculture projects (e.g., timelines). [OAQ]		
National Strategy 1.3: Adequately assess all prioritized stocks and maintain information for currently assessed stocks			
Reduce the number of unknown stock status determinations for FSSI stocks.	Complete/improve priority stock assessments for the stocks of greatest need while maintaining our core surveys and fishery data collection programs. [OST]  Identify and quantify stock assessment data gaps. [OST]		
Incorporate ecosystem information into the science and management of U.S. fisheries.	Increase automation of ecosystem status reports for all regions in collaboration with regional Integrated Ecosystem Assessment (IEA) partners. [OST]  Identify and address habitat science gaps/tools to enhance the implementation of ecosystem-based fisheries management and respond to changing habitat and species distribution. [OST]  Improve forecasts of changing ocean condition impacts on MSA-managed fish stocks, habitats, and fisheries. [OST]  Develop next generation tools to assess stocks and evaluate effective fishery management strategies for future ocean ecosystems. [OST]  Publish collection of scientific articles that demonstrate recent advances in incorporating ecosystem model-based information into fisheries management processes. [OST]  Incorporate ecosystem or environmental information into stock assessment terms of reference (ToRs). [OST]		
Predict bycatch hotspots and develop new gear technologies and measures to reduce bycatch of or damage to deep sea corals.	Analyze data collected from areas believed to be deep-sea coral bycatch hotspots and present findings to the Pacific Fishery Management Council. [OHC]  Develop trawl technology to reduce benthic impacts from groundfish harvest. [OHC]		

NATIONAL PRIORITIES FOR 2021		PLANNED ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR 2021	
National Strategy 1.4: Modernize fishery information collection, management, and dissemination systems, and enhance cooperative data collection and sharing			
Optimize NOAA independent (fleet/charter), fishery-dependent (industry), and community (citizen science) data collection to fill priority data gaps.	Develop a data sharing tool in collaboration with Gulf of Mexico Integrated Ecosystem Assessment (IEA) partners as part of a long-term strategy to incorporate red tide data into Harmful Algal Bloom warning systems. [OST]  Support 100% vessel trip reporting in the lobster fishery and continue development of lobster vessel monitoring technology in collaboration with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. [OST]  Identify opportunities for fishermen to collect scientific data during normal fishing operations. [OST]  Implement cooperative research projects in all regions. [OST]		
Increase the use of electronic reporting, electronic monitoring, and artificial intelligence technology for commercial and recreational fisheries.	Optimize electronic monitoring and electronic reporting programs in conjunction with human observers to expand and improve efficiency and nationwide consistency of fishery-dependent data collection, including recreational fisheries. [OST]  Develop and update Regional Electronic Technology Implementation Plans (2021-2025). [OST]  Develop a roadmap for building a national image library to support artificial intelligence applications for electronic monitoring programs. [OST]  Use machine learning to enhance electronic monitoring and detection of potentially illegal fishing activities. [OST]  Extend tablet-based recreational angler data collection to participating states for the Marine Recreational Information Program's Access Point Angler Intercept Survey (MRIP APAIS). [OST]  Complete National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) study to improve data collection, including electronic reporting, and in-season management of Annual Catch Limits (ACLs). [OST]		
National Strategy 1.5: Combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing and seafood fraud, and advance fair trade			
Build next generation analytical tools using biophysical and oceanographic information to predict when and where IUU fishing is likely to occur.	Implement the use of advanced analytics to assess data from multiple sources to produce detailed global fisheries trade reports. [IASI]		
Increase cooperation with state and federal agencies to conduct seafood inspections at ports of entry regarding seafood import monitoring requirements.	Monitor fisheries import trade to support trade agreements and policies. [OSF]		
Implement the IUU fishing and International Seafood Trade actions in the Presidential Executive Order on Promoting American Seafood Competitiveness and Economic Growth.	Complete rulemaking to fully implement the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Port State Measures Agreement. [IASI]  Integrate the IUU fishing related activities into the Maritime SAFE Act IUU Fishing Working Group activities. [IASI]		
Ensure U.S. fishermen are not disadvantaged by IUU fishing, unfair trade practices, or deceptive labeling of seafood products.	Negotiate bilateral arrangements and trade agreements with other countries through regional fisheries management organizations and arrangements with trade organizations to promote management and trade of global fisheries consistent with the policies required of U.S. fishermen. [IASI]		



NATIONAL PRIORITIES FOR 2021		PLANNED ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR 2021	
National Strategy 1.6: Increase consumer confidence in the quality and safety of U.S. seafood			
Increase the confidence in the seafood supply chain by emphasizing seafood facility inspections.		Design and implement a facility registration system for wild-harvested and farm-raised molluscan shellfish from federal waters for the Interstate Shellfish Sanitation Conference. [IASI]	
Strengthen global seafood competitiveness by improving access to foreign markets through trade policy and negotiations, and resolving technical barriers to United States seafood exports.		Increase access to export markets through industry outreach, trade analysis, advocacy for trade-friendly import regulations, and negotiated certification agreements. [IASI]	
Advocate for sustainable seafood consumption to the public.		Coordinate the development and promotion of digital assets and stakeholder engagement in support of the Eat Seafood, America! digital campaign. [Comms]	
		Evaluate options to optimize visibility of FishWatch content. [Comms/OSF]	
Additional priorities supporting this goal			
Promote sustainable and accessible saltwater recreational fisheries.		Pursue development of alternative fishery management approaches suited to recreational fisheries in partnership with the Regional Fishery Management Councils. [AA]	
		Promote sustainable recreational fishing opportunities through Memorandums of Agreement with private sector and federal agency partners. [AA]	
		Engage with recreational anglers to improve survival of released fishes, reduce marine debris, identify habitat priorities, and address emerging issues, such as aquaculture and wind power. [AA]	



**Woman shopping for seafood during the pandemic.**  
Credit: iStock.

## STRATEGIC GOAL 2: Conserve and Recover Protected Species While Supporting Responsible Fishing and Resource Development

In 2021, NOAA Fisheries will continue to conserve, protect, and recover ESA-listed species and marine mammals, with focus on nine Species in the Spotlight considered among the most at risk of extinction in the near future. We will apply emerging technologies such as the use of ‘omics (e.g., genomics, proteomics) to enhance our assessments and detect the presence of these highly vulnerable species. We will expand North Atlantic right whale early warning systems to protect calving, feeding, and migration areas. We will continue to support Administration goals for offshore energy exploration and development, national defense, and infrastructure while minimizing risk to protected ocean species and their habitats. This includes streamlining of permitting through the use of programmatic consultations and developing shared protocols to improve consistency and timeliness of agency-to-agency issued permits and consultations.

NATIONAL PRIORITIES FOR 2021   PLANNED ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR 2021	
National Strategy 2.1: Stabilize highest priority protected species	
Advance recovery and reduce mortality of Species in the Spotlight.	<p>Reduce harm from vessels and improve access to prey for Southern resident killer whales (Species in the Spotlight). [OPR]</p> <p>Reduce mortality and harm to North Atlantic right whales from human activities (Species in the Spotlight). [OPR]</p> <p>Continue rebuilding sustainable wild white abalone populations through a captive-breeding and enhancement collaborative (Species in the Spotlight). [OPR]</p> <p>Reduce Hawaiian monk seal mortality from disease and human interactions (Species in the Spotlight). [OPR]</p> <p>Increase understanding of Cook Inlet beluga whale habitat use and threats to their survival, and reduce disturbance in key foraging areas (Species in the Spotlight). [OPR]</p> <p>Reduce Pacific leatherback sea turtle bycatch and increase protection of nesting beaches (Species in the Spotlight). [OPR]</p> <p>Improve freshwater habitat access and increase survival of Atlantic salmon between freshwater and marine habitats (Species in the Spotlight). [OPR]</p> <p>Expand hatchery rearing and improve habitat for Central California Coast coho salmon (Species in the Spotlight). [OPR]</p> <p>Improve coldwater management, improve adult fish passage, and restore juvenile rearing habitat for Sacramento River winter-run chinook salmon (Species in the Spotlight). [OPR]</p>
Improve the ability to track recovery performance of protected species.	Investigate the use of a protected species recovery index to better show progress in recovering ESA-listed species. [OPR]



NATIONAL PRIORITIES FOR 2021	PLANNED ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR 2021
<p>Improve ESA species habitat where habitat limitations have been identified in ESA recovery plans as a limiting factor to recovery.</p>	<p>Implement high-priority projects to restore critical habitat for ESA-listed salmon and steelhead on the Pacific coast. [OHC]</p> <p>Implement high-priority projects to restore fish passage for Atlantic salmon recovery in Maine. [OHC]</p> <p>Implement habitat restoration projects to address land-based sources of pollution affecting ESA-listed coral species in the Culebra and Northeast Reserves (PR) Habitat Focus Area. [OHC]</p> <p>Initiate projects associated with Mission: Iconic Reefs in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary to restore seven coral reefs and address factors limiting ESA-listed species recovery. [OHC]</p>
<p>Develop and promote the use of tools to model and forecast changing ecosystems and anthropogenic impacts on marine and anadromous resources.</p>	<p>Complete climate vulnerability assessments for marine mammals and sea turtles in U.S. waters. [OST]</p> <p>Study and document effects of noise, climate change, and other natural and anthropogenic stressors on protected species populations. [OST]</p>
<b>National Strategy 2.2: Review and streamline permitting and authorization processes for energy development and national defense, while maximizing conservation outcomes</b>	
<p>Simplify processes and improve timeliness for applicants seeking ESA and MMPA consultation and permitting for essential governmental, economic, national security, and energy functions.<sup>1</sup></p>	<p>Complete actions identified in the NMFS/BOEM-coordinated Streamlining Plan, and provide training/outreach, to increase efficiency in ESA/MMPA processes. [OPR]</p> <p>Maintain improved average application times of Incidental Harassment Authorizations and Incidental Take Authorizations. [OPR]</p> <p>Maintain a “green” score on the FAST-41 Dashboard for processing environmental reviews and authorization decisions for major infrastructure projects. [OPR]</p> <p>Ensure 15% or less of formal consultations exceed 270 days to complete. [OPR]</p> <p>Develop a repository of programmatic regulatory tools (e.g., programmatic EIS) to streamline environmental permitting and authorizations associated with consultations and permitting. [OPR]</p> <p>Continue to develop and finalize internal templates for environmental compliance documents. [OPR]</p>
<b>National Strategy 2.3: Minimize bycatch and entanglement of protected species while supporting fisheries</b>	
<p>Predict bycatch hotspots and reduce the risk of serious injury/mortality due to bycatch and entanglement.</p>	<p>Implement standardized use of a Human Interaction data form by the National Marine Mammal Stranding Network to collect increased data on stranded marine mammals with evidence of bycatch to help understand hotspots and injury risk. [OPR]</p>
<p>Work with industry and other stakeholders to develop new gear technologies, fishing configurations, or deterrents to reduce or eliminate incidental captures.</p>	<p>Finalize national guidelines for safely deterring marine mammals from damaging fishing gear and catch. [OPR]</p> <p>Develop and test methods of retrieving fixed gear without persistent buoy lines (“ropeless”). [OPR]</p> <p>Develop and evaluate measures to reduce bycatch in the Gulf of Mexico (Deepwater Horizon). [OHC]</p>

NATIONAL PRIORITIES FOR 2021	PLANNED ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR 2021
Protect sea turtles, marine mammals, and other protected species in foreign fisheries.	<p>Seek adoption of binding measures for bycatch mitigation at Regional Fishery Management Organizations (RFMO), and promote best practices through global and regional bodies. [IASI]</p> <p>Implement the MMPA Fish Import Regulations by evaluating foreign fishery comparability applications. [IASI]</p> <p>Ensure that imported seafood meets fishing standards for protecting marine mammals comparable to those followed by U.S. fishermen (via use of seafood documentation and traceability programs, and the List of Foreign Fisheries catalogue). [IASI]</p>
National Strategy 2.4: Address the challenge of balancing water management for protected species with other uses	
Improve water management to balance protected species needs with other uses.	Use life cycle models for water operations in California's Central Valley to improve reliability of water supply for listed Chinook salmon and steelhead. [OPR]
Restore access for fish to spawning and nursery habitat.	Provide technical assistance and collaborate with partners and tribes on passage and reintroduction efforts for salmonids in the Columbia, Willamette, Klamath, and Sacramento basins. [OPR]
Ensure NOAA Water Team prediction capabilities address NOAA Fisheries natural resource needs.	Incorporate protected resource data needs into water prediction tools developed by the NOAA Water Team. [OPR]



Habitat restoration in the Gulf of Mexico. Credit: NFWF/Jay Fleming.





Sea turtle swims above coral reef at Baker Island. Credit: Paula Ayotte.

## STRATEGIC GOAL 3: Improve Organizational Excellence and Regulatory Efficiency

In 2021, NOAA Fisheries will manage our workforce to ensure that we have the right people in the right places, and support our employee health and productivity in this unprecedented time of pandemic health concerns and economic impacts. We will continue to implement and improve our structured process to facilitate priority-based budgeting. We will explore and implement advanced technologies, such as autonomous vehicles (UxS), artificial intelligence, and machine learning to enhance surveys and electronic monitoring. We will explore opportunities in the field of ‘omics (a suite of advanced methods used to detect DNA, RNA, or protein in water) with the goal of enhancing our survey capabilities. Migration to commercial cloud computing will reduce costs and risk and make NOAA data more accessible to partners and industry. We must make significant advancements in our efforts to recapitalize our priority aging facilities and be resilient to ongoing and future health and safety issues.

NATIONAL PRIORITIES FOR 2021	PLANNED ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR 2021
<b>National Strategy 3.1: Match a diverse workforce to mission needs</b>	
Hire and reassign personnel strategically to provide flexibility and agility in executing our evolving mission functions.	Develop staffing plans and align employee duties with organizational programmatic priorities and emerging needs. [HCMO]
Improve representation of underrepresented populations, including but not limited to women, minorities, persons with disabilities, and disabled veterans at all levels and grades of the workforce.	<p>Increase use of the Pathways and Conservation Corp Act (CCA) programs to recruit diverse entry-level employees. [HCMO]</p> <p>Implement strategies for increasing diversity within the supervisory and senior ranks. [HCMO/EEO]</p> <p>Implement targeted recruitment strategies and outreach activities to reach diverse and under-represented populations (e.g., women, minorities, persons with disabilities, disabled veterans). [EEO/HCMO]</p> <p>Educate hiring managers/selection officials about special hiring authorities and programs that support the selection of persons with disabilities. [EEO]</p> <p>Support four to five Chesapeake Bay-focused internship positions for college students from populations currently underrepresented in environmental research and management professions. [OHC]</p>
Provide a safe work environment free of discrimination and sexual harassment, assault, and abuse and ensure worker wellness for all NOAA Fisheries employees and contractors.	<p>Implement a Total Worker Wellness program to support employee holistic health needs as discovered in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. [DAA/O]</p> <p>Co-develop policies, training, town hall meetings, and other initiatives necessary for the eradication of discrimination and sexual harassment, assault, and abuse in NOAA Fisheries (with NOAA's Workplace Violence Prevention and Response Program Office and the Office of Inclusion and Civil Rights). [EEO]</p> <p>Update and publish NOAA Fisheries Policy on EEO and Anti-Harassment, in accordance with NOAA/DOC guidance. [EEO]</p>



NATIONAL PRIORITIES FOR 2021	PLANNED ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR 2021
Ensure all employees are adequately equipped, and provide necessary work accommodations for extended teleworking, in balance with homelife needs, to support their health and safety during the pandemic.	Communicate existing and forthcoming guidance to support maximum telework flexibility and balanced work/life programs in support of employee wellness, engagement, productivity, and resiliency. [HCMO]
<b>National Strategy 3.2: Recapitalize infrastructure and facilities</b>	
Improve facility asset data to support better decision-making.	<p>Establish a facilities dashboard for improved asset visibility. [OMB]</p> <p>Establish validated models for forecasting annual facilities costs (owned and leased) based on validated facility asset data. [OMB]</p> <p>Develop processes and policies for data collection and data use in Builder and CMMS software. [OMB]</p> <p>Develop processes for reviewing and validating data within facility databases (e.g., Fisheries Asset Management Program (AMP), BUILDER facility assessment program, NOAA's DMAS system database, Federal Real Property Database). [OMB]</p>
<b>National Strategy 3.3: Institutionalize prioritization and performance management practices</b>	
Use Strategic Resource Management (SRM) to review and optimize base resource allocations and execution.	Use the Strategic Resource Management (SRM) process to reallocate funds from low-value activities to high-priority activities. [OMB]
<b>National Strategy 3.4: Review agency regulations and remove or modify rules that unnecessarily burden business and economic growth</b>	
Continue implementation of Executive Order 13771 regarding reducing regulation and controlling regulatory costs.	Submit final rules implementing deregulatory actions under Executive Order 13771. [OSF]
<b>National Strategy 3.5: Institutionalize the use of innovative technologies</b>	
Explore the use of 'omics (e.g., genomics, proteomics, transcriptomics, and metabolomics) in the context of sustaining fisheries and their habitats, developing aquaculture, and improving seafood traceability.	Use e-DNA of deep-sea corals and sponges from water samples to link coral taxa with fish use to inform Regional Fishery Management Council decisions. [OHC]
Use autonomous platforms to assess the abundance of fish stocks and marine mammal populations, and monitor fisheries.	Increase use of unmanned systems to augment capacity, quality, and efficiency of scientific surveys of fish, protected species, and ecosystems. [OST]
Modernize the fishery data enterprise to enable the use of analytics such as artificial intelligence technology.	Use machine learning to enhance electronic monitoring and detection of potentially illegal fishing activities. [OST/OCIO]
Incorporate commercial cloud computing to reduce costs and make NOAA data more accessible to partners and industry.	Increase the use of open data source tools and migrate to cloud computing to improve workflow, collaboration, economy, and efficiency. [OST/OCIO]
	Establish a Fisheries-wide cloud platform to increase cloud use, AI/ML adoption, and facilitate data sharing. [OCIO]
	Develop and share tools, templates, and processes for rapid, secure software development and project management that improves efficiency. [OCIO]

NATIONAL PRIORITIES FOR 2020	PLANNED ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR 2020
Maintain and advance use of Earth observing satellites to monitor ecosystem conditions, fisheries, and protected species throughout the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone.	<p>Combine high-resolution satellite imagery with aircraft surveys to provide marine mammal assessment data. [OST]</p> <p>Use satellite imagery to support the growth of a competitive aquaculture industry. [OST/OAQ]</p> <p>Combine the use of satellite imaging systems with vessel identification systems to support IUU fishing enforcement. [OST/OLE]</p>
Pursue collaboration through citizen science engagement for innovation.	Pursue interagency agreement with NASA for ropeless gear and other initiatives. [OCIO]

**Legend for HQ Office designated as coordinators [in brackets] for each Planned Accomplishment**

AA = Assistant Administrator

DAA/O = Deputy Assistant Administrator for Operations

IA/SI = Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection

CIO = Office of Chief Information Officer

Comms = Office of Communications

EEO = Equal Employment Opportunity and Diversity

MB = Office of Management and Budget

HCM = Office of Human Capital Management

OAQ = Office of Aquaculture

OHC = Office of Habitat Conservation

OLE = Office of Law Enforcement

OPR = Office of Protected Resources

OSF = Office of Sustainable Fisheries

OST = Office of Science and Technology



**A grey seal pup on South Monomoy in Massachusetts. Credit: Milton Levin.**







U.S. Secretary of Commerce

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November 2020

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