NOAA Fisheries West Coast Region Strategic Plan 2016-2020: Quick Reference to Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

The strategic plan for NOAA Fisheries' West Coast Region (WCR) identifies our priorities from 2016 to 2020. It guides our internal decision-making and resource allocation. It includes goals, with corresponding objectives and strategies, designed to support NOAA Fisheries' core mandates and those of the Department of Commerce (DOC) and NOAA. This document is a quick reference to the goals, objectives, and strategies from the strategic plan.

Two goals reflect NOAA Fisheries' core mission to maintain sustainable fisheries and recover protected species. Our third goal describes how we will succeed in carrying out our mission as an organization. Each Division and Area Office, as well as the Regional Administrator's Office, plays a significant role in contributing to all three of our goals.

The complete plan is available on the "About Us" section of the WCR website. www.westcoast.fisheries.noaa.gov. The plan describes the WCR's role in carrying out NOAA Fisheries' mandates and the context for our goals, objectives, and strategies; our organizational structure; and the importance of our many partners and stakeholders.

GOALS
A statement of aim or purpose articulating what we need to achieve to advance our mission.
OBJECTIVES
More detailed statements of the outcomes or management impact we are trying to achieve with each goal. These objectives will help us prioritize, manage, and evaluate our activities.
STRATEGIES
Approaches we will take to accomplish the objectives. Each year we will identify specific actions to carry these out.

Sustainable Fisheries

GOAL: Ensure sustainable and productive West Coast fisheries and resilient fishing communities through science-based and collaborative management.

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES
Engagement Ensure strong engagement with constituents and coordination with partners and co-managers to develop and implement effective fishery management processes and measures.	1. Assist co-managers and partners in developing recommendations and proposals aligned with the MSA, ESA, and other applicable law through policy guidance and technical assistance. 2. Engage stakeholders in developing international fishery management policy and implementing obligations of the U.S. under international agreements. 3. Create administrative efficiencies in the regulatory system, both internally and externally. 4. Write fishery regulations so they are in plain language and less complex, to the extent possible. 5. Support tribal fisheries and the renewal of salmon harvest agreements, consistent with provisions of *U.S. v. Washington, U.S. v. Oregon*, and the Pacific Salmon Treaty. 6. Increase engagement with anglers in carrying out NOAA Fisheries' Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Engagement Initiative on the West Coast to enhance recreational fishing opportunity, improve recreational fisheries data, and strengthen communications between the Agency and anglers. 7. Encourage industry involvement in research through cooperative research projects, exempted fishing permits, and promotion of grant opportunities, such as the Saltonstall-Kennedy and Bycatch Reduction Engineering Programs.

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES
Social and Economic Contributions Maximize fisheries and aquaculture benefits to West Coast communities, seafood consumers, recreational fishing anglers, and tribes in harmony with our other goals.	1. Administer the Mitchell Act grant program to support hatchery production and fish passage projects. 2. Encourage management approaches that provide for new entrants, foster fishing community participation and diversity in West Coast fisheries, stimulate innovation, and increase flexibility and efficiency. 3. Collaborate with industry, states, fishing communities, and the PFMC to support industry advances consistent with the sustainability of West Coast fisheries resources. 4. Support initiatives and partnerships for enhancing fishing community resilience, including support for sustainable working waterfronts and fisheries supportive industries. 5. Coordinate with partners, improve permit processes, and promote scientific research and analysis to enable sustainable marine aquaculture on the West Coast that will create jobs and increase domestic production of safe and healthy seafood. 6. Enhance communications to seafood consumers and the general public about the responsible and sustainable management of West Coast fisheries.
Stewardship Minimize impacts of seafood harvest and production on the marine ecosystem.	1. Prevent overfishing through effective annual catch limits and other harvest strategies. 2. Maintain consistent rebuilding progress for currently overfished stocks, work to prevent new stocks from becoming overfished, and ensure timely development and implementation of rebuilding plans for any stocks that become overfished. 3. Minimize bycatch in West Coast fisheries through selective gear and methods that maintain fishing opportunity. 4. Work with international partners and the U.S. fishing industry to improve sustainability of shared stocks, address illegal, unregulated, and unreported fishing, promote dolphin-safe tuna fishing practices, and reduce international fleet capacity in the eastern Pacific Ocean. 5. Minimize impacts of fisheries on ESA-listed species, marine mammals, sea turtles, and sea birds, engaging in consultations as needed. 6. Protect EFH and deep sea corals through FMP amendments, and other regulatory actions. 7. Work with partners to support best practices for sustainable aquaculture production.
Consultations and Support Help minimize impacts from non-fishing activities to protect essential fish habitat and maintain healthy and resilient ecosystems that support productive fisheries.	1. Provide conservation recommendations to protect and conserve EFH. 2. Continue integrating MSA EFH consultations with ESA section 7 consultations. 3. Improve EFH conservation through internal and external partnerships to maximize resources and efforts, and to minimize and mitigate adverse effects on habitat. 4. Provide information about EFH to help raise awareness of threats and actions to minimize or avoid impacts. 5. Engage internally and externally in discussions and consultations on coastal and offshore projects that could impact fisheries, EFH, fishing access, and safety-at-sea. 6. Engage partners under FPA and FWCA to improve habitat and passage conditions for managed fisheries species.
Science and Technology Use the best available science, technology, and tools to inform management decisions, monitor fisheries, and help improve aquaculture practices.	1. Work with the Science Centers to support the PFMC's research and annual stock assessment needs, including maintenance of existing surveys and development of new survey technologies and methods to assess populations in sensitive habitats. 2. Coordinate with the Science Centers and other partners to gain better understanding of non-fishing activities affecting EFH. 3. Better connect EFH protection and conservation to the productivity of managed species. 4. Improve communication among the WCR, Science Centers, and IATTC scientific staff on stock assessments for IATTC managed species. 5. Support NOAA Fisheries' Electronic Monitoring and Reporting Initiative[1] on the West Coast to better integrate the best, most cost-effective and appropriate technology into fisheries data collection and observations, and to improve the WCR's capabilities to perform and communicate in-season management. 6. Help support the state sampling programs that feed into PSMFC's Fisheries Information Networks (PacFIN and RecFIN) to improve fisheries data. 7. Support progress on ecosystem based fishery management approaches through the PFMC's Fishery Ecosystem Plan, NOAA's Integrated Ecosystem Assessment, contributions to annual state of the California Current Ecosystem reports, and coordination with the Science Centers to prioritize ecosystem research needs for fisheries and aquaculture. 8. Collaborate with the Science Centers and PFMC to identify how climate change and ocean acidification may affect West Coast fisheries, aquaculture, and EFH, and incorporate this information in long-term management strategies. 9. Work with the Science Centers to support the development of tools for identifying regulatory impacts to fishing communities.

[1] These include vessel monitoring systems (VMS), electronic logbooks (EL), video cameras for observer-type electronic monitoring (EM), electronic fish ticket (EFT) systems and other technologies that provide EM and electronic reporting (ER).

Protected Resources

GOAL: Recover and conserve protected West Coast marine and anadromous species through partnerships and innovative science-based solutions.

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES
Recovery Advance recovery of ESA-listed species and conservation of all species under our authority and the habitats on which they depend.	1. Complete recovery plans for all ESA-listed species in the WCR by prioritizing budget, staff resources, and external engagement. 2. Finish permitting processes and implementation plans for captive propagation and enhancement of Species of Concern and ESA-listed abalone and experimental reintroductions of priority salmon populations. 3. Execute high priority species and habitat conservation actions identified in recovery plans by leveraging partnerships and resources, and also through programs such as the PCSRF. 4. Engage partners under FPA and FWCA to improve habitat and passage conditions for all species under our authority. 5. Expand use and integration of all authorities under the ESA, MMPA, and FPA to advance species recovery and achieve recovery plan objectives. 6. Improve capacity of NOAA Fisheries and its partners to plan, implement, and monitor large-scale salmon habitat conservation and restoration programs. 7. Partner with Federal, state, and local agencies, stakeholders, tribes, institutions (museums, aquariums, academia, etc.), and the public to advance recovery plan objectives. 8. Design and implement habitat conservation actions to protect ESA-listed salmonids that support the Western Washington Tribal Treaty Rights at Risk initiative.
ESA Consultations and Support Provide timely and effective ESA assistance and consultations to partners and stakeholders.	1. Complete and guide implementation of large-scale, complex ESA section 7 consultations to maximize benefits to ESA-listed species and their habitats. 2. Streamline the consultation process by expanding the number of actions covered by programmatic consultations and integrating management of multiple ESA-listed species where they co-occur. 3. Further advance the use of mitigation in ESA consultations, permits, and habitat conservation plans. 4. Support states and tribes seeking to align their activities with the ESA, through sections 6 and 10 and other programs. 5. Complete ESA consultations on hatchery management actions and provide assistance to hatchery operators in preparing for consultation. 6. Develop innovative approaches and tools to support protected species goals and habitat conservation, such as landowner incentives, education and outreach, and landscape-scale analysis and planning.
Marine Mammal Conservation Promote marine mammal monitoring and conservation, and minimize impacts through education, outreach, partnerships, and implementation of the MMPA.	1. Coordinate West Coast marine mammal stranding program partners to gather and report information on marine mammals as indicators of ocean health, including population status, environmental conditions, contaminants, diseases, and human interactions. 2. Develop tools to increase response to human interactions with marine mammals and reduce harm to animals and people, including safety and impacts to fishing gear and catch, vessels, docks and marinas, as marine mammal populations grow. 3. Evaluate requests under section 120 of the MMPA to address impacts of particular pinnipeds on ESA-listed salmonid populations. 4. Evaluate intentional and incidental take of marine mammals under the MMPA to understand and minimize population level impacts.
Science Collaborate with Science Centers, stakeholders, and other partners to develop and use the best available science for the conservation and recovery of protected species.	1. Increase cooperation with partners and stakeholders to improve monitoring for consultations, species status updates, and tracking of progress toward recovery. 2. Support Science Centers to develop expertise and tools to better manage real-time water operations and drought preparedness. 3. Coordinate with Science Centers to support ecosystem-based analyses that consider the effects of management actions (e.g., stock enhancement, habitat restoration) on multiple species, food webs, and the trade-offs involved. 4. Develop tools and models to understand and address threats to marine mammals, such as fishery interactions and hydro-acoustic impacts. 5. Advance cutting edge scientific techniques to support reintroductions. 6. Coordinate with Science Centers, co-managers, and partners to assess the relative importance of various habitat types and the effectiveness of salmonid habitat restoration methods and projects. 7. Ensure consistent application of climate science in ESA, MMPA, and NEPA analyses and decisions through regional and national climate policy efforts.

Organizational Excellence

GOAL: Achieve the highest standards of integrity, transparency, and service in all regional operations.

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES
Communications and Customer Service Be pro-active in our communications and provide responsive and efficient service to internal and external partners and stakeholders.	1. Provide timely and thorough responses to information requests. 2. Maintain and improve online tools to meet customer needs, such as permit applications. 3. Ensure transparency through online and other tools that allow for internal and external tracking of agency actions (e.g., Public Consultation Tracking System, salmon recovery action mapping). 4. Provide documented and managed WCR data sets, including geospatial data, for internal and external customers. 5. Create and implement roll-out plans to effectively communicate the rationale and context for our management decisions and ensure the appropriate audiences are informed. 6. Maintain a user-friendly WCR Internet website with useful and accessible information to support stakeholder understanding and engagement. 7. Develop web stories, fact sheets, and other materials, use social media, and participate in outreach events to inform stakeholders about management actions, accomplishments, and stewardship opportunities.
Fiscal Integrity Implement processes and tools for accountability and the responsible management of public funds.	1. Integrate strategic planning with the budget process to maximize results and manage risks within current and expected resources. 2. Carry out NOAA Fisheries' annual priorities in the WCR through development of regional milestones and provide timely reporting of accomplishments. 3. Implement tools for efficient and effective planning, execution, and acquisition for all contracts, grants, interagency personnel agreements, interagency agreements, and purchase orders. 4. Establish effective policies and processes for planning the WCR budget to ensure proper and complete expenditure of appropriated funds. 5. Provide WCR workforce and public with first-rate, environmentally sound and safe facilities, in proper alignment with WCR needs.
Internal Alignment Create an integrated, organized, and coordinated organization to support staff, maximize resources, and improve Agency outcomes.	1. Increase coordination with the Science Centers to align management needs and research plans through regular communications and strategic planning. 2. Coordinate with the NOAA Fisheries Restoration Center to align and maximize resources to restore fish habitat. 3. Coordinate and collaborate to support NOAA initiatives, such as the NOAA Habitat Blueprint Initiative, in the WCR. 4. Ensure internal coordination and consistency in implementing agency mandates and achieving priorities across the WCR utilizing the Regional Leadership Team, division managers, and cross-division subject matter teams. 5. Develop and maintain a comprehensive WCR Intranet for staff with internal resources and policies for quick reference. 6. Implement WCR-wide information technology and management plans and processes to provide user support, desktop, and server management, and information management to ensure the confidentiality, integrity, availability, and privacy of systems and information. 7. Use creative and technological solutions to facilitate staff engagement among offices in different locations, support cross-divisional teams, and enhance coordination across the WCR.
Staff Invest in staff growth and learning to create a resilient organization.	1. Advance succession planning through the WCR Workforce Management Plan and develop training, mentoring, and shadowing programs to meet projected staffing needs. 2. Engage staff, particularly through the WCR Employee Communications and Worklife Committee, to identify presentations, activities, and events they believe will enhance workplace culture, job satisfaction, and morale. 3. Provide training opportunities to keep staff current in their fields, to improve and refine their interpersonal and communications skills, and to pursue individual development opportunities. 4. Provide training opportunities to WCR supervisors to maximize their leadership potential. 5. Work with NOAA to ensure WCR recruitment and other human resource management needs are met efficiently, effectively, and in a timely manner to support hiring and maintaining a highly skilled, diverse and dedicated workforce with special attention to mission critical occupations and associated essential skills.