

# NOAA's National Seafood Strategy

## Purpose

The *National Seafood Strategy*, outlines our direction for supporting a thriving domestic U.S. seafood economy and enhancing the resilience of the seafood sector in the face of climate change and other stressors. Our vision is to ensure that:

- U.S. seafood continues to be produced sustainably
- The U.S. seafood sector contributes to the nation's climate-ready food production and to meeting critical domestic nutritional needs
- U.S. seafood production increases to support jobs, the economy, and the competitiveness of the U.S. seafood sector
- Supply chains and infrastructure are modernized with more value-added activity in the United States
- Opportunities are expanded for a diverse and growing seafood workforce

## Strategy Drivers

NOAA Fisheries' *National Seafood Strategy* supports the growing importance of seafood in meeting global needs and recognizes the unprecedented challenges faced by the U.S. seafood sector.

### Seafood is Good for People

Seafood is one of the best sources of nutrients essential for human health and well-being. It is also critical to providing food to a growing global population.

### Seafood is Good for the Economy

The U.S. harvests about 10 billion pounds of seafood annually with a dockside value of \$6.3 billion. Domestic seafood is also an economic engine that supports 1.2 million jobs and generates \$165 billion in sales across the broader economy.

### Seafood is Good for the Planet

Harvested responsibly, as it is in the United States, seafood is also an environmentally friendly way to produce a nutritious food given its relatively low carbon footprint and efficient use of

**The U.S. seafood industry is facing unprecedented challenges.**

**Climate change** is rapidly altering species location, size, and composition. It is also intensifying storms and impacts on infrastructure.

The **coronavirus pandemic** disrupted markets and trade, decreasing the economic viability of the seafood industry and limiting access to some seafood.

**New technologies** and other ocean uses, such as offshore wind energy, will affect use of ocean space and potentially result in conflicts.

Significant **labor shortages** plus aging harvesting, processing, and distribution **infrastructure** affect production, safety, and cost-effectiveness in the industry.

resources, and is increasingly a critical part of food systems designed to reduce and mitigate the effects of climate change.

## Strategy Framework

The *National Seafood Strategy* focuses on NOAA Fisheries' work to sustainably manage marine fisheries and produce seafood responsibly, based on sound science. It is one of a suite of strategies that describes how we will support the nation's fisheries and execute our mission in the face of climate change, market disruptions, and new ocean uses.

The *National Seafood Strategy* also allows NOAA Fisheries to address important national issues such as the resilience of coastal fishing communities; the financial viability of the seafood industry; the effects and opportunities of international trade; and the importance of seafood to nutrition, food security, food sovereignty, subsistence fishing, and traditional Tribal fishing rights.

To implement the *Seafood Strategy*, NOAA Fisheries will partner with state and other federal agencies, the National Sea Grant College Program, Tribes, non-government organizations, fishermen, seafood farmers, and other stakeholders to address the challenges facing the seafood sector, especially when resources are limited.

### GOAL 1: Sustain or increase sustainable U.S. wild capture production

Changes in ocean conditions and the resulting shifts in distribution and abundance of marine resources, as well as the intensity of damaging storms are affecting access to and production of seafood as well as subsistence and Tribal fishing. These factors, in addition to new ocean uses and advances in sampling technologies and data modernization call for an evolution in science and management frameworks for a climate-ready seafood sector, including:

- **Fisheries Science.** Provide the science and economic and social analyses necessary for fisheries management under changing ecosystem dynamics.
- **Fisheries Management.** Maximize fishing opportunities and sustainable seafood production while ensuring the sustainability of fisheries through effective and efficient management. Support the commercial fishing industry and fishing communities in their efforts to adapt to climate change and thrive in a changing ocean economy.
- **Habitat Conservation in Support of Fisheries.** Protect and restore habitat important to our nation's fisheries and support resilient coastal communities.

## **GOAL 2: Increase sustainable U.S. aquaculture production**

Seafood is a healthy and climate-friendly nutrition choice and demand is increasing. Aquaculture is one of few ways to significantly increase domestic seafood production—it's how the majority of growth in demand has been met in the last 20 years. Supporting gradual, diverse, and regionally-appropriate growth of the domestic industry will depend on an efficient, strategic, and science-based regulatory approach that considers and mitigates impacts on protected resources, essential fish habitat, and marine ecosystems.

- **Marine Aquaculture Management and Regulatory Efficiency.** Accelerate progress on implementing an efficient, predictable, timely, and science-based regulatory framework for marine aquaculture.
- **Aquaculture Science.** Provide science-based advice and tools to minimize potential effects of an aquaculture operation on the environment and conduct coordinated, applied scientific research in support of sustainable industry development.

## **GOAL 3: Foster access to domestic and global markets for the U.S. seafood industry**

A thriving, well-regulated domestic seafood industry—capable of competing at home and abroad—will translate into greater global seafood supply and food security from sustainable U.S. fisheries. It will also decrease our reliance on foreign fisheries that are at greater risk of overfishing, IUU fishing, and forced labor.

- **Communication and Promotion.** Increase public awareness of the availability, sustainability, and nutritional value of all U.S. seafood.
- **U.S. Market Development.** Work with federal partners and others to identify and develop U.S. seafood markets and put more U.S. seafood back on U.S. plates
- **Fair Trade.** Promote fair seafood trade by combating IUU fishing and related harmful fishing practices around the world and by expanding access to foreign markets for U.S. seafood.

## **GOAL 4: Strengthen the entire U.S. seafood sector**

The COVID-19 market disruptions highlighted systemic challenges to the U.S. seafood industry and the importance of supporting the entire seafood/fisheries value chain, including after seafood hits the docks. Addressing these challenges will help the seafood industry to rebuild more quickly and enable the industry to be more resilient and flexible in the face of potential future crises and market shocks.

- **Seafood as a Vital Part of the Blue Economy.** Support the U.S. commercial fishing, marine aquaculture, and seafood communities to adapt and thrive in a changing ocean economy and given new competing uses.
- **Seafood Infrastructure.** Work across federal agencies to modernize U.S. seafood infrastructure (e.g., vessels, hatcheries, port and dock facilities, processing, storage, working waterfronts) to strengthen and enhance opportunities for coastal seafood communities and regional food economies.
- **Workforce Development.** Foster a growing and diverse seafood workforce and attract young fishermen and seafood farmers to the sector.

## Strategy Implementation

Informed by public comment and advice from our partners, NOAA Fisheries will prepare an implementation plan for the National Seafood Strategy with specific actions, timelines, partnerships, and milestones.