



## GOALS FOR OCEAN AND FISHERIES POLICY

Securing a Future for Fisheries and Working Waterfronts



The **Marine Fish Conservation Network** is dedicated to upholding and strengthening the science and conservation-based mandates in ocean and federal fisheries policy that will ensure all of us benefit from this natural resource for generations to come. Science-based fisheries management has improved the health of U.S. fish stocks over the past decade, thanks to amendments made during the last reauthorization of the **Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act**, our nation's primary federal fisheries law. As Congress once again considers ocean and fisheries-related legislation, including the reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, we must work together to make sure our national ocean policies continue to support abundant fish populations and conserve the habitats upon which they rely.

### STAYING THE COURSE WITH SCIENCE-BASED MANAGEMENT

The Network's aim is both to preserve the science and conservation advancements that have already been secured and to make additional improvements that not only promote the long-term health of U.S. fisheries and strengthen the wellbeing of fishing communities, but also ensure that our oceans and those who rely on them can successfully meet the emerging challenges of the future. To that end, the Network's goals for U.S. ocean and fisheries policy are to:

- **Support productive and sustainable fisheries that underpin local economies.** Congress should maintain and defend strong conservation and science-based management in fisheries policy and legislation, including the Magnuson-Stevens Act's requirements to rebuild fish stocks, set science-based annual catch limits, and hold fishery managers accountable if overfishing occurs. The Network supports strengthening assessment, monitoring, and enforcement mechanisms for implementing fisheries laws.



NOAA fisherman with  
Gulf of Maine cod

Credit: NOAA



### Serving up fresh catch

Credit: Natalie Gildersleeve

- **Promote policies that support and strengthen our nation’s working waterfronts, small businesses, and community-based fishermen.** National fisheries policy and legislation should prioritize the health and sustainability of coastal communities and their fishing sectors by designing and implementing policies scaled to the needs of community-based fishermen in their respective regions. This process should include strengthening and refining National Standard 8 in the Magnuson-Stevens Act and ensuring communities have sustained participation in and access to fisheries.
- **Foster vibrant ocean ecosystems that ensure the long-term health of U.S. fisheries,** including stronger protections for fish habitat and better management and conservation of forage (or small “bait fish”) species that feed larger predators. Effective fisheries management should also include measures to minimize bycatch (the catching and potentially killing of non-targeted wildlife during fishing), incorporate the best available ocean science into all management decisions, and fully comply with all federal conservation laws and regulations, such as the National Environmental Policy Act, the Endangered Species Act, and the Marine Mammals Protection Act.
- **Require fisheries management to address climate change impacts on changing oceans.** Federal fisheries managers should consider the impacts of climate change as a priority in the development of all fishery management plans, as well as include conservation measures to mitigate those impacts. Laws and regulations should also recognize the growing reality of climate change emergencies and establish new policies and processes for quickly implementing contingency plans to ensure the health and resiliency of fish stocks in the face of these events.

## GET INVOLVED WITH THE MARINE FISH CONSERVATION NETWORK

### Follow our blog, “From the Waterfront”

“From the Waterfront” shares stories of our fishing past, present, and future to demonstrate the invaluable role that well-managed fisheries play in healthy ocean ecosystems and our American fishing tradition. Visit [conservefish.org/blog](https://conservefish.org/blog).

### Join our Waterside Chat

Network Deputy Director Tom Sadler talks with guests about current ocean policy and fisheries management topics and what policy decisions mean for people’s livelihoods, communities, recreation, and coastal ways of life. View the *Waterside Chat* on **YouTube**, or listen on **Spotify**, **Amazon Music**, or **Apple Podcasts**.

### Follow us on social media

Get the latest news and information on **Facebook** or **Twitter/X**: [@marinefishcons](https://twitter.com/marinefishcons).

For the Network’s legislative priorities, visit [conservefish.org/msa-reauthorization/](https://conservefish.org/msa-reauthorization/)



Danielle McMurray caught false albacore off Montauk, NY

Credit: Capt. John McMurray