

Promote sustainable fisheries that support healthy ecosystems and coastal economies

Commercial and recreational fishing is big business in the United States. The commercial seafood industry, which includes a long supply chain from commercial fishermen to seafood processors to markets, supports more [than one million jobs and generates about \\$50 billion in sales annually](#). Meanwhile, the recreational fishing sector accounts for approximately 46 million Americans fishing in both fresh and saltwater, making it one of the most popular outdoor activities. In addition, recreational fishing supports [more than 800,000 jobs](#). Fishing is important to our economy and our culture, so our fish stocks must be managed sustainably to ensure that current and future Americans are able to benefit from the bounty of the oceans and Great Lakes.

Since 1976, we have seen tremendous progress toward creating and maintaining sustainable fisheries domestically and internationally. Much of this progress can be credited to the passage and implementation of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens). The U.S. model of fisheries management has become an international guidepost for sustainable fisheries practices. The United States has achieved significant gains in rebuilding domestic fisheries and ending overfishing through the commitment and tireless efforts of U.S. fishermen, regional fishery management councils and commissions, scientists, and managers. Opportunities also exist to grow domestic fish production by advancing sustainable offshore aquaculture. In addition, NOAA and other federal agencies are carrying out important initiatives to combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing on a global scale. The end of chronic overfishing means healthier ocean ecosystems and a brighter future for fishermen and coastal communities here in the United States and around the world.

<p>Maintain the U.S. government commitment to healthy and sustainable fisheries by effectively implementing the primary law governing U.S. fisheries</p>

Congress should strengthen America's commitment to healthy, sustainable fisheries by continuing to support the implementation of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. The Act is the nation's premier fisheries management legislation; it created a framework for fisheries management that brings together the combined knowledge of fishermen, scientists, and managers to inform decisions at the regional level. The Act also set the stage for ending overfishing by requiring catch limits for all federally managed fisheries. In the last 15 years, the number of federally managed fisheries with overfished stocks dropped by two-thirds, and 39 fisheries have been rebuilt. A renewed and strengthened commitment to the Act that made this success possible is essential for ensuring healthy fisheries into the future. In addition, as countries around the world struggle with the declines of their fisheries, the United States can play a key leadership role. The United States should share the lessons we learned about effective fisheries management practices, continue to offer guidance on how to end overfishing, and lead an international strategy to combat illegal, unreported, and unreported fishing.

To support these aims, the Magnuson-Stevens Act remains the strongest tool at our disposal to protect the health and productivity of America's fisheries. **If our nation's leaders decide to reauthorize the Magnuson-Stevens Act, Congress should maintain and strengthen the key elements that have led to measurable fisheries improvements.** Specifically, Congress should:

- Maintain the focus on preventing overfishing.
- Ensure that management decisions are based on the best available data and scientific research.
- Support the innovative policies that have led to the recovery of U.S. fish stocks.
- Facilitate the sharing of lessons and best practices from U.S. fisheries policy abroad.

Improve fisheries data collection and management by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)

Fisheries data, including data collected through vessel logbooks, catch sampling programs, and scientific surveys, are essential to sound management of U.S. fish stocks. These data are essential to fishery managers and are also used by fishermen, bankers, and civil authorities to make a wide range of economic decisions. There is significant concern among these and other stakeholders that data collected by NMFS are not accurate or complete. **The Trump Administration and Congress should improve fisheries data.** Specifically, they should:

- Encourage scientists and representatives from the public and private sectors to collaborate.
- Invest in new technologies to enhance data collection.
- Carefully evaluate data collection requirements to ensure that the data fishermen collect are useful to scientists and managers.
- Improve and modernize data collection for recreational fisheries.

Prioritize combatting illegal fishing and improving seafood traceability

Illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing introduces unfair competition that hurts the American fishing industry and undermines the sustainable management of our fish stocks. In addition to environmental and economic concerns, IUU fishing is linked to a series of growing national security risks, such as transnational organized crime, drug and human trafficking, terrorism, and international maritime disputes. **The Trump Administration and Congress should lead efforts to address illegal fishing** by doing the following:

- Fully implement the recommendations of the [Presidential Task Force on Combating IUU Fishing and Seafood Fraud](#).
- Support the development and deployment of new technologies to monitor illegal fishing.
- Strengthen the capacity of international partners to combat illegal fishing.

Over the last several years, the Administration and Congress have made significant progress in combating IUU fishing policies. For example, the [Safe Ocean Network](#) was recently formed to combat IUU fishing by coordinating action and sharing knowledge among 46 governments and

organizations. Notably, Congress passed legislation to implement the [Port State Measures Agreement](#). The agreement requires party nations to take a number of steps to combat IUU activity, including denying port entry and access to port services to foreign fishing and transport vessels that have harvested fish illegally. Additionally, in 2016 NOAA announced [seafood traceability rules](#) designed to address seafood fraud in the United States. While these are important milestones, many of these initiatives will need continued political and financial support to realize their full potential.

Support the sustainable growth of the offshore aquaculture industry

While immense progress has been made in rebuilding domestic wild fishing stocks, seafood consumption is expected to grow beyond what wild fish stocks can sustain. To grow a domestic aquaculture industry, the United States must develop a more streamlined and efficient regulatory framework to mitigate concerns about environmental issues and conflicts for space in an already crowded ocean. **The Trump Administration and Congress should support progress toward a thriving domestic aquaculture industry** by implementing NOAA's [Marine Aquaculture Strategic Plan](#) and streamlining the regulatory process.

A strong domestic offshore aquaculture industry would provide two principle benefits. First, it would provide much needed food security. The United States currently imports [approximately 90 percent](#) of the seafood consumed domestically by value. Since U.S. production falls short of domestic demand and global demand is growing, competition for wild fish stocks is increasing. Second, a well-managed domestic aquaculture industry would create thousands of jobs and contribute to the overall growth of the U.S. economy.