



**NOAA** NATIONAL OCEANIC AND  
ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Recreational Fishermen and Federal Partners Work Together to Improve Survival of Released Fish**

NOAA Fisheries is bringing together recreational anglers, charter boat captains and scientists from Maine to North Carolina to share their techniques and devise “best practices” for improving survival of fish that are caught and released in recreational fisheries. The first of these workshops will be co-hosted by The Sportfishing Conservancy and NOAA Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary on June 12 in Plymouth, MA at the Hilton Garden Inn from 6:00-8:30pm.

According to NOAA Fisheries statistics, well over half the fish caught today by recreational fishermen are released. Improving the chances that these fish live once released, benefits everyone -- recreational and commercial fishermen and the marine ecosystem.

“We each have a lot to learn from each other about safely handling fish so we can improve their chances of survival after they are released,” said Paul Perra, coordinator, recreational fishing program, Northeast Region, NOAA Fisheries. “The Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, together with the National Marine Sanctuaries Foundation and The Sportfishing Conservancy, have been working on a similar effort so it made sense for us to team up for this first NOAA Fisheries workshop.”

The June 12th workshop will provide an opportunity to discuss safe fish handling, including reducing life-threatening effects of barotrauma (pressure changes) on fish, efforts to minimize interactions between recreational fishing vessels and whales, and ways to improve the science about fish survivability through local cooperative research and use of angler data.

Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary is one of a select group of special marine protected areas around the nation. By acting as responsible stewards, including using best practices for recreational fishing, we help preserve our invaluable resources for future generations.

Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary eagerly agreed to co-host the workshop as a way of celebrating World Oceans Day (June 8) and to kick off The Sportfishing Conservancy’s annual Sanctuary Classic Fishing and Photo Contest, which runs from June 8 to September 2 this year. Education and recreation can go hand-in-hand to produce a new generation of responsible marine stewards.

Tips for safe handling fish to be shared during the June 12th workshop include simple steps like making sure you fish with appropriate gear to land fish quickly and without undue stress to techniques for helping fish that are brought from depths “decompress” so they can survive.

The Sportfishing Conservancy's Sanctuary Classic Fishing and Photo Contest kicks off on June 8<sup>th</sup> and runs until September 2<sup>nd</sup>. The program encourages responsible recreational fishing and outdoor fun in our country's national marine sanctuaries and their adjacent waters. For Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary, located at the mouth of Massachusetts Bay, the qualifying geographic area ranges from Newburyport in the north, around all of Massachusetts and Cape Cod Bays and down along Outer Cape Cod to Chatham. For more information on the Classic go to: [www.SanctuaryClassic.org](http://www.SanctuaryClassic.org).

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