

# Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office

## Draft Strategic Plan - FY15-FY19

### 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO) is responsible for the stewardship of the Nation's living marine resources from Maine to North Carolina, and includes the Great Lakes under its authority. We have drafted a five-year strategic plan that identifies objectives associated with seven primary strategic goals: sustainable fisheries; protected resources; habitat conservation; community resiliency; aquaculture; organizational excellence; and customer service. This draft will be distributed for public input. We will be seeking input relating to key needs in our stewardship of living marine resources and approaches to meeting our stated objectives.

Our strategic plan has three main sources of input:

1. The seven primary goals are aligned with the strategic direction as presented in Department of Commerce, NOAA, and NOAA Fisheries plans.
2. An internal assessment of strengths and weaknesses, threats and opportunities informs GARFO objectives.
3. Input from our partners and stakeholders is critical for validation of objectives.

Our Strategic Goals are:

#### 1. Sustainable Fisheries

Our Sustainable Fisheries Goal highlights:

- science-based service and stewardship of fishery resources to implement the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery and Conservation Act (MSA) and the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act,
- collaboration and guidance on fishery management issues that threaten fishery sustainability and community resiliency and the development and implementation of regulations stemming from collaborative efforts,
- identification and facilitation of fishing opportunities for abundant fishery stocks not fully utilized,
- implementation of the Greater Atlantic Recreational Fisheries Plan, and
- improvement of fishery-dependent data collection to support science-based stewardship of fishery resources.

## **2. Protected Resources**

Our Protected Resources Goal emphasizes:

- Science-based service and stewardship to implement the Endangered Species Act and the Marine Mammal Protection Act,
- proactive efforts for species at risk, and collaborative agreements for recovery of Atlantic salmon and other species under the Endangered Species Act, and
- domestic and international fishery partnerships.

## **3. Habitat Conservation**

Our Habitat Conservation Goal highlights:

- science-based service and stewardship under the MSA, the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, and the Federal Power Act,
- actions to improve efficiency and effectiveness in providing habitat advice through consultative and stewardship opportunities, and
- Habitat Blueprint activities in the North Atlantic.

## **4. Community Resiliency**

Our Community Resiliency Goal proposes:

- an integrated framework of GARFO programs aimed at rebuilding fish stocks and maintaining and restoring a healthy ocean and coastal ecosystem for the long term benefit of the coastal communities. The objectives under this goal also include attention to the impacts of climate change and ecosystem-based management.

## **5. Aquaculture**

Our Aquaculture Goal supports:

- further implementation of the DOC and NOAA Marine Aquaculture Policy,
- a collaborative approach to streamline shellfish, finfish and algal aquaculture permitting processes, and
- helping to reduce aquaculture industry impediments at the local level.

## **6. Organizational Excellence**

Our Organizational Excellence Goal is integral to the successful attainment of the six other goals. It recognizes that GARFO's success in meeting our mission is dependent on:

- a commitment to maintaining a professional and proficient workforce,
- clear and concise communication skills, tools, and processes,
- our success in ensuring adherence to internal controls and fiscal accountability,
- the continuous development and use of customer-focused and cost-effective information technology,

- our resolve to fully inform management decisions as required by the National Environmental Policy Act,
- our dedication to a structured and continuous process for self-evaluation through strategic planning, and
- successful coordination with other line offices on common activities throughout the region.

## **7. Customer Service**

Our Customer Service Goal advocates for a well-informed public that:

- understands the NMFS mission of science-based stewardship of living marine resources,
- understands the regional organization (what we do) and can access staff and resources (who does what) to accomplish business as needed with GARFO,
- understands the associated fishery regulations (what they need to do and why), and
- interacts constructively with GARFO in meaningful dialogue with appropriate feedback communication opportunities when necessary.