



Agency Makes Significant Progress on Commitments to Recreational Fishermen

from Chris Oliver, Head of NOAA Fisheries

As a Gulf Coast native, I have an intimate understanding of how integral saltwater fishing, both recreational and commercial, is to the social, cultural, and economic life of our nation's coastal communities. And today (December 12, 2017) I am pleased to report that NOAA Fisheries has made substantial progress



on or completed more than 80 percent of the projects identified in the *2015-2018 National Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Implementation Plan*. And the work won't stop there. We will continue to focus on completing the commitments in the plan through 2018.

In the meantime, some of the activities outlined in a recent progress update on the plan include:

- Distributing thousands of fish descending devices to state partners and anglers.
- Issuing final guidance on periodic evaluations of fishery quota allocations.
- Conducting surveys to estimate expenditures and economic impacts associated with saltwater recreational fishing trips.
- Improving habitats critical to supporting recreationally important species.

Also since 2015, we have taken many steps to open and strengthen a dialogue with recreational fishermen around the nation, including a recent series of regional roundtable discussions and workshops held in 2017.

Saltwater recreational fishing is a major economic driver nationwide. According to our most recent estimates, in 2015 America's nearly 9 million saltwater anglers took an estimated 61 million fishing trips; these trips supported 439,000 jobs, resulted in \$63 billion in sales, and contributed \$36 billion to the U.S. GDP. To highlight the regional impacts of saltwater recreational fisheries, we have developed [nine fact sheets](#) that provide snapshots of regional trends, economic impacts, fishing opportunities, issues of interest, and key statistics for popular species caught by anglers.

Our region-specific activities are the latest in a long-term concerted effort to support sustainable recreational fisheries. We understand the importance of recreational fishing to the country and our economy and we know that saltwater recreational fishing supports coastal communities, fishermen, and contributes to our economy in a big way. We also know that more progress is made when the agency and anglers take action together. We will continue to follow through on our commitment to build trust with anglers, and improve the stewardship of our recreational fisheries for the benefit and enjoyment of the nation.

Fish TREMBLE at the mention of his name!



Junior Member NATHANIEL PAKURIS

Beat his own tautog record when he landed this 6.6 lb. tog while fishing with his grandfather, John Sheriff, on November 24 south of the Sakonnet River.

With this fish, Nate took 1st Place in the Yearlong Tournament, Junior Boat Division.

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