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NOAA Fisheries' Equity and Environmental Justice

Presentation to the Council Coordination Committee

May 21, 2024

Sam Rauch, DAA for Regulatory Programs

NOAA Fisheries National EEJ Strategy

NEWS

NOAA Fisheries Releases Final Equity and Environmental Justice Strategy

May 22, 2023

Agency to incorporate equity and environmental justice into the vital services we provide to all communities.

[Feature Story](#) | National



More Information

- > [Final Equity and Environmental Justice Strategy \(PDF, 41 pages\)](#)
- > [Final Equity and Environmental Justice Strategy—Spanish \(PDF, 41 pages\)](#)

Recent News

VIDEO

[Climate Change and Marine Animals: A Conservation Challenge](#)
National



FEATURE STORY

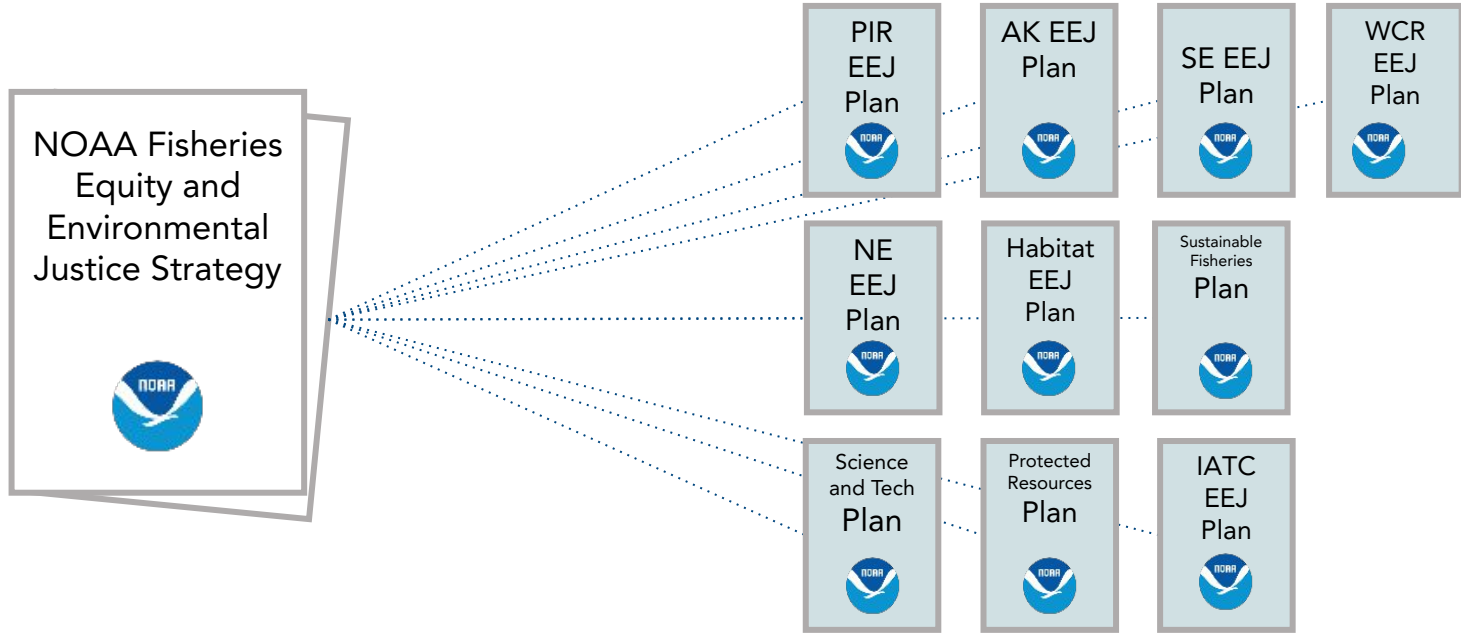
[Celebrating Seaweed by the Seashore](#)
New England/Mid-Atlantic, National



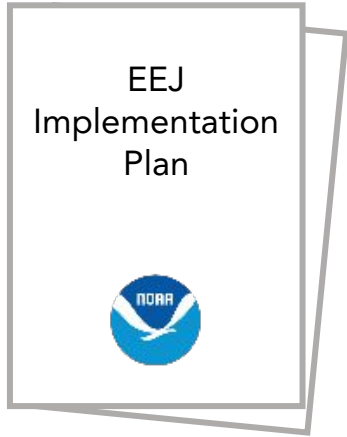
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Happening Now:

NOAA Fisheries' Internal Review of Office and Regional Implementation Plans



About the Plans



- We anticipate publicly releasing all of the plans in June 2024.
- The plans are designed to be living documents that will be updated to ensure they address evolving community needs.
- We know that it will take time to achieve these implementation plans and are committed to making that progress.
- There will be opportunities for the public to provide feedback on the plans.
- We will continue engaging with communities throughout the regions on our efforts and share progress with partners.



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EEJ Regional Engagement to Inform Implementation Plans

Alaska

- Virtual and in-person partner and community meetings



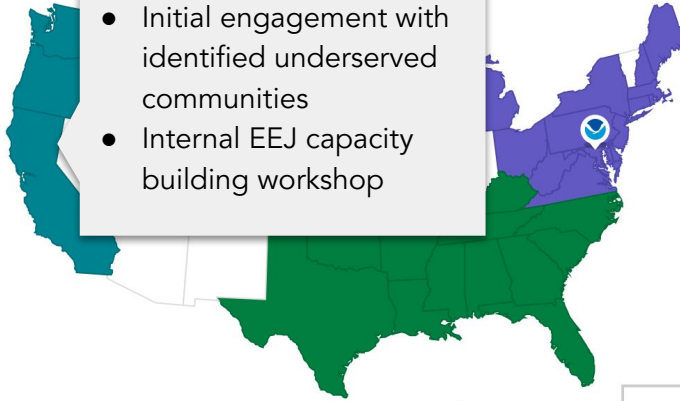
Pacific Islands

- In-person meetings with territorial partners
- 8 internal capacity building workshops



West Coast

- Initial engagement with identified underserved communities
- Internal EEJ capacity building workshop



Southeast

- 29 focus groups across the South Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico and US Caribbean



New England/ Mid-Atlantic

- Ground truthing the identification of underserved communities using CSVI tool
- Working with partners to build lines of communication with communities



Plan Highlights: Sneak Peek

Southeast Regional Office/Southeast Fisheries Science Center Plan Actions:

- Review FAO's Voluntary Guidelines for securing sustainable small-scale fisheries in the context of food security and poverty eradication and discuss with the Caribbean Council their potential for assisting small-scale fisheries in the U.S. Caribbean.
- Pursue a safe fishing zone designation by the International Maritime Organization for Lang Bank along the eastern side of St. Croix to prevent disruption of fishing activities by large vessels transiting the area.
- Conduct a situational analysis of marine aquaculture development in the U.S. Caribbean to identify forms of aquaculture that are best-suited to regional conditions and explore opportunities for more accessible pathways for authorizing small-scale or experimental projects.



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Plan Highlights: Sneak Peek

Office of Sustainable Fisheries (OSF) Plan Actions Supporting the U.S. Caribbean:

- Prioritize U.S. Caribbean research and data needs in the Atlantic Highly Migratory Species (tunas, swordfish, billfishes, sharks) Research Plan.
- Facilitate cooperative place-based research in the U.S. Caribbean via scientific research permits. Involve place-based experts to leverage local knowledge in HMS Essential Fish Habitat work.
- Provide fishing compliance guides in both English and Spanish for training in Puerto Rico.
- Support educational programs and opportunities such as the Marine Resource Education Program (MREP) to engage underserved communities in management processes. Upcoming events: August 22-25, 2024 (Fajardo, PR).



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Plan Highlights: Sneak Peek

AKRO/AKFSC:

- Develop and improve the social science and EEJ section of impact assessments and other applied science products such as Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) reports, and Fishery Ecosystem Plans
- Produce an annual report focusing on fishing communities substantially dependent on or substantially engaged in the North Pacific groundfish and crab fisheries and develop place-based social and economic well-being indicators for Gulf of Alaska fishing communities linked to local marine ecosystems



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National Academies of Sciences, Engineering & Math

Study on

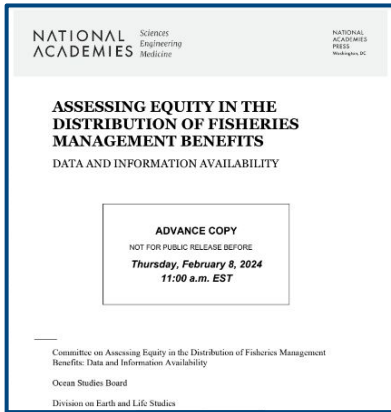
Assessing Equity in the Distribution of Fisheries Management Benefits

The Study: Background

Do NOAA Fisheries' benefits (such as funding, fisheries allocations, permits, opportunities, services, and environmental protection and restoration) equitably reach or benefit underserved communities? Can we expand the equity in our delivery of these benefits? – EEJ Strategy

Incorporate EEJ considerations into decision-making about resource allocations, to the extent consistent with applicable law. Considerations could include assessment of impacts and benefits to underserved communities and prioritization of actions that benefit or correct a disparity among communities. - EEJ Strategy

Identified the need for an independent, third-party review



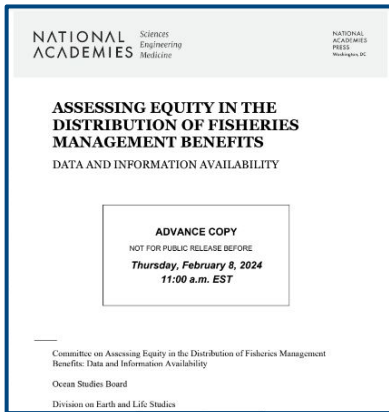
The Study

NASEM study on equitable distribution of fisheries management benefits (allocation/permits/quota) was split into two phases:

1. Identification of information needs and determination of the availability of information
2. Identification of to whom and where benefits accrue and recommendations to make distribution more equitable

Phase 1 began in fall 2022 and the report was released in late February 2024

Phase 2 has not yet begun



Phase 1 Report



Assessing Equity in the Distribution of Fisheries Management Benefits: Data Information and Availability

- Equity is not simple and is multidimensional.
 - four dimensions of equity: *distributional, recognitional, procedural, and contextual.*
- The multidimensional nature of equity highlights the difficulty and complexity of understanding and addressing equity in fisheries management.
 - Acknowledged and applauded the efforts of NMFS and the councils through the EEJ Strategy and for soliciting feedback.
- Will serve as a useful resource for meeting the goals and objectives of our EEJ Strategy

Next Steps



Phase 1

- Chapter 3 focuses on distributional equity, responding to the statement of task.
- Chapter 3 findings and recommendations will be helpful with EEJ Strategy implementation.
 - No specific recommendations provided given limited funding and resources.
- The report is a useful resource for developing a comprehensive approach to equity.

For Phase 2

- Updating the statement of task for Phase 2, based on outcomes of Phase 1.
- Phase 2 will focus on distributional benefits of permits and quotas with illustrative case studies.



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Thank You!