

# 2010 RECREATIONAL SALTWATER FISHING SUMMIT

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CONSENSUS CENTER



Prepared for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration by the  
FCRC Consensus Center at Florida State University  
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CONSENSUS CENTER

The FCRC Consensus Center serves as an independent public resource facilitating consensus solutions and supporting collaborative action. It assists public and private interests in preventing and resolving disputes and building consensus on public policy issues. The Center was created by the Florida legislature in 1987 and placed in its neutral home, Florida State University.

For more information on the Center, go to <<http://consensus.fsu.edu>>.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Alexandria, Virginia, was the site of the April 16 and 17, 2010, national Recreational Saltwater Fishing Summit hosted by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). As promised in 2009 by Dr. Jane Lubchenco, Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere, the Summit was designed as an important step toward an enhanced relationship between the recreational saltwater fishing community and NOAA.

More than 170 participants identified and shared their visions of a successful future in 2020, their perceptions of the most urgent challenges facing the recreational saltwater fishing community and NOAA in achieving that success, and potential actions to meet those challenges. NOAA ended the Summit with the commitment to continue the dialogue and exchange of information.

### The Participants

Underscoring the timeliness of the Summit, the participants came from all six NOAA regions and represented a broad range of recreational saltwater fishing perspectives and experiences. They included private anglers, angling and trade associations, charter boat owners and operators, party and headboat owners and operators, tournament organizers, and fishing industry retail and manufacturing businesses. The fishing community participants were joined by representatives of the Regional Fishery Management Councils and Interstate Marine Fisheries Commissions and key regional staff and officials from NOAA.

### The Summit Process

Because the Summit was intended to ensure a productive dialogue, NOAA developed the agenda with the recreational saltwater fishing community's input, making sure that there were ample opportunities for careful listening, the exchange of information, and open and honest dialogue. To address the critical question of stakeholder trust, NOAA engaged the FCRC Consensus Center at Florida State University to design the Summit process and facilitate the discussion. As a neutral professional facilitation center with no stake in the outcome, the facilitators worked to ensure that all perspectives were heard and that the discussions were focused and productive.

A pre-Summit survey designed by the facilitation team was used to develop a foundation of shared information and build trust as context for the Summit dialogue. That information highlighted what participants viewed as the desired Summit outcomes, the principles to guide the Summit dialogue, and the four key themes from the participants' vision of success. It also called out the critical challenges facing the recreational saltwater fishing community and a range of proposed actions that could address those challenges.

To achieve the Summit goal of arriving at an improved understanding of the issues and stronger and more open relationships, the agenda was ambitious in scope and designed to ensure that the key challenges, the actions to

*"We need to develop a long term vision in order to consider the best near term solutions. The time for talk is over. The time to act is now. We are ready to roll up our sleeves and get to work."* Dr. Jane Lubchenco (featured below) in her opening comments at the Summit.



The Recreational Saltwater Fishing Summit provided a constructive forum where participants representing a broad range of perspectives from all six NOAA regions could work side-by-side with NOAA staff to identify concerns and possible solutions.

address those challenges, and concrete next steps were thoroughly discussed and clearly defined. At the end of the Summit, Dr. Lubchenco complimented the participants on the level of detail and specificity of the Summit's work products and noted that, as a result, NOAA will be able to respond in a correspondingly concise and detailed manner.

### The Collective Accomplishments

At the outset of the Summit, participants from the recreational saltwater fishing community and NOAA staff indicated their support for an overarching 2020 vision of success for saltwater recreational fishing. That vision, which was derived from the results of the pre-Summit survey, was expressed through four themes (highlighted to the right). Participants also identified 34 key challenges to achieving the vision and prioritized the most urgent challenges faced by the recreational saltwater fishing community and NOAA in achieving the four vision themes. The most pressing challenges related to the need for building greater trust, enhancing communication, creating more accurate data and responsive management, and implementing solutions to problems with catch shares, access, allocations, quality, abundance, and sustainability. After identifying the most pressing challenges, participants then identified, evaluated, and prioritized the most acceptable among 212 possible actions put forward at the Summit to meet the challenges and achieve the vision of success themes.

### Next Steps

The Summit concluded with both the participants and NOAA recognizing and expressing commitment to the need for an ongoing process for continued dialogue and collaboration beyond the Summit. NOAA pledged to continue working closely with the recreational saltwater fishing community and its advisory bodies and regional offices to build an action agenda that addresses the mutual concerns and areas for improvement discussed at the Summit. Recognizing that the success of the Summit will be determined by the strength of its follow-up actions, NOAA committed to providing regular updates on progress and continuing to build stronger relationships with the recreational saltwater fishing community. "Let us build on the good work begun and work together to hammer out a strong future for fishing in our marine waters. Time's a wastin'. Let's get to work," Dr. Lubchenco concluded.



*"The Summit is an important beginning of a renewed dialogue between the recreational saltwater fishing community and NOAA. Re-opening that conversation provides the means to begin the process of developing and implementing an action agenda capable of addressing our joint interests."* Eric Schwaab (image above), Assistant Administrator for NOAA Fisheries.

### OVERARCHING VISION OF SUCCESS THEMES

1. Improved open communication, cooperation, and trusting interaction.
2. Much improved, robust, timely, and accurate data and science on fisheries, habitat, and water quality.
3. Fishery management decisions based on a more complete understanding of the social and economic contributions of both the recreational and commercial saltwater fishing communities.
4. Ensured broad access to the greatest possible range of recreational fishing opportunities.