

Annotated Agenda
MAFAC Meeting - Portland, Oregon
April 25, 2016

1. Title of Discussion: **Draft National Bycatch Strategy and Other Bycatch Efforts**

2. Presenter: Richard Merrick, Director, Scientific Programs and Chief Science
Advisor, NOAA Fisheries

3. Objective/Purpose (Informational and Action)

The presentation is to inform MAFAC of current efforts to reduce bycatch, including new NOAA Fisheries web content and to seek comment on the [draft National Bycatch Reduction Strategy](#) that is currently out for public review. NOAA Fisheries is committed to minimizing **bycatch in U.S. fisheries**. While great progress has been made, there is more to do. The updated strategy is needed to ensure our current efforts are aligned with priorities.

4. Background/Synopsis:

Minimizing and reducing bycatch is a legislative mandate under a number of different statutes and is an essential component of sustainable fisheries and ecosystem management. NOAA Fisheries is committed to minimizing bycatch in U.S. fisheries to ensure our fisheries remain sustainable and protected species are given the best chance to recover. It has been over 10 years since our last strategy, the *2003 National Bycatch Strategy*, and we've completed most actions laid out in that document. In addition, the 2007 MSA reauthorization created new requirements for bycatch that were not addressed in the 2003 strategy. An updated strategy is needed to ensure our current efforts are aligned with priorities. The goal of the new Bycatch Reduction Strategy is to guide and coordinate NOAA Fisheries' efforts under the MSA, MMPA, and ESA and other relevant mandates to reduce bycatch and bycatch mortality and encourage utilization of discards to maintain sustainable fisheries while conserving and recovering protected species. We are accepting public comment on the draft strategy until June 3, 2016, and are interested in hearing your thoughts on the strategy.

The presentation will also review breakthroughs in bycatch and how the program has evolved, an overview of the new NOAA Fisheries bycatch website, how we plan to implement the bycatch reduction strategy, and next steps.

5. Action to be taken by MAFAC

Review draft National Bycatch Strategy and submit comments/recommendations.