



NOAA FISHERIES

GREATER ATLANTIC & WEST COAST REGIONS



Fishing Community Resilience:

Discussion points of NOAA Fisheries' Greater Atlantic and West Coast Region Study Group on Fishing Community Resilience - Fall 2015

Fishing Community Resilience: The ability of a fishing community to withstand, recovery from and successfully adapt to change.

Note: This information represents highlights of the study group's discussion to date and does not represent Agency policy.

Executive Summary

From the Department of Commerce, through NOAA, and NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) and its Regional Offices, the term community resilience has emerged as a key element in strategic planning documents. The Greater Atlantic and West Coast Regional Offices' Fishing Community Resilience Study Group was formed in May 2015 to explore resilience specifically in the context of fishing communities. Since there is no Agency definition of fishing community resilience (FCR), the group spent time considering this and how we could better incorporate it into our fisheries management processes, or more clearly articulate where it already is incorporated. Several offices within NOAA and NOAA Fisheries have also been addressing various aspects of fishing communities and resilience recently. We aimed to learn from these efforts and consider if there were any gaps and/or how we could enhance these efforts through our regional offices' work. Members of our study group were from both offices, with input from NOAA Fisheries' Northeast and Northwest Fisheries Science Centers.

NOAA Fisheries Charge

Within the scope of our mandates, Department and Agency strategic plans and guidance memos urge us to:

- Ensure communities and businesses have the necessary information, products, and services to prepare for and prosper in a changing environment. - *Department of Commerce Strategic Plan, 2014-2018*
- Promote NOAA's core mission and vision of healthy ecosystems, communities, and economies that are resilient in the face of change. - *NOAA Annual Guidance Memo, September 2012*
- Ensure sustainable and resilient fisheries and fishing communities. - *NOAA Fisheries Strategic Plan, 2016-2020*
- Strive for productive and sustainable fisheries that create and sustain jobs, supporting vibrant fishing communities. - *Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office Strategic Plan, 2015-2019*
- Ensure sustainable and productive West Coast fisheries and resilient fishing. Communities. - *West Coast Region Strategic Plan, 2016-2020*



Photos by Sarah Towne and Jennifer Ise

Definitions

Our study group developed the following working definitions, which we intend to share with other NOAA Fisheries offices for feedback. Notably, as we discussed factors that affect FCR and Agency guidance on community resilience generally, we felt the definitions of fishing community under Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA) and National Standard (NS) 8 guidance was too narrow in scope; therefore, we created a broader working definition.

Fishing Community: For the purposes of considering FCR, we identified three types of fishing communities that NOAA Fisheries may consider alone or in conjunction:

- **Place-based communities**, such as cities and towns, that are substantially dependent on or substantially engaged in the harvesting or processing of fishery resources. Examples include Dutch Harbor, AK or Cape May, NJ, which fall under the MSA and NS8 definition of fishing community.
- **Communities of interest**, such as those based on gear, target species, or industry sector. Examples include the New England groundfish fleet or West Coast gillnet vessels.
- **Areas within communities where fishing and fishing-related industries occur**, such as neighborhoods, ports, or other waterfront areas (regardless of whether the community is a fishing community under MSA). Examples include the San Pedro area in Los Angeles, CA, the Ballard neighborhood in Seattle, WA, or Point Judith in Narragansett, RI.

Fishing Community Resilience (FCR): The ability of a fishing community to withstand, recover from, and successfully adapt to change. In this context, change may occur over a broad spectrum of environmental, social, and economic conditions, caused by sudden disasters, regulatory changes, consumer and market shifts, or more gradual events such as climate change.



Key Discussion Points

- There are many factors that affect fishing community resilience, such as waterfront / port infrastructure and capacity; environmental factors; local, state, and federal regulations and policies; and seafood consumer market demand.
- Some of these factors are within NMFS' scope, and others are beyond our scope
- Addressing these issues will take collaboration across jurisdictions and between business and government.
- NMFS' challenge is to find those places where NMFS can add value and support fishing communities.
- Fishing communities need fish, fishermen, buyers, infrastructure, reasonable operating costs, and markets to be successful.
- As in ecological systems, social and economic systems with higher diversity have higher resiliency (Freese and Quigley 2006).

Potential Next Steps for NMFS

Based on our discussions to date, some next steps to better incorporate FCR into our fisheries management planning and processes might include:

- Ensuring we're more aware of FCR in our daily mindsets
- Tapping into what communities and NMFS are already doing
- Learning what the needs of specific fishing communities are
- Finding the gaps and determining where NMFS fits and can support FCR
- Understanding FCR as an iterative, evolving, and collaborative process

Feedback

The study group welcomes feedback about how we consider FCR, and about how NOAA Fisheries can better contribute to enhancing FCR.

Study Group Members

- Greater Atlantic Regional Office: Co-leads: Harry Mears and Peter Burns; Members: Colleen Coogan, Chris Boelke
- West Coast Region: Co-leads: Jennifer Ise and Steve Freese; Members: Jamie Goen, Sarah Towne, Tonya Wick
- Northeast Fisheries Science Center Consultants: Dr. Patricia Clay, Dr. Lisa Colburn
- Northwest Fisheries Science Center Consultant: Dr. Suzanne Russell