

**NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE PROCEDURAL INSTRUCTION 39-103-01**

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External Relations

Social Media Policy 39-103

How to Contribute NOAA Fisheries Content to Social Media 39-103-01

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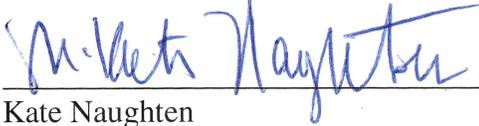
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**SUMMARY OF REVISIONS:**

Guidance and requirements for contributing content to additional social media channels (J Swartz)

Signed  12/12/2016  
Kate Naughten Date  
Director, Office of Communications

## HOW TO CONTRIBUTE NOAA FISHERIES CONTENT TO SOCIAL MEDIA

Communicating to the public and our target audiences is a team effort by all NOAA Fisheries staff, and social media offers key platforms to help us reach those audiences. Staff should share content with their communications leads to post content to regional social media accounts and with the NOAA Fisheries Communications Office to post content to national social media accounts. In accordance with Department of Commerce policy, NOAA Fisheries may not rely on social media and web 2.0 technologies as the exclusive means of distribution of information. To comply with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, original materials (including images) posted to any third-party social media service must first be posted on an official government website.

### National Social Media Accounts

The NOAA Fisheries Communications Office maintains and administers national accounts. Programs, science centers, and regional offices are encouraged to submit content for posting per the guidelines for each of the tools below. The NOAA Fisheries Communications Office might edit content of posts to conform to guidelines.

- Twitter— [www.twitter.com/noaafisheries](http://www.twitter.com/noaafisheries)
- Facebook— [www.facebook.com/noaafisheries](http://www.facebook.com/noaafisheries)
- Pinterest— [www.pinterest.com/noaafisheries/](http://www.pinterest.com/noaafisheries/)
- Instagram— [www.instagram.com/noaafisheries](http://www.instagram.com/noaafisheries)

- LinkedIn— [www.linkedin.com/company/noaa-fisheries](http://www.linkedin.com/company/noaa-fisheries)
- YouTube— [www.youtube.com/user/usnoaafisheriesgov](http://www.youtube.com/user/usnoaafisheriesgov)

## General Guidelines for Staff to Contribute Content

- **Send submissions for all national NOAA Fisheries social media channels** (such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Pinterest, LinkedIn, and Flickr) to [fisheries.socialmedia@noaa.gov](mailto:fisheries.socialmedia@noaa.gov).
- Please include **photo(s), captions, and related NOAA Fisheries website links with your submission**. Related content about the topic should link to a NOAA or Fisheries webpage if possible. URL links must be shortened by using a federal government approved short link creator such as [www.bitly.com](http://www.bitly.com).
- **Consideration for Photos**
  - **Photo Captions**—If possible, photo captions should include details such as date the photo was taken, location, names and titles of all people in photo, name(s) of marine species, and a brief description of the significance to NOAA Fisheries.
  - **Photo Credits**—Please note that, in most cases, photos used must be “**public use only**,” which means that they cannot be copyrighted. Photographer images may be used when permission is obtained. Refer to the photo information page on Inside Fisheries or the *NOAA Fisheries Photo Credit Style Guide*.
  - **Photo Content**—Submitters should ensure the photo’s subject adheres to safety procedures (e.g., in a photo of a whale disentanglement operation, people should be wearing proper safety gear, such as helmets, life vests, etc.).
- Write social media posts in plain language and avoid technical terms and jargon. The baseline audience for all NOAA Fisheries websites and social media outlets is the general public. Technical posts or posts that link users back to overly complicated content will not be included.
- Be prepared to discuss or respond to questions regarding your post. The NOAA Fisheries Communications Office monitors traffic and moderates comments across accounts and may occasionally ask program, regional office, and science center communicators for assistance in handling questions asked or comments made about posted content.

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## NOAA Fisheries Facebook Page

[www.facebook.com/noaafisheries](http://www.facebook.com/noaafisheries)

Posts on Facebook focus on NOAA Fisheries content that either already has been posted on NOAA Fisheries websites or are the agency’s products, photos, or content that lead back to Fisheries websites for more information—all with the goal of increasing web traffic.

Facebook posts are limited to *two posts per day* for the NOAA Fisheries Facebook account, to avoid overloading (and potentially annoying) Facebook fans. Posts will be made on a first-come, first-served basis depending on the immediacy or relevance.

In addition to the NOAA Fisheries national Facebook account, NOAA Fisheries regional offices and science centers may collaborate on a joint Facebook account by geographic region. These joint accounts must first be approved by the NOAA Fisheries Communications Office (see *NOAA Fisheries Social Media Policy* for more guidance on establishing new social media accounts). Please reach out to your NOAA Fisheries Communications Council representative first if you have content you would like posted on a joint Facebook account.

For a NOAA Fisheries Facebook blurb, please provide:

- A 100-word or less compelling description of the event, news, or activity; description should be written for a general public audience (it is recommended the blurb include a related high-resolution image with caption). Research shows shorter posts with a visual get better engagement results.
- The URL linking to the website content you wish to communicate. Include a federal government approved [www.bitly.com](http://www.bitly.com) shortened link.

For a NOAA Fisheries Facebook photo or video, please provide:

- High-resolution image (at least 800 x 400 pixels, recommended size of 1200 x 630 pixels) or high-quality video file and title.
- Captions:
  - Maximum 100-word description of the image or video. Caption should also include some additional context tying the image back to a NOAA Fisheries program office or field of work.
  - Caption *must* include the URL for the related NOAA Fisheries website for further information.

Please note: All videos are uploaded to the NOAA Fisheries Video Gallery, and possibly its YouTube channel, *prior* to sharing on Facebook. This is a required element for all federal government social media outlets. See [video guidelines](#) for more information. Please contact the NOAA Fisheries Communications Office with questions.

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## **NOAA Fisheries Twitter Feed**

[www.twitter.com/noaafisheries](http://www.twitter.com/noaafisheries)

Twitter is a microblogging service of short, frequent posts of information (much like news headlines), primarily leading back to a NOAA Fisheries website URL for more information. Items for Twitter should focus on NOAA Fisheries activities, with the purpose of increasing traffic to Fisheries websites. “Retweets” and “likes” should be appropriate and relevant, and must not advertise an organization’s services or products, in line with federal government policies. Be careful not to “retweet” or “like” content that does not share our mission messages. We can use Twitter to link to articles that highlight NOAA Fisheries’ science and work, including related partners’ work funded by NOAA Fisheries.

Twitter posts, retweets, and likes will be *unlimited* for the entire NOAA Fisheries Twitter account. Updates will be made on a first-come, first-served basis.

Twitter has a large media following, and breaking news on Twitter is encouraged. However, it is important to coordinate and cooperate with the NOAA Fisheries Communications Office and Public Affairs. Please contact your regional office, science center, or headquarters public affairs specialist to include Twitter in the rollout strategy and/or communication plan.

In addition to NOAA Fisheries Twitter account, regional offices and science centers maintain Twitter accounts. Contact your regional Communications Council representative to see if your regional office or science center has a Twitter account where your update can be posted.

For a post to NOAA Fisheries Twitter account, please provide:

- Intro text that is 140 characters or less (though research shows 130 characters or less gets better engagement).
- Intro text written in plain language for a general public audience that is engaging, not stiff. Make your tweets interesting and compelling.
- High-resolution image with caption (image within Twitter feed should be at least 440 x 220 pixels).
- URL link to a full piece of content (tweet should *always* end with a link). Please include a federal government approved [www.bitly.com](http://www.bitly.com) shortened link.
- When possible, the name of other aligned organizations that might be interested in or benefit from the tweet, or organizations that might react positively to it and share it (e.g., endangered species issues would be of interest to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service). We can add their Twitter handle (“@name”) as an additional marketing technique that has become commonplace. If starting a tweet with a handle name (@name) please include a period at the beginning (.@name) so that Twitter users not following that particular handle name can still see the tweet.
- Applicable NOAA hashtags for online pushes, such as #SeafoodMonth or #TurtleWeek

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## NOAA Fisheries’ YouTube Channel

[www.youtube.com/noaafisheries](http://www.youtube.com/noaafisheries)

The Department of Commerce has an agreement with YouTube that allows each line office within NOAA to have *one* YouTube channel. The Fisheries Communications Office approves and posts videos to the NOAA Fisheries YouTube channel. These videos are the very best our line office has to offer and must be under 5 minutes long to be posted on YouTube.

The NOAA Fisheries’ YouTube channel includes videos from the programs, science centers, and regional offices. If you are considering production of a film or video, and you would like it featured on the NOAA Fisheries YouTube channel, please review [video production](#) requirements **before** you start on your video project to ensure it meets agency standards.

- An unlimited number of *high-quality* videos can be posted each day. Submissions of first-hand raw footage (e.g., biologist “helmet cam” or time-lapse) must be vetted through the NOAA Fisheries Communications Office.
- If you are interested in submitting a video for posting on the NOAA Fisheries YouTube channel, please contact your program or NOAA Fisheries Communications Council representative. **Only** videos submitted through these representatives will be considered for posting. Please note all videos must be captioned to meet 508 compliance requirements (e.g., closed captioning). For more information see [Making Multimedia Section 508 Compliant and Accessible](#).
- All videos are uploaded to the NOAA Fisheries Video Gallery *prior* to sharing on YouTube. This is a required element for all federal government social media outlets.
- Visit the NOAA Fisheries [Video Production](#) intranet page for more information on specific video requirements.

## **NOAA Fisheries Image Gallery (by way of Flickr)**

[www.fisheries.noaa.gov/gallery/images](http://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/gallery/images)

Flickr is an image-hosting web tool that provides a place to store, organize, and share photos. For NOAA Fisheries, Flickr is more of an internal tool that drives the external Image Gallery on the NOAA Fisheries website. It makes images and their stories available to a large number of users, allowing for further understanding and conversation about the images. It also feeds the image gallery's abilities to upload directly to Facebook and Twitter, among other social media options.

The NOAA Fisheries Image Gallery will be updated as needed. For *each* image that you would like to post in the NOAA Fisheries Image Gallery, please provide:

- High-resolution NOAA image: Suggested width of at least 1200 pixels x 1200 pixels, JPEG format.
- Captions:
  - Maximum 100-word description of the image; photo captions should also include some additional context tying the image back to NOAA Fisheries work or program, as well as credit information.
- Link for additional information (*do not* shorten using [www.bitly.com](http://www.bitly.com) ).
- URL link to the original image source on a NOAA website.

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## **NOAA Fisheries Instagram Feed**

[www.instagram.com/noaafisheries](http://www.instagram.com/noaafisheries)

The NOAA Fisheries Instagram account is a national account to be shared by all programs, science centers, and regional offices, and is managed by the NOAA Fisheries Communications Office. Please send high-quality, high-resolution photos or NOAA Fisheries video clips to the NOAA Fisheries Communications Office, and we will link back to related content on your website. As a reminder, all photos and videos on social media accounts must be hosted on a Fisheries web page first.

For a NOAA Fisheries Instagram post, please provide:

- High-resolution image: dimensions of Instagram images are 1200 x 1200 pixels, scaled down to 640 x 640 pixels. Images should be at least 640 x 640 pixels.
- Video clip: dimensions should be 1080 x 1080 pixels.
- Captions:
  - Maximum 100-word description of the image or 60-second video clip.
  - Additional context tying the image back to a NOAA Fisheries Program office or field of work.
  - Photographer information/credit.
- URL for the related NOAA or Fisheries website for further information

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## **NOAA Fisheries Pinterest Page**

[www.pinterest.com/noaafisheries](http://www.pinterest.com/noaafisheries)

Pinterest is a pin board-style photo sharing website that allows users to create and manage theme-based image collections. Users can browse other pin boards for inspiration and “re-pin” (like Twitter's “retweet”) images to their own collections or “like” photos.

People create and share collections (“boards”) of visual bookmarks (“pins”) they use to do things like plan trips and projects, organize events, or save articles and recipes.

For a NOAA Fisheries Pinterest post, please provide:

- Eye-catching, high-resolution visual (at least 800 x 400 pixels) or high-quality NOAA Fisheries YouTube video link and title for embedding.
- Consider maps and infographics as well as images.
- Captions:
  - Maximum 100-word description of the image or video; caption should also include some additional context tying the image back to a NOAA Fisheries Program office or field of work.
- URL for the related NOAA Fisheries website for further information.

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### **NOAA Fisheries LinkedIn Showcase Page**

[www.linkedin.com/company/noaa-fisheries](http://www.linkedin.com/company/noaa-fisheries)

LinkedIn is the largest professional network in the world, building networks of professionals having shared interests or industries. LinkedIn users may start discussions or create posts to exchange information, ideas, and opportunities. The [NOAA Fisheries showcase page](#) is an extension of [NOAA's "company" page](#), and it is designed to highlight NOAA Fisheries content across programs, regional offices, and science centers. The NOAA Fisheries Communications Office manages the showcase page and monitors LinkedIn posts for compliance with established comment policy.

To have content posted on the NOAA Fisheries LinkedIn page, please provide:

- A 100-word or less engaging description of the event, news, or activity; description should be written for a general public audience (include a related high-resolution image with caption).
- The URL linking to the website content you wish to communicate. Include a federal government approved [www.bitly.com](http://www.bitly.com) shortened link.
- High-resolution image (at least 800 x 400 pixels) or high-quality NOAA Fisheries YouTube video link and title for embedding.
- Captions:
  - Maximum 100-word description of the image or video; caption should also include some additional context tying the image back to a NOAA Fisheries program office or field of work.
  - *Must* include the URL for the related NOAA Fisheries website for further information.

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### **Participating in NOAA Fisheries Blogs**

When writing or commenting on a blog, please remember that all Fisheries-run social media platforms are for official agency use only and not for personal use. Please refer to [NOAA's Social Media Rules of Behavior](#) for more information.

When you post content to a Fisheries social media channel, you are acting in an official capacity on behalf of the agency. See [DOC policy](#) for guidelines. Always avoid the following:

- Overly informal or overtly opinionated language.
- Content that is far off topic or contains personal attacks of any kind.
- Offensive terms that target specific ethnic or racial groups.
- Promotion of commercial products and services.
- Unsupported conclusions or assumptions.
- Commentary on management actions (to the extent possible).
- Information not cleared for distribution.
- Representing yourself on an external blog as a NOAA Fisheries employee without your leadership's approval.
- Engaging in political activities, opinions, or commentary.

Bloggers should refrain from engaging directly in conversation with individual respondents. Instead, bloggers should post clarification statements as new "blog post updates" if needed and provide a link to the appropriate NOAA website to find more information. If a response is deemed appropriate, a communications lead would be responsible for determining how to respond.

All photos or videos must site sources. All NOAA Fisheries' images and videos reside in the public domain.