

THE FUTURE OF SPORTFISHING:

— POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE RECREATIONAL FISHING COMMUNITY —

Recreational fishing is one of the most popular and accessible ways to connect the public, especially diverse audiences, to the outdoors. Our community is working hard to ensure that the sport continues for generations to come. The number of recreational anglers in the U.S. has steadily grown, today 57.7 million Americans participate in recreational fishing.¹ The sportfishing industry currently contributes over \$148 billion dollars in economic output and supports over 900,000 jobs.²

Our fisheries resources are held in the public trust and conserved through sound state and federal laws and policies, supported by funding from anglers and the sportfishing industry. Fishing activity across the nation supports the economy, connects people to the outdoors, and provides substantial funding for conservation. Through fishing license purchases, excise taxes, and direct donations, the recreational fishing community contributes approximately \$1.8 billion dollars toward aquatic resource conservation each year.²

¹ RBFF Special Report on Fishing 2024

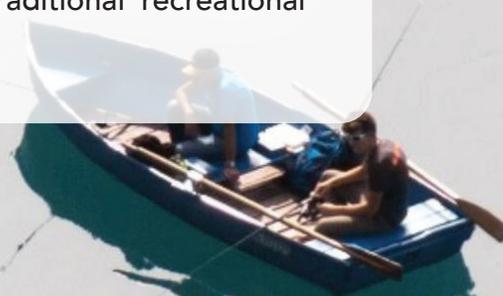
² 2023 Economic Contributions of Recreational Fishing: U.S. Congressional Districts Report. Southwick Associates

— A PARTNERSHIP PROPOSAL —

The American Sportfishing Association and recreational fishing partners present the following recommendations for the next Presidential Administration and the next two Congresses. These recommendations promote conservation efforts for our nation's waterways, support local economies, and enhance access for the 57.7 million Americans who participate in recreational fishing.

This document was a collaborative effort by a group of recreational fishing industry, conservation, and community stakeholders. This group's mission is to support science-based conservation, growth in trade and commerce, increase education and access, and advocate for and protect the rights of American anglers.

We urge the next Administration and next two Congresses to consider and adopt the following recommendations. With their support, the sportfishing community can grow our economic contributions, while providing a wholesome, traditional recreational activity that supports a sustainable outdoors.



The Future of Sportfishing

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

SCAN FOR FULL REPORT



Adequate and Dedicated Funding for Federal Land Management Agencies

Increased federal funding and support for critical conservation work.

- ▶ Support robust funding for federal land management and natural resource agencies.

Reauthorization of the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund

Maintain support for state-based resources.

- ▶ Support the Angling and Boating Alliance's recommendations for a timely reauthorization of the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund.

Enhanced Funding for State-Led Collaborative Conservation

Increased funding and support for state-based conservation work.

- ▶ Support fully funding State Wildlife Action Plans.

Improve Data and Access

Increase data quality and access, particularly for underrepresented groups.

- ▶ Support the passage of the Youth Coastal Fishing Program Act.
- ▶ Reform MRIP and collaborate with states to generate more accurate and precise recreational fisheries data.

Investment in Marine Technologies

Utilize technological solutions to promote safety and angler satisfaction.

- ▶ Withdraw 2022 vessel speed rule and invest in marine technologies that reduce the risk of vessel strikes.
- ▶ Create a task force to research and identify solutions to mitigate shark depredation.

Effective Fisheries Management

Promote sportfishing representation in science-based management plans.

- ▶ Support the implementation of alternative management approaches like harvest control rules tailored to the characteristics of recreational fisheries.
- ▶ Endorse equitable recreational fishing representation on the Regional Fishery Management Councils.

Species and Habitat Recovery

Support healthy aquatic ecosystems and promote species conservation.

- ▶ Support the REEF Act and expedite the conversion of oil and gas infrastructure to the 'Rigs-to-Reef' Program.
- ▶ Support and fund efforts to recover West Coastal salmon.
- ▶ Support annual funding and expanded state authority for the reduction in pinniped populations to conserve salmon populations.

Freshwater Legislation

Support the passage and implementation of freshwater-based legislation.

- ▶ Support the development of a strong conservation title in the Farm Bill.
- ▶ Create a Mississippi River Basin Fishery Commission.

Conserving and Accessing Waterways

Conserve waterways against AIS and ensure equitable angler access.

- ▶ Support science-based natural resource management and allow lead fishing tackle unless clear, site-specific research showing population-level impacts to wildlife justifies restrictions.
- ▶ Support the recommendations of the AIS Commission, including related legislation.

SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS

- American Catfishing Association
- American Sportfishing Association
- Backcountry Hunters & Anglers
- Bass Anglers Sportsman Society (B.A.S.S.)
- BoatU.S.
- Bonefish and Tarpon Trust
- Center for Sportfishing Policy
- Coastal Conservation Association
- Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
- Guy Harvey Foundation
- International Game Fish Association
- Major League Fishing
- Marine Retailers Association of the Americas
- National Marine Manufacturer's Association
- National Professional Anglers Association
- Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
- Trout Unlimited