The Nearshore Strategy describes key nearshore resources and habitats, and highlights issues that may adversely affect them and the human uses that rely on them. Consideration of the conservation requirements of nearshore species, the related issues, and how they should be addressed leads to the core of the Nearshore Strategy: opportunities for action that can be taken to improve the status and sustainability of nearshore species and habitats. Recommendations presented in this chapter outline actions by which the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) can better ensure the sustainability of nearshore marine fish, wildlife and habitats. These recommendations support the department’s mission of protecting and enhancing Oregon’s fish and wildlife and their habitats for use and enjoyment by present and future generations.

A variety of human activities affecting nearshore resources was identified by participants in developing the Nearshore Strategy. Many of these lie outside ODFW’s sole jurisdiction and require coordinated analysis and action to address. For this reason, one of the primary recommendations discussed in this chapter is improvement of inter-agency communication to better achieve comprehensive management of the nearshore ecosystem.

This chapter presents recommendations for actions ODFW should undertake, in many cases with partners, to better conserve and manage nearshore fish and wildlife resources. In addition to the ODFW-specific recommendations, some of the ideas found in Appendix F (Potential Conservation Actions) or in the public meeting notes (Appendices B and E) could be the basis for actions by individuals, organizations, tribes or other agencies.

Sixteen recommended ODFW actions are presented in this chapter. They are grouped into three general categories: Education and Outreach, Research and Monitoring, and Management and Policy. These specific recommendations have been chosen because they address priority nearshore issues that are in need of immediate or timely attention, are feasible in implementation given appropriate funding, and have received some level of public support.

**The description of each recommended action includes:**

- **What:** What is the suggested action? A brief description.
- **Why:** Why is the action needed? Needs are based on the factors affecting nearshore resources as discussed earlier in the Nearshore Strategy, and input from the public, technical advisors, and the Nearshore Team on the priority of each current or potential problem.
- **How:** How will the action be implemented? Where possible, an indication is provided of the steps needed to carry out the recommended action.
- **Who:** Who should be involved? Potential partners are listed with whom ODFW can collaborate on implementation of the suggested action.
- **When:** When should the action(s) begin? Where possible, an indication is included of how long the action is expected to take and/or how often it should be repeated.
- **Benchmarks:** Expected targets, products or other measures of the success of the action are proposed.
- **Funding:** State Wildlife Grant (SWG) funding for dedicated nearshore staffing is anticipated to be available for future Nearshore Strategy actions, but limited in duration. Some recommendations or parts thereof will be implemented regardless of SWG funding, based on priorities and current levels of other funding sources. Most of the recommended actions for nearshore management and conservation will require new or additional funding to support personnel, programs, materials and other expenses. Instances where existing funds can be used have been noted.
Category: Education and Outreach

(1) Marine Resources Program Website

What: Improve the appearance, visibility and effectiveness of the ODFW Marine Resources Program (MRP) Website:
- Expand opportunities on the website for disseminating information to user groups, such as the current recreational groundfish harvest cap tracking webpage.
- Make educational materials such as fish identification guides, information on species biology, and a page geared to children’s interests readily available.
- Provide information about current ODFW research projects and how the results are used.
- Post upcoming or in-season commercial and recreational fishing rules and regulations for species managed by ODFW. Ensure this information is easy to find.
- Provide clear links to websites with related information such as federal commercial fishery regulations.

Why: Better availability of information and educational materials to the general public and user groups is needed. Improving the organization of the MRP’s website will enable the public to more easily find and access information. A comprehensive, well organized website is a cost-effective mechanism for providing information to the public and user groups, and enhancing resource stewardship.

How: These actions will require ODFW staff time. Assigning existing MRP staff to implementing these recommendations would require shifting effort away from essential duties such as fishery data collection and analysis. A full time member of ODFW’s Information and Education (I&E) Division located in the MRP office would be the most effective means of implementing the recommendations on improved outreach and education mechanisms.

Who: ODFW MRP staff and/or intern and I&E staff.

When: Efforts have begun to enhance and restructure the MRP website. Current efforts are focused on migrating and improving existing web pages within the site, and creating pages describing current research projects. Future efforts will be centered on developing new pages within the site—for example, with educational programs—and enhancing website functions. Improvement and expansion of the MRP website will be an ongoing effort.

Benchmarks: Track website hits. Conduct a site survey to gain feedback and measure user satisfaction.

Funding: Existing and new funds are needed. New funding will be needed to support a full-time member of ODFW’s Information and Education Division located in the MRP office. Existing MRP staff funding can be used to support current staff to work on certain aspects of the MRP website.

(2) Nearshore Advisory Committee

What: Form a nearshore advisory committee to provide advice on, and assistance with, implementing the Nearshore Strategy, and conducting regular reviews and updates.

Why: External participation is essential for implementation, priority setting and updating of the Nearshore Strategy. External participation will help ensure the success of actions stemming from the Nearshore Strategy by relaying information between ODFW and the affected communities to improve understanding and support.
- There is a need for mechanisms to provide communication between ODFW and user groups, non-government organizations, industry and the various coastal regions (local input).
- More opportunities are desired for public participation in management processes to ensure that management is in line with public priorities, is conducted in a transparent manner, and incorporates all relevant information into decision-making processes.
An advisory committee provides opportunity for the general public, user groups, non-governmental organizations, tribes and/or other agencies to communicate and engage with ODFW in the management of nearshore resources for sustainability. Management decisions are better informed and often receive greater public support if user groups or others affected by the decisions participate in the management process. Advisory committees can provide an avenue for focused, effective public participation in selected aspects of the process. For example, the Sportfishing Advisory Committee has provided valuable advice to ODFW on issues affecting effort and catch in the sport groundfish fishery, and the potential impacts to sport anglers of management options under consideration. Committees dedicated to other issues can provide similar value in the form of collaborative communication between the communities they represent and ODFW.

Who: ODFW staff is committed to creating a productive group with broad and diverse representation, and ODFW has a goal of empowering coastal communities to organize locally. ODFW staff are evaluating approaches to the establishment of an advisory body, including looking at similar advisory bodies elsewhere.

When: Begin in winter 2005; ongoing.

Benchmarks: Advisory committee feedback. Assessment as part of Nearshore Strategy review process.

Funding: Implementation of this action is a high priority for continued federal State Wildlife Grants funding to the Marine Resources Program. Potential additional sources include the Port Liaison Project, which promotes cooperative research between ocean researchers and commercial fishermen, and provides funding for commercial fishermen who participate in research and management projects.

(3) Media Coverage

What: Increase and expand development of materials supporting media coverage of nearshore marine resource topics.

Why: There is a relatively low level of awareness of nearshore conservation, management and scientific issues among the general public. Increased media coverage of nearshore topics can increase knowledge of nearshore resources and issues among the general public, and can help promote stewardship of the nearshore environment and its fish and wildlife.

Who: ODFW MRP staff; ODFW Information and Education Division staff; potential for internships.

When: Ongoing.

Benchmarks: Number of media articles on nearshore issues and topics (tracked by ODFW’s Information and Education Division).

Funding: Existing funding to ODFW’s MRP and Information and Education Division.

(4) Communication Partnerships

What: Develop new, and expand existing partnerships for communication, education and outreach on nearshore topics and issues. Work with partners including state agencies, local governments, private groups, Oregon Tourism Commission, watershed councils, soil and water conservation districts, and others to develop new mechanisms for information dissemination.

Why: There is a need for added and improved information dissemination by ODFW on nearshore issues and topics. ODFW’s MRP often lacks the staff time and expertise for formulating and disseminating well-developed education
and outreach materials. Partnering with groups such as Oregon Sea Grant that have expertise in developing education and outreach programs and materials for marine issues and topics can greatly improve ODFW's outreach.

**Who:** ODFW MRP and I&E staff, Hatfield Marine Science Center, Oregon Sea Grant, Oregon Coast Aquarium, Coastal Oregon Marine Experiment Station, private or non-profit groups, tribes and others.

**When:** Depending on emerging nearshore topics and issues. Once a topic or issue has been identified by MRP staff as needing a well-developed outreach or education campaign, selecting and working with partners should begin.

**Benchmarks:** Implemented education and outreach campaigns. New outreach materials available for dissemination by ODFW and partners.

**Funding:** New and existing funds are needed. Existing funding to ODFW's MRP and Information and Education Division will be used. Grants for education and outreach programs will be sought in conjunction with partners.

**Category: Research and Monitoring**

The Marine Resources Program currently conducts research and monitoring activities, but these efforts need to be expanded to meet the data needs of current and future management programs. This is especially true in the nearshore area where managers lack adequate information on many harvested and non-harvested species and their habitats.

The Research and Monitoring Framework section (Chapter V) lists some key data elements and examples of research and monitoring projects needed to meet management needs. The recommendations that follow address the most important improvements needed by the MRP's research and monitoring programs.

**(5) Nearshore Research and Monitoring Capabilities**

**What:** Improve and expand the capabilities of research and monitoring programs for nearshore living marine resources to meet the requirements of the Native Fish Conservation Policy and other nearshore resource management programs. Use the Strategy Species and Watch Lists to identify priority species for research and monitoring. Collaboration among agencies, universities, fishing industry sectors and the public will be required to meet the needs for expanded research and monitoring.

**Why:** Managers currently lack much of the needed information to make decisions that fully meet the mission of conserving nearshore resources while providing for long-term use by current and future generations. The lack of data increases the risk associated with management or policy decisions, and often forces managers to make more conservative decisions, which may not meet public needs. Managers also lack a mechanism to ensure that the limited research and monitoring funding supports the most important and efficient types of data collection. Reviewing and improving research programs, developing collaborations, and ensuring long-term commitment to data collection are essential steps toward developing data needed to meet management requirements.

**How:** The MRP currently conducts nearshore research projects with limited funding to meet some priority management needs. The following list provides examples of actions that will improve the research program:

- Review the research program to establish short- and long-term research priorities (priority species and projects) for nearshore resources.
- Identify and pursue internal and external funding sources to support expanded research capabilities.
- Develop a dedicated biological sampling program that can parallel the existing fishery monitoring program (this will provide life history data on undersampled species to be used in determining species status).
- Restore and expand fish aging capabilities.
- Develop a dedicated student fund that can be used to fund graduate or doctoral student projects fitting identified nearshore data needs.
Long-term monitoring of species abundance and stock characteristics is an essential data source for determining species status. The MRP has large programs that monitor commercial and recreational fisheries by collecting data on effort and landings, and by sampling the fish to obtain biological information. These programs currently are being reduced by funding agencies just as management programs demand more complete and frequent sampling. The following list provides examples of actions that will improve the monitoring programs:

- Review sampling design and update data collection methods to better meet current management needs.
- Identify key nearshore species lacking adequate sampling, and increase sampling to begin developing long-term database to monitor species status.
- Increase recreational sampling in undersampled times and locations to better monitor landings.

Much of the needed research and monitoring will require collaboration of several research institutions, the fishing industry, funding agencies and the public. The following list provides examples of collaborative efforts that will improve nearshore research and monitoring:

- Work with the Port Orford Ocean Resources Team (POORT) program, sport angler associations and similar groups to develop joint research and monitoring projects with the fishing industry.
- Collaborate with NOAA Fisheries on research projects targeting nearshore species.
- Support and help develop a cooperative nearshore research center on the Oregon coast.
- Support and help develop an interagency and university nearshore rockfish stock assessment research consortium.
- Work within the developing Ocean Observing System programs (NANOOS and PACOOS) to develop and secure funding for research and monitoring projects on nearshore species and habitats.
- Work with PSMFC to help secure adequate long-term funding for monitoring programs.

**Who:** ODFW, NOAA Fisheries, PSMFC, PISCO, university researchers, fishing industries, sport angler organizations, tribes and others.

**When:** Review existing programs through 2006. Timing of program improvements and expansions is depending on funding.

**Benchmarks:** Development of data essential to policy and management decisions through new or enhanced nearshore research projects.

**Funding:** Implementation of this action is a high priority for continued SWG funding to the Marine Resources Program. Outside funding would be required for expansion of existing research and monitoring programs. The Port Liaison Project (NOAA Fisheries funding administered by Oregon Sea Grant Extension Service) can help fund industry participation in cooperative research efforts.

**6 Assessment/Indicator Strategies for Nearshore Species**

**What:** Develop stock assessment and/or stock status indicator strategies for priority nearshore groundfish and shellfish species. A stock assessment is a detailed analysis of population and biological data to estimate the size of a population of animals and whether it is increasing or decreasing. Stock status indicators are periodically collected information on some population characteristic that could indicate a change in the population size over time. Both types of information are essential to developing management measures for organisms, especially harvested species. Species in greatest need of population status monitoring will be the focus for developing assessment and indicator strategies. Marine species should be included in the Native Fish Stock Status Report as information is available.

**Why:** There is a significant lack of information about nearshore fish and shellfish populations available for use in management. Data and monitoring have not been adequate to assess stock status on many species, and there currently
is no mechanism for indicating a population decline on many species. The Native Fish Conservation Policy requires methods for detecting declines. Developing stock assessment and/or indicator strategies, along with collecting the data necessary to implement the strategies, is essential, especially for harvested species with little current population information.

**How:**

Primary stage - ODFW staff should work with university researchers to identify priority species, develop stock assessment or indicator methods, and incorporate needed data collection into monitoring and research programs. Support OSU’s proposal to examine data and assessment methodologies for nearshore species.

Secondary stage (significant added funding required) - Establish a dedicated population dynamics program within the MRP, allowing for more participation in federal stock assessment work and a greater ability to address state priority species not covered in federal assessments.

**Who:**

ODFW, NOAA Fisheries, university researchers and potential monitoring and data collection partners: fishermen, charter boats and local groups (e.g., POORT)

**When:**


**Benchmarks:**

Methods developed for alternative assessments/indicators. Implementation of alternative stock assessments and indicator strategies.

**Funding:**

Implementation of this action is a high priority for continued SWG funding to the Marine Resources Program. An OSU proposal for beginning review of assessment strategies will be 50 percent funded by Oregon Sea Grant. The remaining 50 percent needs to be secured; potential sources include a Restoration and Enhancement grant or other outside sources. Additional funding would be required for expansion of existing monitoring programs to collect needed data for assessments and indicators.

(7) Nearshore Habitat Research and Monitoring

**What:**

Map and characterize nearshore rocky reefs, and determine species-habitat associations. Use the information to improve stock assessments and provide information for management.

**Why:**

There is a lack of information available to marine resource managers regarding nearshore groundfish populations, individual reef populations, habitat associations and locations of rocky reef habitat. Habitat mapping efforts are a priority given increased commercial and recreational harvest of nearshore groundfish associated with rocky reefs, and past interest in the potential for commercial kelp harvest. In addition, juveniles of many species that are more frequently fished farther offshore use nearshore rocky reefs. The Native Fish Conservation Policy and the Essential Fish Habitat provisions of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act both require consideration of habitat extent, characteristics and damage in fish management actions. Growing understanding of fish-habitat associations will contribute to achieving the broader goals of monitoring and protecting important habitat areas, improving nearshore fish stock assessments, and improving understanding of abundance changes resulting from natural and anthropogenic causes.

**How:**

Continue and expand ODFW's ongoing research efforts to map, spatially analyze and characterize nearshore rocky reefs. Collaborate with other agencies such as NOAA Fisheries and the California Department of Fish and Game to develop methods to characterize reef habitat and apply information to stock assessments.

**Who:**

ODFW MRP staff, NOAA, DLCD, California Department of Fish and Game and POORT (for south coast surveys), with potential partners: additional state and federal agencies, fishermen, charter companies, and local groups.
Currently, remotely operated vehicle (ROV) survey efforts off the Oregon south coast are scheduled for the summer and fall of 2005. Continuing these and other efforts in the future is dependent upon funding and will include increasing the number of surveyed rocky reef sites and collaboration with other agencies.

**Benchmarks:** Conduct south coast rocky reef surveys. Secure future funding for continued surveys.

**Funding:** Surveys to date have been funded by external grants. Continuation of rocky reef habitat surveys will require further external support.

(8) Marine Mammal-Fisheries Interaction Research and Monitoring

**What:** Identify and evaluate conflicts between marine mammals, fisheries and fish resources in coastal rivers, bays and the nearshore ocean. Identify the most important of such conflicts and, as funding allows, conduct studies to estimate the significance of the interaction to both the fishery/fish resource and the marine mammal species involved. Develop information on marine mammal food habits and foraging behaviors in the coastal zone.

**Why:** Expanding populations of some marine mammal species (e.g., pinnipeds) and increasing human use of the coastal zone have resulted in greater interactions between these animals, fishery resources and human activities. Some interactions may result in negative impacts to depleted fish stocks, while others may place humans at risk of injury due to aggressive behaviors of some pinnipeds. Obtaining a better understanding of the true nature of these interactions will allow more accurate determinations of their overall significance, and may provide insight into the development of management actions that could be used to reduce conflicts.

**Who:** ODFW will continue to develop and implement these studies in cooperation with NOAA Fisheries (the federal agency with management jurisdiction for marine mammals).

**When:** ODFW currently carries out evaluations of pinniped interactions with salmonid resources and responds to issues of marine mammal conflicts with human activities. Given appropriate levels of federal funding, these efforts would continue as necessary.

**Benchmarks:** ODFW will develop contract reports and peer-reviewed scientific publications describing these resource conflicts and the results of studies implemented to evaluate their significance. ODFW staff will be prepared to supply information on these issues to local, state and federal government representatives, to fishing industry representatives, and to the general public.

**Funding:** ODFW currently funds two permanent full-time positions to work on these issues, as well as other aspects of marine mammal population biology in Oregon. In addition, limited state funds are directed toward marine mammal research efforts. However, in order to make important progress toward the goals described above, significant amounts of federal contract funds must be obtained annually to fund field research efforts and employ project staff.

(9) Socioeconomic Research and Monitoring for the Oregon Coast

**What:** Sponsor socioeconomic analyses for the Oregon coast including coastal community demographic trends and economic and social contributions of industries that depend on nearshore resources directly (e.g., fishing) or indirectly (e.g., tourism). This effort also may include, as necessary, assessments of the economic costs to sport and commercial fisheries caused by conflicts with marine mammals (e.g., loss of catch and gear to pinnipeds). Socioeconomic factors most useful to managers for planning or developing alternative management actions should be identified and monitored to obtain information on trends in coastal economies and the impacts of regulatory and other management changes.
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**Why:** Socioeconomic information can be used to understand how coastal communities, economies and nearshore resources are interrelated and might be affected by various management actions. Although ODFW’s ultimate responsibility is to protect and enhance living marine resources, this type of information can help decision-makers better understand the context of management issues, and contribute to the development of management plans and alternative management actions to meet management goals. Socioeconomic information also can help managers find and develop incentives for user groups and industry to implement new management actions to achieve management goals.

**Who:** ODFW MRP staff, university researchers, economic consultants, coastal county governments, tribes and others.

**When:** An economic analysis of the commercial nearshore fishery currently is being conducted for ODFW by contracted economic consultants. Future analyses should include a recreational nearshore fishery analysis that includes contributions to local economies, and a general analysis for the Oregon coast that includes profiles of individual coastal communities.

**Benchmarks:** Nearshore commercial fishery economics report. Recreational nearshore fishery economics report. Socioeconomics report for coastal Oregon.

**Funding:** Continued SWG funding to the Marine Resources Program could be used to implementation this action.

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**Benchmarks:** Feedback from Nearshore Advisory Committee. Assessment as part of the Nearshore Strategy review.

**Funding:** Implementation of this action is a high priority for continued SWG funding to the Marine Resources Program.
Category: Management and Policy

Management and policy needs were articulated frequently during development of the Nearshore Strategy. There are many tools for conservation and management including planning efforts such as the conservation plans through which the Native Fish Conservation Policy is implemented; management measures including harvest restrictions based on numbers, weight, size of fish, season and area; environmental review and permitting processes; other spatial management tools regulating human activities in designated areas; voluntary options including incentives for desired behavior (such as reduced habitat damage from various activities or reduced bycatch rates in fisheries); and others. The recommendations in this section address priority nearshore issues and species using a variety of non-regulatory tools. Implementation of some of these actions eventually may require rule-making action (e.g., on revisions to state fishery management plans) by the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission.

(11) Native Fish Conservation Policy—Conservation Plans

What: Review the Nearshore Strategy Species list to identify priority species in need of conservation plans under Oregon's Native Fish Conservation Policy.

Why: The Native Fish Conservation Policy was developed by ODFW in 2002 and revised in September 2003 to ensure the conservation and recovery of native fish in Oregon. The policy applies to all native fish in Oregon waters. In order to effectively and consistently apply this proactive policy to all native fish, including marine fish and shellfish, the Strategy Species list should be carefully reviewed to prioritize species most in need of conservation plans containing the specific elements described in the Native Fish Conservation Policy. The resulting priorities will guide ODFW's management and research efforts for marine species and ensure statewide consistency in the approach the department takes to native fish conservation.

Who: ODFW Nearshore Planning staff, additional ODFW MRP staff, ODFW Conservation and Recovery Program staff, ODFW Fish Division staff and leadership

When: Beginning in winter 2005.

Benchmarks: A priority list of species in need of conservation plans as described in the Native Fish Conservation Policy, and an inventory of the information needed to complete the plans.

Funding: Existing and new funds are needed. ODFW staff funding through state Commercial Fish Funds will be used. In addition, implementation of this action is a high priority for continued SWG funding to the Marine Resources Program.

(12) Commercial Nearshore Fishery Management Plan


Why: Oregon's commercial groundfish fishery began developing in the early 1990s, driven in part by growing markets for live fish. The fishery targets nearshore rockfish and several other species; when sold live, many of these species fetch prices three or more times greater than they would “fresh” (dead). Participation in this fishery is by small vessels making day trips out of various Oregon ports.

Following a period of rapid expansion in effort and harvest levels in this fishery during the late 1990s, the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission (OFWC) directed ODFW staff to develop an interim management plan to limit the growth of the nearshore fishery, protect nearshore fish resources from overexploitation, and balance overall oceanwide marine resource use among recreational and commercial interests. An interim plan was adopted by the OFWC in October 2002. In 2003 the nearshore commercial fishery was placed in the Developmental Fisheries Program. A limited entry permit program was established by the Oregon Legislature to limit the number of vessels that commercially harvest nearshore species beginning in 2004.
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As the fishery adjusts to the parameters set by the limited entry program its characteristics are changing. New issues have risen since the interim management plan was developed. One of the most important questions is whether the state-set harvest caps, which were initially set at the year 2000 harvest levels, are at appropriate levels to support biological conservation needs and optimum sustainable harvest levels. Because most of the nearshore species lack formal stock assessments, many of the research efforts discussed in previous recommendations are needed to determine alternative measures of population status and trends. Geographic differences in patterns of nearshore fish distribution and commercial fishery effort are another complex issue in need of attention.

Nearshore fisheries, both commercial and sport, present growing management challenges to ODFW and increasingly require resources beyond existing funding levels, personnel and technologies. In order to provide proactive management of these increasingly valuable fisheries that ensures both conservation—the basis for sustainably supporting various uses including fishing—and opportunities for the current use and enjoyment of the resources, ODFW needs to develop more efficient management methods. Possible options for reducing the management needs of a fishery (e.g., dedicated access privileges, also called individual fishing quotas or individual transferable quotas, and electronic fish ticket reporting systems) could be explored, as well as options for increasing program resources (e.g., additional funding sources, graduate internship programs). An important consideration is the need to manage increasingly complex fisheries with regulations that are understandable and enforceable. Many public meeting attendees voiced a desire for simplified regulations.

Revision of the interim management plan is needed to ensure management reflects the current status of the fishery and the resource and is consistent with the Native Fish Conservation Policy. In addition, the plan should be coordinated with management planning for Oregon’s recreational nearshore fisheries in order to balance overall ocean-wide sustainable use of marine resources among recreational and commercial interests, as directed by the OFWC.

Who: ODFW Nearshore Planning staff and additional ODFW MRP staff, with Input from stakeholders, NOAA Fisheries, other state agencies, university researchers, public and tribes.

When: Beginning in winter 2005.

Benchmarks: OFWC adoption of an updated version of the Nearshore Commercial Fisheries Management Plan.

Funding: Existing and new funds are needed. Commercial Fish Funds will be used to support ODFW staff. Implementation of this action is a high priority for SWG funding.

(13) Recreational Groundfish Fishery Management Review

What: Evaluate immediate and long-term management needs for Oregon’s recreational groundfish fishery. Develop specific options and related actions (i.e., staff analysis and public meetings, proposals to the Pacific Fishery Management Council’s Groundfish Management Team) to meet those needs. Issues such as catch allocation decisions, data collection, and the conservation and management needs of mixed stocks should be addressed.

Why: No formal management plan currently exists for the recreational groundfish fishery, which is largely conducted in nearshore waters. The management needs of the recreational groundfish fishery are becoming increasingly complex due to a growing number of constraining stocks in the mixed group of species targeted or caught incidentally in this fishery, and the desire to maximize angling opportunities within sustainable harvest limits. This complexity emphasizes the need for a coordinated vision for nearshore resources and development of management strategies and actions that are current and consistent with the Native Fish Conservation Policy.
Oregon Nearshore Strategy, January 2006

Who: ODFW staff, with input from stakeholders, NOAA Fisheries, other state agencies, tribes, university researchers and the public.

When: Beginning in early 2006.

Benchmarks: Recreational groundfish fishery management strategies that are consistent with federal guidelines, coordinated with Oregon's commercial nearshore groundfish management, sustainable, understandable, enforceable and supportive of best fishing practices to minimize bycatch and other adverse effects.

Funding: Existing and new funds are needed. ODFW staff funding through state and federal sources could be used. However, current funding levels support only minimal base program functions such as fishery sampling. Implementation of this action is a high priority for continued SWG funding to the Marine Resources Program.

(14) Estuarine Fish and Wildlife Management

What: Develop and implement science-based management strategies for Oregon's estuarine fish and wildlife resources. Develop conservation plans for species identified as priority.

Why: No current management strategy exists for Oregon's estuarine fish and wildlife resources. Estuaries are important habitat for certain life stages of many recreationally and commercially important fish species. Estuaries are linked to the nearshore ocean through the movement of water, nutrients, sediments, animals and plants, as well as human activities such as dredging and dredged material disposal, and commercial and recreational fishing and crabbing. Due to their proximity to human infrastructure and activity, estuarine fish and wildlife are especially vulnerable to factors such as non-point source pollution, dredge and/or fill operations, and shoreline alteration. Invasive species are altering the ecosystem structure of many of Oregon's estuaries. At public meetings held during development of the Nearshore Strategy, need for acknowledgement of the marine-estuarine connection and comprehensive strategic planning for Oregon's estuaries was frequently expressed.

Who: ODFW Nearshore Planning and other MRP staff; ODFW's Northwest Region, Southwest Region, and Columbia River Investigations Program; other state and federal agencies with jurisdiction over estuarine resources and/or human activities with the potential to affect estuarine resources; stakeholders, and tribes.


Benchmarks: Development of key strategic planning elements for estuarine fish and wildlife resources. Implementation of conservation and management measures identified through the planning process. Development of conservation plans under the guidance of the Native Fish Conservation Policy for estuarine species identified as in greatest need through the planning process.

Funding: Implementation of this action is a high priority for continued SWG funding to the Marine Resources Program.

(15) Shellfish Conservation and Harvest Management Plan(s)

What: Develop conservation and harvest management plans for commercially and recreationally harvested shellfish.

Why: Conservation and management is needed to ensure that Oregon's shellfish are managed sustainably and in a manner consistent with the Native Fish Conservation Policy.
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- Efforts on both comprehensive and species-specific levels can identify and guide needed stock assessments; inter-agency partnerships for research, management and outreach; monitoring; and research efforts.

- No management plan currently exists for shellfish such as Dungeness crab, razor clams and bay clams, while harvest has become increasingly important to the recreational and commercial fishing industries. Current efforts to move some commercial clamming from the Developmental Fisheries Program to a limited entry program would benefit from a management planning effort.

Who: ODFW shellfish project staff, ODFW Nearshore Planning staff and other ODFW MRP staff, with input from Oregon Department of Agriculture, Department of Human Services, Department of Environmental Quality, tribes and stakeholders.

When: Proposed to begin in 2007.

Benchmarks: Established shellfish management plan(s).

Funding: Shellfish license funds, SWG funding.

(16) Inter-agency Management Coordination

What: Improve communication and collaboration with state and federal agencies, local governments, and tribes on issues affecting nearshore resources and related management.

Why: The Nearshore Strategy identifies a broad spectrum of resource management concerns and issues, many of which cut across the jurisdiction of multiple agencies. Many potential sources of anthropogenic factors affecting nearshore species and habitats and species do not fall under the sole jurisdiction of ODFW. In cases where these factors affect nearshore resources and require management action, ODFW will need to partner with those agencies with management authority. Strengthening or establishing mechanisms for communication between the various parties involved will improve ODFW’s and other managers’ ability to stay informed about important issues. More thorough and timely information is necessary for resource managers as a whole to work toward comprehensive ecosystem management.

In addition, new issues with the potential to affect nearshore resources will continue to arise—for example, open ocean aquaculture, marine reserves, artificial reefs, alternative energy development and others. ODFW should proactively analyze these issues as they appear on the horizon and provide information on the potential effects on Oregon’s nearshore fish and wildlife, as well as recommended policy positions or actions as appropriate, to the Ocean Policy Advisory Council (OPAC) and the Governor’s Office.

Who: ODFW staff, state agencies, federal agencies, tribes, local governments and stakeholders, with input to and from OPAC and the Governor’s Office.

When: Ongoing.

Benchmarks: Increased ability of ODFW, OPAC and the Governor’s Office to address new nearshore marine issues in a thorough and timely manner.

Funding: Existing funds can be used to implement these actions. SWG funds could be used for intensive issue analysis.