

AFS Strategic Plan for 2015-2019

The American Fisheries Society, established in 1870, is the world's oldest and largest professional fisheries organization representing 9,000 members worldwide.

The mission of the American Fisheries Society is to improve the conservation and sustainability of fishery resources and aquatic ecosystems by advancing fisheries and aquatic science and promoting the development of fisheries professionals.

The actions of the American Fisheries Society during the next 5 years will be guided by the Strategic Plan for 2015-2019. For the 2015-2019 Strategic Plan, the previous plan was refined by reorganizing the goals and objectives, making the plan more usable as a planning document, and as a framework for reporting accomplishments. As with previous plans, the current Strategic Plan does not include specific actions. Rather, it is suggested that the annual operational plans of the Society, and each of its Units, include development of specific actions or work plans to implement this Strategic Plan.

Fisheries science and management, like other scientific and technical disciplines, face new challenges:

- Globalization of trade and transportation will require greater cross-border understanding of the opportunities, threats, and cultural perspectives affecting international stock management, invasive species, and disease introductions.
- Climate change will drive decision-making for aquatic habitat protection and rehabilitation because of impacts on migration, invasive species, disease epidemiology, water supplies, water quality, food production, and energy resources.
- Economic pressure, volatile markets, a transient and retiring workforce, and demands from rising economies will require organizations to do more with fewer resources, modify their training and hiring practices, and dramatically restructure some commercial and recreational fisheries, as well as restructure use of and access to aquatic resources.
- Ecosystem-based management coupled with social and economic concerns will continue to drive research and management agendas that will, by necessity, be shared among agencies.
- Nature-deficit syndrome brought about by increasing urbanization and electronic media use will present challenges with constituents who have minimal exposure to and appreciation for the scientific principles that control fisheries and ecosystem function.

Similarly the Society, in order to meet our members' needs and thrive, recognizes that our operations and business model must evolve to adapt to changes in technology and communications.

- Electronic communication, virtual meetings, and social networking are important means of interacting, particularly among young professionals, international colleagues, and dispersed

organizations. Incorporation of these tools in traditionally structured meetings and development within established online venues will enhance participation and provide valuable experiences. Professional societies will be expected to serve as information intermediaries that provide timely quality assurance and technical insight on these ventures.

- The proliferation and increased use of open-access publications by professionals will continue to present a competitive challenge to traditional print journals and books and move us away from a subscription-based approach to an author-pay approach.
- The position of the Society as an authoritative and timely source of information on fisheries, aquaculture, and aquatic science will require increased visibility and engagement at regional, national, and international levels with educational institutions, other professional societies, government agencies, non-governmental organizations, tribal groups, private industry, decision makers, and the public.
- As an intelligent, adaptive, knowledge-based organization, the Society's business and governance models will shift to respond to: greater demand for services that benefit members; changes in the Society's revenue streams and expenses; and more direct participatory decision-making in collective actions.
- The Society will increase the disciplinary, gender, ethnic, and cultural diversity and engagement of its members as a vital means to maintain relevancy and respond to the challenges facing fisheries science and management.

Within this context, the American Fisheries Society envisions that world-wide fisheries production will be optimized and sustained while structural and functional conditions of marine, freshwater, and estuarine ecosystems are maintained. The mission of the Society will be carried out effectively, and our vision will be attained, if each of the Goals described below is met.

Goals

Science Goal: Advance and promote fisheries, aquaculture, and aquatic sciences.

Education Goal: Support education and professional development in fisheries, aquaculture, and aquatic sciences.

Communication Goal: Disseminate fisheries science information.

Networking Goal: Provide forums and networks to promote interaction among fisheries professionals and students.

Advocacy Goal: Promote the fisheries profession and support evidence-based decision making for the conservation, development, and wise use of fisheries resources and aquatic ecosystems.

Governance Goal: Practice good governance of the Society and its member units.

The Society uses a number of Strategies to accomplish these goals; each strategy may address multiple goals.

1. Organize and sponsor forums to present new findings and exchange ideas.

(Possible metrics: (1) Number of meetings, workshops, conferences, and symposia organized, (2) Number of informal gatherings or other networking opportunities organized, (3) Results of member satisfaction surveys, (4) Number of attendees)

2. Provide continuing education opportunities with an emphasis on training and courses that are not commonly offered by academic institutions and/or that will be essential tools in the future.

(Possible metrics: (1) Number of courses; (2) Number of students; (3) Types of courses offered: quantitative skills, regulatory, social science/human dimensions of fisheries management, field and lab safety certification, field and/or laboratory methods, new and emerging topics, fisheries management; (4) Post-training reporting)

3. Develop communication products and publicly accessible information to promote the value of fisheries, aquatic habitat, and fisheries sciences.

(Possible metrics: (1) Descriptions of information developed and how that information was communicated, (2) Potential number of people who received the information)

4. Develop relationships, partnerships, and collaborations with other professional societies, conservation organizations, decision makers, and stakeholders to establish and promote mutual goals of fisheries science, education, and stewardship.

(Possible metrics: (1) Descriptions of relationships/collaborations developed and how those contributed to the advancement of Society priorities and shared interests of partner organizations)

5. Publish high quality scientific journals, books, and proceedings that present recent advances, reviews and syntheses of fisheries and aquatic science and management.

(Possible metrics: (1) Number of manuscripts published, (2) Number of books published, (3) Number of papers published in symposia proceedings, (4) Editorial contributions, (5) Impact factor, (6) Number of citations)

6. Develop and disseminate scientifically-based communication materials that represent and reflect the mission of the Society to political leaders, decision makers, stakeholders, and the public.

(Possible Metrics: (1) Number and frequency of communiques; (2) Number of invitations to speak with decision makers, stakeholders, and the public; (3) Number of letters, briefings, reviews, testimonies, workshops)

7. Provide online resources of value and interest to members and non-members to be the leading source of online fisheries science.

(Possible metrics: (1) Number of unique visits to website, (2) Engagement of visitors on the website, (3) Time spent per visitor on the website;(4) Number of scientifically based tweets generated and number of Twitter followers)

8. Support, manage, and promote a fisheries professional certification program that is recognized as a distinguished mark of scientific excellence and expertise within and outside the Society.

(Possible metrics: (1) Number of certified scientists, (2) Number of agencies or institutions that give credit for certification in hiring and promotion, (3) Number of re-certifications)

9. Use innovative techniques such as surveys, focus groups, social media, and other means, to determine and respond to the needs, interests, and opinions of Society members.

(Possible metrics: (1) Blog entries, (2) Opinion surveys via website or social media, (3) Formal or informal focus group meetings; (4) Number of scientifically based tweets generated and number of Twitter followers)

10. Embrace and adopt new technologies to enhance and expand the Society's education, communications, networking, and advocacy activities.

(Possible metrics: (1) Types and numbers of technology used)

11. Enhance participation of students and professionals at all levels of the Society to assure member recruitment, retention, and leadership development into the future.

(Possible metrics: (1) Number of emerging leaders mentorship awardees, (2) Number of student awards, (3) Number of members in each membership category, (4) Proportion of student members that become young professionals, (5) Proportion of young professionals that become regular members, (6) Number and proportion of Chapter members who are Society members, (7) Development of membership database to support analysis)

12. Promote ethnic, socio-economic, generational, and disciplinary diversity within the Society and the fisheries profession.

(Possible metrics: (1) Group membership statistics; (2) Group membership survey results; (3) Group annual meeting participation; (4) Number of plenary speakers who are

female or members of underrepresented groups; (5) Number of specific groups, teams, or individuals contacted for participation)

13. Recognize and acknowledge the achievements and contributions of members and partners through awards, special conference sessions, and other activities.

(Possible metrics: (1) Number and types of awards, (2) Number of awardees)

14. Hold elections and convene regular meetings of elected officers to plan activities that advance the mission of the Society and provide sound financial management of assets, revenue, and expenses.

(Possible metrics: (1) Financial status, (2) Elections held, (3) Number of leadership meetings, (4) Audit report results, (5) Diversity and sizes of income streams, (6) Accuracy of approved budget estimates)

15. Periodically review constitution, bylaws, and procedures manual and revise using appropriate procedures as necessary.

(Possible metrics: (1) Number and substance of new amendments passed, (2) Number of periodic reviews of documents)