

Marine Events Survey for Sailing Races & Regattas, Sportfishing Tournaments, and Competitive Board & Paddle Events Frequently Asked Questions

What is ocean planning?

The ocean and the livelihoods it supports are vital to New England. People in our region greatly value our ocean heritage and are seeking to use resources from the ocean in new and increasingly complex ways. At the same time, environmental changes are affecting the health of ocean life and habitats. Balancing these needs is a challenging process that requires careful thought and decision-making. By collecting existing information to describe human activities and natural resources in the ocean, **ocean planning** is a way to address these challenges. Government agencies and stakeholders are working together to anticipate needs, set priorities, and make decisions from a regional perspective. **The result?** More effective decisions informed by public input to ensure protection and sustainable use of ocean resources. For more information on ocean planning, see neoceanplanning.org.

What is the purpose of the recreational characterization study?

As part of the ocean planning effort, this study will characterize coastal and marine recreational uses in the Northeast (Long Island Sound to ME), gathering data about where, when, and how people recreate along New England's coast and in the ocean to help ensure recreational uses be considered in the broader context of ocean planning. More specifically, the study will collect information on the following activities: whale watching, SCUBA diving, sailing regattas, saltwater sportfishing tournaments/derbies, and competitive paddle and board sports, including surf contests, stand up paddleboard races and in-water triathlons; as well as day beach use, surfing, sea kayaking, swimming, and wildlife viewing. The project will not collect data on individual fishing activity or recreational boating from individual users as those activities are being addressed through other studies. For more information on how other recreational uses have been/are being addressed, see <http://neoceanplanning.org/projects/recreation/>.

Who is conducting the study?

This study is being conducted by the [Northeast Regional Planning Body \(RPB\)](#), which has contracted with a project team consisting of [SeaPlan](#), the [Surfrider Foundation](#), and [Point97](#). The project team has been working with representatives from the recreational boating and fishing industries, and stakeholders from competitive paddle and board sports, to develop a survey methodology that will best characterize areas that are important to their respective interests.

Who has been involved so far?

The project team is receiving guidance from a project steering committee consisting of representatives from state and federal agencies, including the Maine Coastal Program, the New Hampshire Coastal Program, New Hampshire Department of Fish and Game, the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management, the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council, the Connecticut Department of

Environmental Protection Office of Long Island Sound Programs, the New York State Department of State, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the United States Coast Guard. The following regional industry experts have also been involved in developing these three components of the marine events survey:

Sailing Races and Regattas: Individuals from the Gulf of Maine Ocean Racing Association, the Connecticut Marine Trades Association, the US Coast Guard, the Massachusetts Environmental Police, Sailors for the Sea, and Morris Yacht Clubs.

Sportfishing Tournaments: Individuals from the Bay Shore Tuna Club, the Babylon Tuna Club, Connecticut Charter and Party Boat Association, the Coastal Conservation Association of New Hampshire, Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries, New Hampshire Department of Fish and Game, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, and the US Coast Guard.

Competitive Board and Paddle Events: Individuals who organize competitive group events, such as representatives from the Surfrider Foundation's regional chapter network and over fifty other stakeholders (full list viewable: http://bit.ly/NE_Study).

These industry and agency experts have identified the online survey format as the best way to gather high quality data from a wide variety of individuals most familiar with these respective activities.

What information are we looking for?

Sailing Races and Regattas: Survey participants will be asked to draw an outline of the area in which the majority of race or regatta activity takes place. We recognize that races and regattas often lack precise boundaries, and that race activities are dependent on a number of factors, especially wind direction, but ask that participants think about defining areas most likely to be used by race participants. Survey participants will then be asked questions about the races they have mapped.

Sportfishing Tournaments: Survey participants will be asked to draw an outline of the area in which the majority of tournament activity takes place. We recognize that fishing tournaments often lack precise boundaries, and that participant locations may vary based on changing conditions. The project team anticipates that survey participants can use areas depicted on nautical charts (e.g. habitat features such as canyons, wrecks, or other features) to identify locations that tournament participants are likely to visit during a particular event. Survey participants will then be asked questions about the tournaments they have mapped. We understand that some locations are sensitive and we will continue to work with industry experts to determine how best to represent the data from a regional standpoint in a way that does not reveal the exact locations of certain areas.

Competitive Board and Paddle Events: We are looking to characterize general route areas, frequency and basic economic data for surf contests, SUP races and in-water triathlons. We recognize that races and contests can sometimes lack precise boundaries, and that activities are dependent upon a number of factors, but ask that you help us identify the general areas that best characterize the typical route taken by participants.

How will this information be used?

The data collected during this survey will not be used for regulatory purposes. Rather, data from the study will be used by the RPB to develop a draft Northeast Ocean Plan, and will be integrated into the [Northeast Ocean Data Portal](#), which is a publicly available, online decision support and information system for managers, planners, scientists, and project proponents. The information will be combined with data being collected from other industries to help ensure recreational uses are considered in ocean planning efforts. The data will be publicly available, and can be used by industry members in business planning and to demonstrate the importance of recreation to the ocean economy. We will continue to work with industry experts to determine how best to represent the data from a regional standpoint.

