

New Bedford ranked top fishing port for 14th Year in a Row

In its annual report, Fisheries of the United States, NOAA announced today the latest data on U.S. recreational catch and commercial fish landings and value. For the fourteenth consecutive year, the Port of New Bedford is the number one fishing port in the nation.

New Bedford, had the highest valued catch, 130 million pounds of fresh seafood valued at \$379 million. Those revenue numbers are down from \$411 million the year before. The Port of New Bedford has been the number one fishing port in America since 1999.

New Bedford vessels landed two-thirds of the total value of all seafood landings in Massachusetts, and fully one-third of the value of New England's landings. For comparison, Gloucester, Massachusetts landed 3.6% of New England's catch value, while Portland, Maine landed 2.7% of New England's catch value.

"This is very positive news for our City and the region but, there is much work to do to ensure New Bedford retains the competitive advantages that have enabled our domination of the industry," said Mayor Jon Mitchell.

The Port of New Bedford's number one status is the direct result of the nation's highly-valued scallop fishery, which is centered in New Bedford. Scallop landings account for more than 81 percent of New Bedford seafood landings.

The nation's scallop industry is now both profitable and sustainable. The fishery has recovered over a twenty year period, as the industry worked in conjunction with University

of Massachusetts Dartmouth, School of Marine Science and Technology (SMAST) to improve stock assessments and management controls efforts.

Unfortunately, this success has not been replicated in the groundfish industry. The value of landings from groundfish vessels declined by 30% in 2013 in New Bedford. Federal disaster money has just started to reach the businesses affected by the disaster.

Moving forward, industry, academics, and regulators must once again work together to improve stock assessments and develop management controls which provide sustainability in the ground fish industry as they have for the scallop industry.