



## [PRESS RELEASE]

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### ***A New Wave: The National Future Fishermen Coalition Launches in Support of the Next Generation of U.S. Commercial Fishermen***

**[May 22nd, 2025]** – Today marks the official launch of the [National Future Fishermen Coalition \(NFFC\)](#), a united effort dedicated to ensuring a strong, resilient, and opportunity-rich future for America’s commercial fisheries. By investing in the next generation, NFFC is working to secure a future where fishing remains a vital and thriving part of our nation's coastal economies, food systems, and cultural heritage.

As America’s working waterfronts face mounting challenges - ranging from rising operational costs and burdensome regulations to reduced access to waterfront infrastructure and increasing consolidation within the seafood supply chain—the need for action has never been more urgent. *"The graying of the fleet is not just a nationwide issue, it is a global issue"*, comments **Andrea Tomlinson, Executive Director of the [New England Young Fishermen's Alliance \(NEYFA\)](#)**. *"De-stigmatizing our small- and medium-sized boat fishermen and women is the first step toward educating our nation about our sustainable national seafood supply."*

Echoing this urgency, **Raymond Rowell, Permit Bank Director at the [Cape Cod Commercial Fishermen's Alliance \(CCCFA\)](#)**, noted, *"Without investment in training the next generation, it's difficult to envision a future at all. In an industry hampered by increasing regulations and razor thin margins, boat owners can't afford to miss trips because they lack crew members."*

NFFC represents the first national coalition of its kind focused on addressing the 'graying of the fleet' that threatens the future of commercial fishing. *"This initiative brings together a national body of individuals and organizations to strategically tackle the generational shift happening in commercial fisheries,"* said **Bob Gill**, a respected independent fisheries expert and Steering Committee member of the NFFC.



*"Our mission is simple but powerful," said **Maité Duquela, the NFFC Coordinator.** "We're focused on national, regional, and local collaboration in order to build a future where new fishermen are supported, empowered, and equipped to carry forward a proud legacy of feeding our communities, stewarding our oceans, and sustaining our coastal economies."*

The NFFC is the product of a years-long collaborative effort. Founding partners include the Gulf of America Reef Fish Shareholders' Alliance, Cape Cod Commercial Fishermen's Alliance, Maine Coast Fishermen's Association, Commercial Fisheries Center of Rhode Island, Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association, New England Young Fishermen's Alliance, and Bob Gill. **The group photos below capture these founding partners, who represent a broad range of regions, fisheries, and communities united by a shared commitment to empowering the next generation of fishermen and women.**



**Image:** Founding members of the National Future Fishermen Coalition

*"We are proud to help launch this effort," said **Ashford Rosenberg, Director of Regional Policy and Special Projects at [The Gulf of America Reef Fish Shareholders' Alliance \(Shareholders' Alliance\)](#)**. "The fleet's getting older, and it's getting harder to bring new folks into the industry. But we believe there's a future here worth fighting for. That's why we pulled together groups from around the country who are already doing real, on-the-water work to support the next generation. It's not just about keeping people fishing—it's about building a future where this way of life can grow stronger, and where the next generation has a real shot at success."*



Our coalition is committed to supporting community organizations and associations in their efforts to break down barriers to entry for young and new fishermen, and to making commercial fishing a viable and rewarding livelihood for present and future generations.

*"As a young person who grew up fishing, I can attest that the difficulties of being a full-time fisherman are all too real," said **Emily Coffin, Seafood and Fisheries Policy Coordinator for the [Maine Coast Fishermen's Association \(MCFA\)](#)**. "I want to do what I can so that other young people have the confidence to pursue a happy and stable life in commercial fishing for generations to come."*

**Natalie Sattler, Communications and Program Director at the [Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association \(ALFA\)](#)**, emphasized, *"ALFA is excited to be a part of the NFFC to help provide new and young fishermen a safe introduction to fisheries and share our work and resources with similar fishing groups around the country. We look forward to collaborating with coalition partners to strengthen the welfare of fishermen and our local communities."*

That sentiment is shared by **Shaye Rooney, Co-Executive Director of the [Commercial Fisheries Center of Rhode Island \(CFCRI\)](#)**, who added, *"CFCRI is honored to collaborate on this unique nationwide initiative to further support future and existing fisheries workforce. We feel that this effort will help to strengthen the success of and expand access to incredible workforce development programs and resources for fishermen that exist across coastal regions. This initiative will have multidirectional benefits and lasting impacts to jobseekers, fishing associations, captains and boat owners, and the broader fishing community to help preserve fishing as a profession, a culture, and a way of life; an overarching mission of our organization."*

Our coalition unites fishermen, community leaders, organizations, and allies across the nation around a shared belief: **the future of fishing depends on the people who do it and must be shaped by those who live it every day**. NFFC works to empower the next generation of commercial fishermen by supporting programs that foster personal and professional growth, while also creating opportunities for connection across regions and sectors. By challenging outdated narratives that pit fishing against environmental responsibility, we embrace a vision of resilient, sustainable fisheries that reflect both ecological and economic realities.

As the coalition launches, NFFC welcomes individuals and organizations from across the country to **learn more about our work and join as a member**. Whether you're a seasoned captain, a deckhand with big aspirations, or an advocate for sustainable seafood and thriving coastal communities, the National Future Fishermen Coalition



invites you to stand with us in supporting the people who make it possible. To join, simply complete this short [form](#).

**Together, we can ensure that the next generation of fishermen doesn't just survive, but thrives.**

To learn more or get involved, visit [www.nationalfuturefishermen.org](http://www.nationalfuturefishermen.org) or follow us on social media at:

Instagram: [@NFFCoalition](#)

X/Twitter: [@FutureFishermen](#)

Facebook Page: [National Future Fishermen Coalition](#)

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For all media and general inquiries related to the National Future Fishermen Coalition, please contact Maité Duquela.

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