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NATIONAL OCEANIC & ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION • US DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

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NOAA05-138
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 22, 2005

U.S. FISHERIES CHIEF, WILLIAM HOGARTH, ELECTED TO CHAIR INTERNATIONAL FISHERIES COMMISSION

Seville, Spain – Member nations of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas have elected William T. Hogarth, director of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Fisheries Service, to serve as Commission chairman. The election took place at the Commission's annual meeting in Spain. The United States last chaired the Commission from 1984 to 1987.

"Dr. Hogarth's election to chair this important commission is a significant milestone in the U.S. effort to bring about improved international cooperation on important fisheries issues," said U.S. Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutierrez. "The large, migratory fish managed by the Commission are important, not only in terms of economics, but also for the health of ocean ecosystems globally."

Hogarth has been the U.S. delegate to the Commission since 2002. The Commission chairmanship is a two-year term.

"The Commission manages some of the most economically valuable fish species and the organization is extremely important to U.S. commercial and recreational fishing industries," said retired Navy Vice Admiral Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Jr., Ph.D., under secretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and NOAA administrator. "The United States will continue to advocate for improved science, stronger management, compliance with internationally agreed-upon regulations, and an end to practices such as illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing that undermine our management efforts."

Hogarth expressed his commitment to ensuring that the Commission process is open, transparent, and inclusive to all countries.

"I am honored to be elected to lead such a distinguished Commission," Hogarth said. "We have many challenges ahead, but I am dedicated to continuing the process of improving the functioning of the Commission that was begun by Masanori Miyahara, the outgoing Chairman. I believe strongly in an open and transparent process where everyone can express their opinions, and I am looking forward implementing this philosophy within the Commission over the next two years."

Established in 1969, the Commission is responsible for collecting scientific information, assessing stock status, and establishing management programs for 30 tuna and tuna-like species that are fished upon by many nations in the Atlantic Ocean. The Commission is made up of 41 members. The next meeting is a scientific workshop on the stock structure of Atlantic swordfish, scheduled for January 16-18, 2006, in Greece.

NOAA Fisheries Service is dedicated to protecting and preserving our nation's living marine resources and their habitat through scientific research, management and enforcement. NOAA Fisheries Service provides effective stewardship of these resources for the benefit of the nation, supporting coastal communities that depend upon them, and helping to provide safe and healthy seafood to consumers and recreational opportunities for the American public.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), NOAA is working with its federal partners and nearly 60 countries to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes.

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