



FY2006 Budget Highlights



National Marine Fisheries Service Selected Marine Fisheries Activities

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS, or "NOAA Fisheries") requests \$25.4 million (M) in FY 2006 for its Expand Annual Stock Assessments program, reflecting a net increase of \$4.5M over the FY 2006 base level. NOAA Fisheries also requests \$9.6M, an increase of \$5.51M for Economic and Social Science Research and \$26.0M, and increase of \$1.47M for Fisheries Observers.

The FY 2006 requests for the Expand Annual Stock Assessments, Economics and Social Science Research, and Fisheries Observers programs will enable NOAA Fisheries to increase the collection rate of comprehensive, high-quality biological and environmental data; provide analyses of the economic and societal impacts of our stewardship decisions; and ensure compliance with existing laws, regulations, and fishery management plans (FMPs).

FY 2006 Program Changes

Expand Annual Stock Assessments - Improve Data Collection

The \$25.4M request includes investments in additional personnel and upgrades to information management resources based on the program's Marine Fisheries Stock Assessment Improvement Plan (SAIP), which guides NOAA Fisheries' efforts to improve the scope, quality, and timeliness of stock assessments.

The increase (\$4.5M) is designed to enhance the quantity and quality of data collected and analyzed from NOAA Fisheries resource surveys, commercial operations, and recreational fisheries. New personnel (eight FTEs) will tackle shortfalls in fisheries monitoring, data management, and advancements in stock assessments. With this increase, NOAA expects to deliver first-time assessments for four major fish stocks by the end of this fiscal year.

An increase of \$2.0M will enhance the Strengthen Living Marine Resources program, significantly improving NOAA Fisheries' data collection capabilities. The investment will support the installation of Fisheries Scientific Computer Systems (FSCS) onboard several survey vessels. This state-of-the-art data collection and information management system, will replace manual data recording—a process that once took weeks or months—and will provide access to near-real-time

information on stock assessments. Additionally, NOAA Fisheries proposes to fund an additional 250 charter vessel days-at-sea (DAS) to address DAS shortfalls in existing monitoring programs.

Economic and Social Science Research

The request of \$9.62M (a \$5.51M increase) includes investments in seven FTEs and expansion of the Agency's economic and social science data collection capabilities. This increase will enable decision makers to identify cost-effective approaches for achieving conservation goals while reducing the risk of court challenges due to incomplete economic analyses.

These investments in data collection will enable NOAA Fisheries to complete economic analyses of commercial harvesters for 26 FMPs by FY 2006 (a 46% increase over FY 2005 projections); complete profiles on 20 fishing communities (a three-fold increase from FY 2005); and estimate economic impacts of effort displacement on recreational and commercial fisheries in 20 Federal marine managed areas (also a three-fold increase from FY 2005).

Fisheries Observers Program

Fisheries observers provide the most reliable and nonbiased source of catch and bycatch data from U.S. commercial fishing and processing vessels. While at sea, observers record biological and environmental observations and conduct critical sampling surveys.

NOAA Fisheries requests an increase of \$1.47M to expand coverage to several fisheries that are categorized as "unobserved" or "observed at less than adequate levels," including the:

- Southeast Alaska salmon driftnet fishery
- Northeast Atlantic herring fishery, and
- Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico reef and bottom longline, handline, and bandit rig fisheries.

This investment will support two new FTEs as well as augment the total number of days at sea for the observers to 64,604 (~1200 days above FY 2005 levels). With the proposed increases, NOAA Fisheries will be able to improve two currently observed fisheries to fully meet sampling design objectives and initiate coverage in four additional fisheries. Furthermore, the request will enable the agency to deploy observers to 41 fisheries, thus providing adequate or nearly

adequate levels of observer coverage in 70% of fisheries.

FY 2006 Budget	
NOAA Fisheries program	FY 2006 change (\$M)
Expand Annual Stock Assessments	\$4.50
Economic and Social Science Research	\$5.51
Fisheries Observers	\$1.47
TOTAL	\$11.48

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