



FY2006 Budget Highlights



National Marine Fisheries Service Protected Species Research and Management Services

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), requests \$30.9 million (M) in FY'06, reflecting a net increase of \$2.3M over the FY'06 BASE level for Protected Species Research and Management Programs, and \$8.2M, reflecting a net increase of \$5.4M for Other Protected Species. This will support the enhanced operations of the NOAA programs.

FY 2005 Program Changes

An increase of \$2.3M for a total of \$30.9M is requested for Protected Species Research and Management Programs. Specific projects include studying ocean sound effects and increasing the number and quality of stock assessments:

- Rising levels of ocean noise and their potential effects on marine species, particularly on protected species, has become a significant emerging issue in marine conservation. Recent strandings of marine mammals suggest there may be a relationship between some anthropogenic sound sources and these stranding events. Specific research will be directed at determining the characteristics of noise experienced by marine animals underwater, measuring the behavioral and auditory effects of exposure to ocean noise, and developing cost-effective mitigation measures for ocean noise effects.
- Currently, the status of more than 180 protected and at-risk marine species is unknown. The requested funding will allow NMFS to increase the number and quality of stock surveys and assessments on which to base regulatory decisions. Stock assessment priorities include large whales, Hawaiian cetaceans, loggerhead sea turtles, beaked and sperm whales, and coastal and oceanic bottlenose dolphins.

NMFS requests a total of \$8.1M for Other Protected Species activities. The funding is critical to achieving recovery for those Endangered Species Act (ESA) listed species that do not have a separate program within NMFS. The increase would fund regional staff to complete ESA section

7 consultations and implement recovery programs for shortnose sturgeon, gulf sturgeon, white abalone, Johnson's seagrass, and smalltooth sawfish.

Funds would also be used to initiate pilot proactive conservation efforts for species nearing the need for listing under the ESA. This pilot program aims to implement threat-reducing, on-the-ground conservation actions or management agreements in order to lower the risk of extinction for two species. NOAA intends to use this investment to implement measures, which will prevent a listing of species, thereby eliminating the need to complete costly ESA consultations and permitting requirements. The outcomes of these conservation efforts will serve as case studies and basis for other pilot projects. Finally, NOAA will develop a performance measurement system to evaluate the success of the pilot's conservation efforts in decreasing the number of listed species.

NOAA requests and increase of \$0.6M for a total of \$5.9M for Atlantic Salmon. This request will be used to implement the Atlantic salmon recovery plan, including research and management activities within NMFS. The research initiatives and management activities that will start with the requested new funding will provide additional capacity and resources for managers to protect the Atlantic salmon stocks.

FY 2005 Budget	FY 2005 Change (\$M)
Protected Species Research and Management Programs	\$ 2.3
Other Protected Species	\$ 5.4
Atlantic Salmon	\$ 0.6
Total	\$8.3

For More Information:
Gary Reisner
301-713-2259