



NEWS FROM NOAA

NATIONAL OCEANIC & ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION • US DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

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NOAA FISHERIES SERVICE BEGINS PROCESS TO END OVERFISHING BY 2010 *New Magnuson-Stevens Act First Step to Implementation / Comments Sought*

NOAA Fisheries Service has begun the process of developing new guidance to assist regional fishery management councils in developing measures to end overfishing in all U.S. commercial and recreational fisheries by 2010. This deadline is a new requirement under the reauthorized Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 2006. NOAA provides guidelines to facilitate consistent application of the law's 10 national standards among the nation's fishery managers. This action would modify the guidelines for National Standard 1 of the Act, also known as the "overfishing standard."

Overfishing still occurs at various levels in 48 fisheries in U.S. waters, although NOAA has significantly improved the situation in recent years. The highest priority in the Magnuson-Stevens Act reauthorization was to strengthen the Act to ensure an end to overfishing. The U.S. Ocean Action Plan also called for expansion of market-based management systems, improved recreational data, and the use of peer-reviewed science in resource management decisions. Initial funding for these activities is included in the 2008 budget request for NOAA Fisheries Service.

"The President is determined to stop overfishing and rebuild the nation's marine fisheries to sustainable levels to maximize their economic and environmental benefit to the nation," said Bill Hogarth, director of NOAA Fisheries Service. "We are pleased that Congress gave us new tools to end all overfishing and we look forward to continued support in the 2008 budget process."

To end overfishing and prevent it from occurring in the future, the new law requires all fisheries to be regulated under annual catch limits, with accountability measures to ensure that catches do not exceed the limit. The new law also elevates the importance of following scientific advice in fishery management decisions, so the new guidelines for National Standard 1 will address the role of science in establishing annual harvest caps.

The public is offered this opportunity to discuss these issues and provide comment on how the nation can meet the law's new mandates.

Upon consideration of public input that NOAA receives during this scoping period, the agency will develop a proposal for specific regulations, and then will hold another public comment period. The agency aims to finalize the modified National Standard 1 guidelines by the end of 2007.

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A public scoping meeting will be held March 9, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the NOAA Science Center, 1301 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910. The NOAA Science Center is the fifth NOAA building up the hill from the intersection of Colesville Rd. and East-West Highway. Look for a banner in front of the building that reads, "Celebrating 200 years of NOAA". Additional public scoping meetings will be set in the near future. Written comments may be e-mailed to: annual.catch.limitDEIS@noaa.gov; faxed to: 301-713-1193; or mailed to: Mark Millikin, NOAA/NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway; Silver Spring, MD 20910. The deadline for comments is April 17, 2007.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, is celebrating 200 years of science and service to the nation. From the establishment of the Survey of the Coast in 1807 by Thomas Jefferson to the formation of the Weather Bureau and the Commission of Fish and Fisheries in the 1870s, much of America's scientific heritage is rooted in NOAA.

NOAA is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and information service delivery for transportation, and by 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, more than 60 countries and the European Commission to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes, predicts and protects.

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Magnuson-Stevens Reauthorized Act of 2006: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/msa2007>
NOAA Fisheries Service: www.nmfs.noaa.gov
NOAA: www.noaa.gov