NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE

NATIONAL CATCH SHARE PROGRAM

FY 2011 HIGHLIGHTS

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) requests $54.0M in FY 2011 to support the implementation of a national catch share program. This budget request supports NOAA and the Department of Commerce's efforts to conserve, protect, and manage living marine resources in a way that ensures their continuation as functioning components of marine ecosystems, affords economic opportunities, and enhances the quality of life for the American public. This includes meeting the high performance goal to reduce the number of stocks subject to overfishing to zero by the end of 2011. This request supports the development, implementation, and operation of catch share programs in the Nation's fisheries, including sector management in the Northeast multispecies fishery.

National Catch Share Program +$36.6M: Rebuilding our Nation's fisheries is essential to preserving the livelihood of fishermen, the vibrancy of coastal communities, a sustainable supply of healthy seafood, and restoring ocean ecosystems to a healthy state. Catch share programs give fishermen a stake in the benefits of well-managed fisheries, and therefore greater incentive to ensure effective management. Catch shares allocate a dedicated percentage or share of a fishery's total catch to individual fishermen and community associations. These programs improve fishery economics by allowing fishermen to harvest shares when the markets are best and take other actions to reduce costs, and increase revenue without fear of losing access to their quota. It also eliminates competition for common quotas that leads to overcapacity in the fishery, increased bycatch and waste, and overfishing. Catch share programs incentivize entities to control catch. This coupled with observing, monitoring, and catch accounting systems, is effective in preventing overfishing.

NOAA recently released a draft catch share policy to encourage the consideration and adoption of catch shares wherever appropriate in fishery management and ecosystem plans and amendments, and will support the design, implementation, and monitoring of catch share programs. NOAA is seeking broad input on the draft policy from interested commercial and recreational fishermen, communities, state, and local governments, tribes, and the general public. The comment period will end on April 10, 2010. Comments can be made at: http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/domes_fish/catchshare/index.htm

The FY 2011 request will support the implementation of a nationwide catch share management approach. NOAA and the Regional Fishery Management Councils must work together to conduct comprehensive analysis and evaluation of the Nation's fisheries, develop catch share programs through fishery management plan amendments and regulations, and integrate data collection systems to monitor catches. Evaluating the economic and social performance of these programs requires new social science data collection programs and research initiatives. This transition ultimately improves long-term sustainability and profitability of these fisheries. While the nation will realize economic benefits, higher levels of monitoring and enforcement might be needed to ensure quotas are not exceeded. During FY 2011, NMFS will:

- Enhance implementation and support operation of four catch share programs: West Coast Trawl Individual Quota (TIQ), Northeast Multispecies Sectors, Mid-Atlantic Tilefish, Gulf of Mexico Grouper and Tilefish.
- Work with Councils to analyze and evaluate fisheries for suitability of catch share programs.
- Develop additional catch share programs across the country.
- Work with industry to implement observing and catch and quota monitoring systems needed for accurate tracking.
- Develop consistent, comprehensive approaches for analyzing and documenting the biological, ecosystem, economic, and social impacts of management strategies; develop indicators for fishery sustainability; and provide consistency in management nationwide.

The request builds on existing capabilities for analysis, regulation, enforcement, training and logistical support for observers and monitors and is based on an agency-wide analysis conducted with input from all levels. As catch share programs mature, resources will be reallocated in future years to support the transition to and implementation of catch share programs in additional candidate fisheries.