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FEBRUARY 1, 2005

Planning
NMFS Strategic Plan

A VISION FOR MARINE RECREATIONAL FISHERIES: NOAA RECREATIONAL FISHERIES STRATEGIC PLAN FY2005-FY2010

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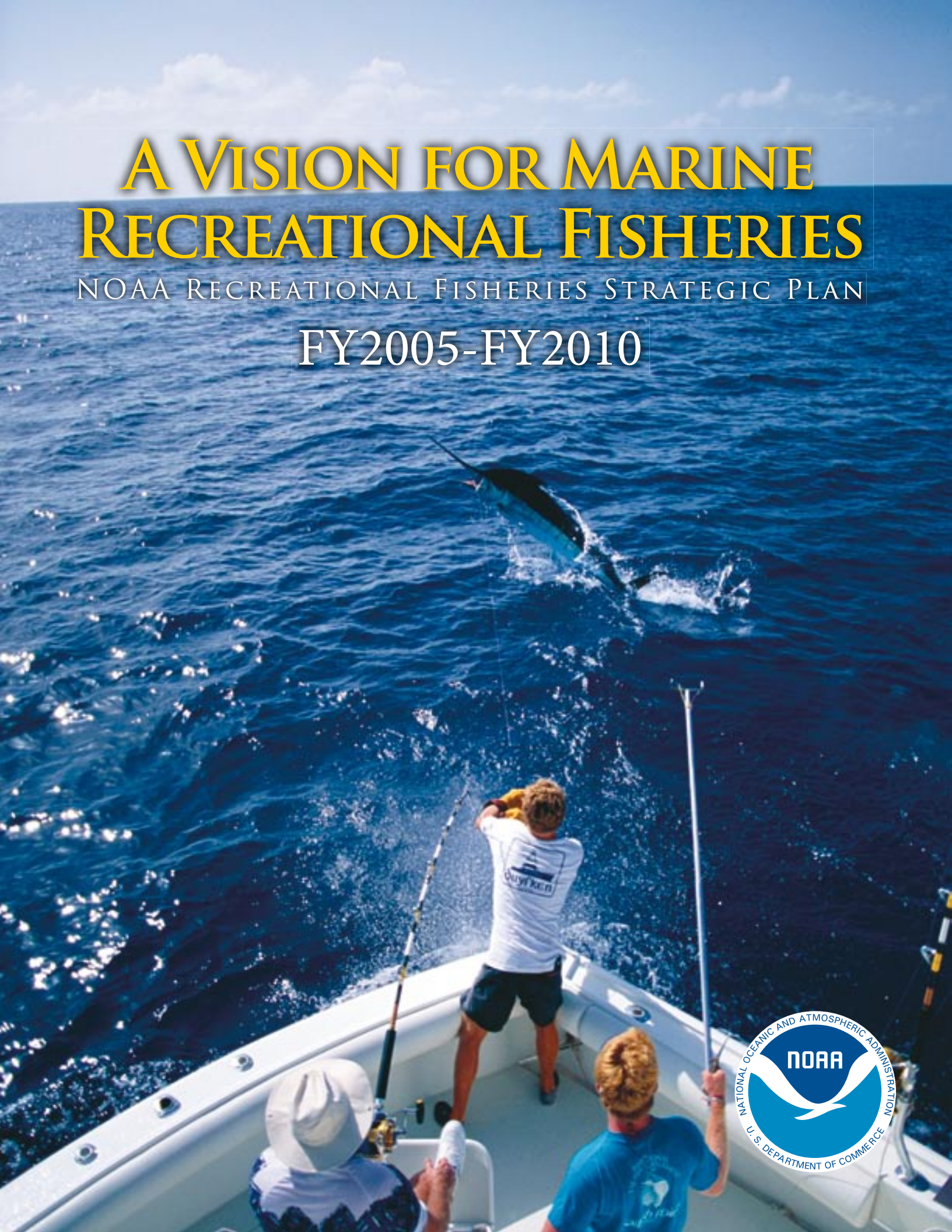
A Vision for Marine Recreational Fisheries

NOAA Recreational Fisheries Strategic Plan

FY2005-FY2010



NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
NOAA
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Vision Statement

The American people enjoy the riches and benefits of healthy and diverse marine ecosystems.

Mission Statement

Stewardship of living marine resources through science-based conservation and management and the promotion of healthy ecosystems.

As America's trustee for marine recreational fisheries resources, NOAA applies science-based fisheries management to provide healthy ocean ecosystems for the benefit and enjoyment of all Americans. Among the Agency's many mandates is the responsibility to ensure the public may enjoy a diverse array of recreational fishing experiences. This document outlines the Agency's direction for recreational fisheries within the parameters of NOAA's larger vision and mission.

Message from the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is the proud steward of our Nation's living marine resources—conserving, protecting, and managing these resources for more than 30 years. With the release of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy's 2004 report, *An Ocean Blueprint for the 21st Century*, and the unprecedented level of attention being paid to our ocean resources, NOAA is facing a new era of resource management challenges. In response, NOAA is continuing to improve its use of ecosystem approaches to fisheries management aimed at rebuilding and sustaining fishery and protected species stocks.

I'm pleased with the progress we've made so far in addressing overfishing and rebuilding stocks to healthy levels. The healthier and more abundant the fish populations, the better the recreational fishing experience for the American angler. This, in turn, translates into healthier economies for coastal communities. We need look no farther than Atlantic striped bass and redfish to see the economic and social benefits of healthy fisheries.

One of my top priorities is to revitalize our recreational fisheries program. During the past year, our staff met with anglers from across the country to develop a plan for the program and a shared vision for its success. The result is the NOAA Recreational Fisheries Strategic Plan. This plan demonstrates a renewed commitment to serving America's 13 million anglers by ensuring healthy, sustainable fisheries for generations to come.

William T. Hogarth, PhD
Assistant Administrator for Fisheries
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce

Presidents dating back to Teddy Roosevelt have understood recreational fishing as a basic part of the life, culture, and economy of the United States. It was not until Executive Order 12962 was signed by President Clinton in 1995 and later reaffirmed by President Bush that the sport of fishing received formal recognition from the chief executive. Although it lacked regulatory authority, the presidential proclamation gave the sweeping order for federal agencies to work together to "conserve, restore, and enhance aquatic systems to provide for increased recreational fishing opportunities nationwide."

A year later, the 1996 amendments to the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (the Magnuson Act) reinvented the way marine fisheries resources were managed through its renewed focus on conservation. This primary federal fisheries statute echoed the language of the Executive Order. The Magnuson Act directed NOAA and the other federal agencies to "… promote domestic commercial and recreational fishing under sound conservation and management principles …"

Saltwater recreational fishing generates more than $30 billion in economic impact and supports nearly 350,000 jobs.

As the agency responsible for managing for healthy marine ecosystems in the United States, NOAA takes the Magnuson Act, Executive Order 12962, and other conservation laws seriously. Because the task is larger than any one agency can handle, NOAA needs to be a partner in conservation with the recreational fishing community, coastal states, and other federal agencies. The NOAA Recreational Fisheries Strategic Plan represents a renewed commitment to working cooperatively with our partners to meet our responsibilities under the various mandates and to safeguard our coastal, marine, Great Lakes, and riverine ecosystems during a new era of challenges.

Status of Saltwater Fishing in the U.S.

Every year, 13 million Americans enjoy recreational fishing in our oceans and along our coasts. Fishing provides an opportunity to spend quality time outdoors with family and friends, away from the hurried demands of daily life. It is also a way to practice stewardship of our environment and pass a conservation ethic on to our children.

Saltwater recreational fishing is more popular than ever. Over the past decade, the number of angler trips rose nearly 10 percent, to 82 million trips in 2003. Not surprisingly, the number of fish caught by anglers since 1993 has increased proportionately. Although saltwater anglers have caught more fish in recent years, they also have released their catch more often (Fisheries of the United States, 2003).

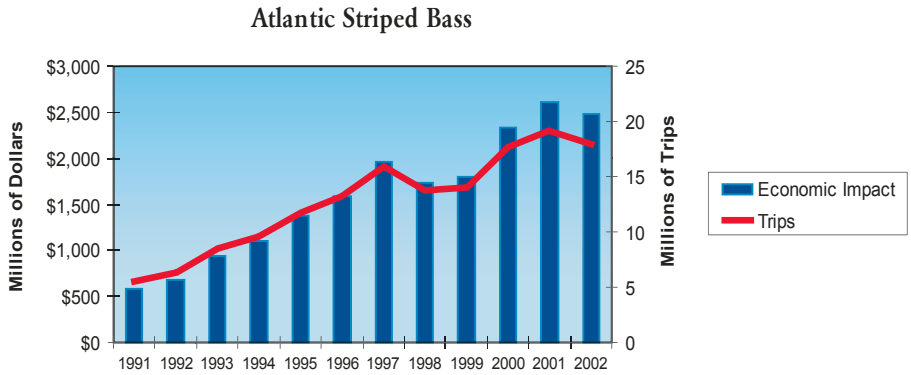
More than just a traditional American pastime and contributor to conservation, saltwater recreational fishing is also a major economic driver. Saltwater recreational fishing generates more than $30.5 billion in economic impact and supports nearly 350,000 jobs

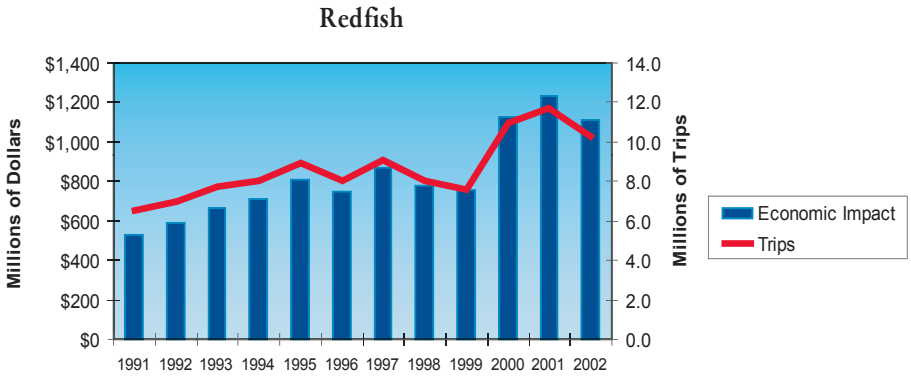
nationwide (The Economic Importance of Marine Angler Expenditures in the United States, 2004).

As more people move to the coasts, recreation and other human activities will place increased pressures on the resource and thus place greater demands on NOAA as the steward for our Nation's coastal, marine, Great Lakes, and riverine ecosystems. The U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy's 2004 report, *An Ocean Blueprint for the 21st Century*, stresses the need for a big-picture view by adapting our management strategies to avoid losing the wealth provided by our marine fisheries.

Renewed Commitment to Recreational Fisheries

As our understanding of the oceans and coasts has grown, NOAA's responsibilities have grown more complex. The Agency is moving from single-species management toward an ecosystem approach to management. As this transition takes place, partnerships will become increasingly important in addressing the diverse range of issues.





Local economies benefit from healthy recreational fisheries. The dramatic recoveries of redfish and striped bass populations were made possible by the partnership efforts of anglers, states, and NMFS.

The Plan outlines our shared vision for the future of recreational fisheries and signifies our commitment to work together to make it a reality.

Marine recreational anglers represent one of NOAA's largest organized constituencies. With their demonstrated conservation ethic, America's 13 million anglers will be among NOAA's most important allies. The Recreational Fisheries Strategic Plan aims to reengage anglers and create a common vision for the future of marine recreational fisheries.

Developed at the request of NOAA leadership, this plan incorporates input from experts throughout NOAA and members of the recreational community. A cross-agency working group composed of individuals appointed by program and office directors developed a plan outline that was fleshed out during the past year.

During the spring and early summer of 2004, nine regional workshops were held with anglers from across the country. These public workshops provided anglers the opportunity to comment on the initial plan outline. For those unable to attend, comments were also accepted via e-mail through the NMFS website.

The plan outline was simultaneously reviewed within NOAA by regional scientists and managers and by the Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee (MAFAC), an advisory body to the Secretary of Commerce, composed of independent fisheries experts.

During the fall of 2004, the interagency working group reviewed and incorporated an array of comments from NOAA and the public. This Recreational Fisheries Strategic Plan emerged from all the input and outlines a shared vision for a revitalized recreational fisheries program within NMFS.

Implementation

The strategic vision relies on an integrated two-step approach linking tailored regional efforts with national coordination. Each of NOAA's eight regions will develop detailed, step-by-step work plans that identify specific actions needed to implement these goals and objectives. Success will be determined by NOAA's ability to cut across agency lines and strengthen partnerships with communities, states, and other Federal agencies.

The plan development process benefited greatly from the involvement of our partners. Recognizing that any future successes will come through working cooperatively toward a common goal, NOAA will con-

Our Commitment

It is the vision of NMFS that through healthy and diverse marine ecosystems the American people will enjoy a diverse array of recreational fishing experiences. To achieve this vision, NMFS is committed to working with our partners to

- Improve the science and management of recreational species and their habitats.
- Keep anglers informed about and involved in the management process.
- Promote marine stewardship.

tinue to strengthen these relationships. Angler participation will be a centerpiece of implementation.

National Implementation Team
The ad hoc interagency team that developed the strategic plan will be formalized into a National Recreational Fisheries Implementation Team. This cross-agency team will work at the headquarters level to implement the plan by representing NOAA's recreational fishing interests within NOAA programs. The national team will be responsible for tying the regional efforts together by reviewing plans, identifying gaps and linkages between regional efforts, and ensuring regular reporting of progress and accomplishments.

Regional Implementation Teams
Regional implementation teams will be created for each of NOAA's eight regions. Led by the regional recreational fisheries coordinator, these teams will be responsible for designing activities that match the vision described in the Recreational Fisheries Strategic Plan. These work plans will include detailed objectives, metrics, timetables, and budgets.

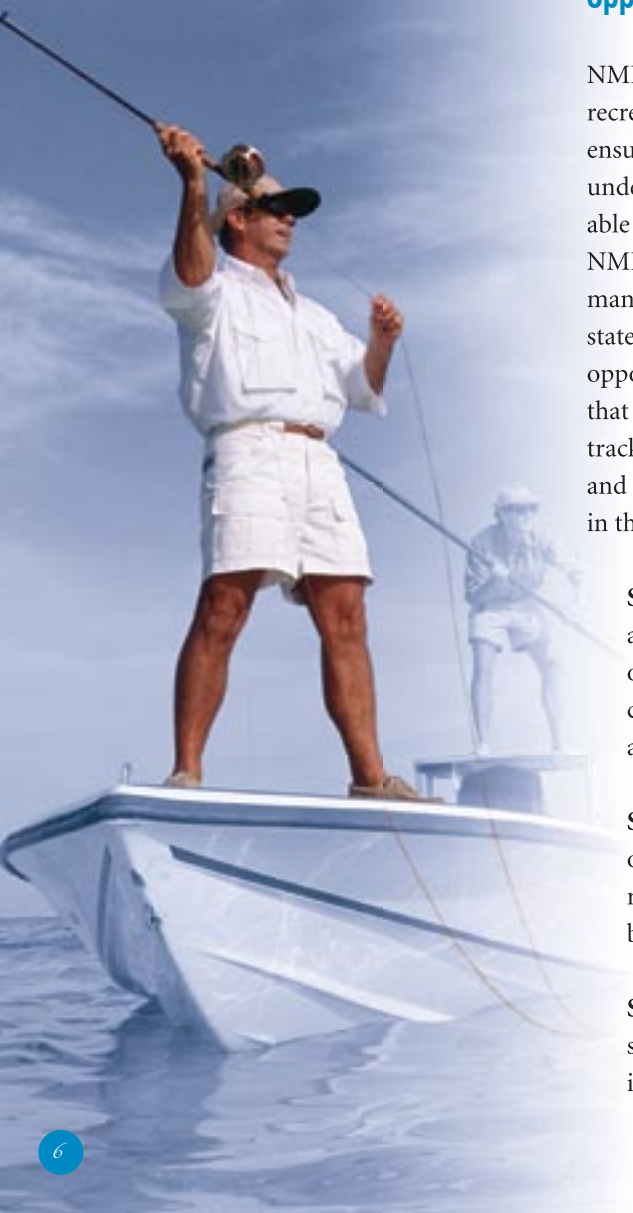
Throughout NOAA, considerable resources already are dedicated to activities that benefit recreational fisheries. An important function of the implementation teams will be to identify these activities and tie them back to the Recreational Fisheries Strategic Plan. Having identified the gaps, the teams can then develop new initiatives.

Through these regional recreational fisheries implementation teams, NOAA employees will work side by side with the Agency's management and conservation partners to turn the plan into action. Stakeholder members on these regional teams will include representatives from angling organizations, industry, Fishery Management Councils, interstate marine fisheries commissions, state fish and game agencies, and university partners. NOAA is committed to working closely with all partners to coordinate and enhance our recreational fisheries activities.

Enhanced Coordination

NOAA's vision for recreational fisheries is one part of the Agency's broader mission goal to "protect, restore, and manage the use of coastal and ocean resources through an ecosystem approach to management." The goals and objectives outlined in the Recreational Fisheries Strategic Plan are designed to support this broad Agency goal. The specific activities undertaken as part of this plan will help achieve the performance measures outlined in the NMFS Strategic Plan.

Nine regional meetings were held with anglers from across the country in order to ensure that the Plan accurately incorporated the ideas of the recreational fishing community. Here, anglers in Hawaii offer their thoughts on the Recreational Fisheries Strategic Plan.



Management Goal

Improve marine recreational fishing through better management

Objective #1

Evaluate the status of recreational fisheries management and identify opportunities for improvement.

NMFS has a responsibility to provide recreational fishing opportunities by ensuring sustainable fisheries resources, understandable regulations, and reasonable public access. To provide this service, NMFS constantly assesses current agency management practices and collaborative state management programs to identify opportunities for improvement. Part of that process should include measures for tracking our progress to assure the agency and our stakeholders that we are moving in the right direction.

Strategy 1.1 Evaluate existing recreational fisheries data collection methods by working with regional science centers and NOAA's Office of Science and Technology.

Strategy 1.2 Regularly chart progress on the status of the most popular recreational fish species nationally and by region.

Strategy 1.3 Work with other federal, state, tribal, and academic partners to identify management techniques currently applied to terrestrial recreational activities that might be appropriate for marine anglers.

Strategy 1.4 By analyzing existing socioeconomic data, identify areas in which additional data are required in order to make fair allocation decisions.

Objective #2

Effectively apply the suite of fishery management tools.

Recreational anglers abide by a proven set of management tools, including bag limits, size limits, gear restrictions, and time and area closures. The manager's choice of the appropriate tool is only the first step toward successful management. Managers must then effectively implement that measure, evaluate the results, and make corrections as necessary. Critical to each of these steps are having good fisheries and socioeconomic data on all sectors, including the recreational fishing community, and ensuring that these data are fairly incorporated into the decision-making process.

Strategy 2.1 Assist willing states in establishing a computerized system for tracking/licensing/registering marine anglers.

Strategy 2.2 Ensure that timely socioeconomic information is used in making management decisions about recreational fisheries.

Strategy 2.3 Where available and appropriate, provide historical data on both recreational and commercial fisheries for inclusion at all levels of the management process.

Strategy 2.4 Continue moving toward ecosystem approaches to management.

Strategy 2.5 Where appropriate, promote the use of innovative tools (such as artificial reefs, aquaculture, ocean parks, and marine protected areas) into marine ecosystem conservation and restoration efforts.

Strategy 2.6 When appropriate, consider the comments of the broad range of marine recreational users in management decisions.

Objective #3
Make the fisheries management process more open and accessible to the public.

Fisheries management relies on balanced representation from all sectors, including recreational anglers. To many, the fishery management process can seem confusing, time-consuming, and intimidating. This is especially true when it comes to involving people who pursue fishing as a weekend hobby and not as a full-time job. To encourage the participation of recreational anglers, NMFS is committed to an open and accessible decision-making process. The following strategies will help involve anglers by giving them a voice in decision-making, providing discussion forums, and asking for their input early in the process.

Strategy 3.1 Provide for fair recreational angling representation by facilitating participation in the management process.

Strategy 3.2 Inform marine anglers and their organizations of opportunities to participate in the management and regulatory process, and provide a way to exchange dialogue on all relevant recreational fisheries issues by enhancing the NMFS angler website.

Strategy 3.3 Schedule meetings to better fit times when saltwater anglers are available to attend.

Strategy 3.4 Promote early consultation and participation by anglers on key issues—such as artificial reefs, marine protected areas, and tournament observer programs—through the NMFS website.

Objective #4
Reduce bycatch and discard mortality in all fisheries.

Anglers are among the leaders in conserving our marine fisheries. Anglers release 60 percent of the fish they catch (Fisheries of the United States, 2003). However, significant unintended mortality can still occur, even when anglers practice conservation measures such as catch-and-release.

Marine recreational anglers have been catching more fish in recent years, but they also are releasing their catch more often according to a 2004 NMFS report, Fisheries of the United States.

National Standard 9 of the Magnuson Act requires NMFS to minimize the mortality of bycatch. To achieve this mandate, the Agency works closely with fishing communities and other governmental partners to promote measures that minimize both bycatch and bycatch mortality.

Strategy 4.1 Investigate and promote gear alternatives and procedures to reduce marine angler discard mortality.

Strategy 4.2 Support voluntary catch-and-release programs and the proper handling of fish through partnerships with marine recreational fishing organizations.

Strategy 4.3 Support those ocean ecosystem conservation initiatives that improve recreational fishing opportunities.

Objective #5
Improve compliance with fisheries regulations.

NMFS's success in providing healthy marine ecosystems comes not so much from managing fish as from managing people. To recreational anglers, this management often takes the form of restrictions on their fishing. As dedicated environmental stewards, anglers understand the importance of conservation measures that protect the long-term status of fish populations. To foster their continued stewardship, NMFS must help anglers understand regulations. The following strategies will enhance angler understanding and compliance with regulations.

Strategy 5.1 Work with the recreational fishing community to develop regulations that are simple to understand and provide a clear incentive for enhanced compliance.

Strategy 5.2 Establish priorities that will place more emphasis on recreational fisheries that have a significant impact on depleted stocks.

Strategy 5.3 Foster community compliance by ensuring that law enforcement officers are trained in the rationale behind regulations.

Strategy 5.4 Enhance cooperation between local, state, interstate, and federal agencies to improve enforcement efforts.

Objective #6

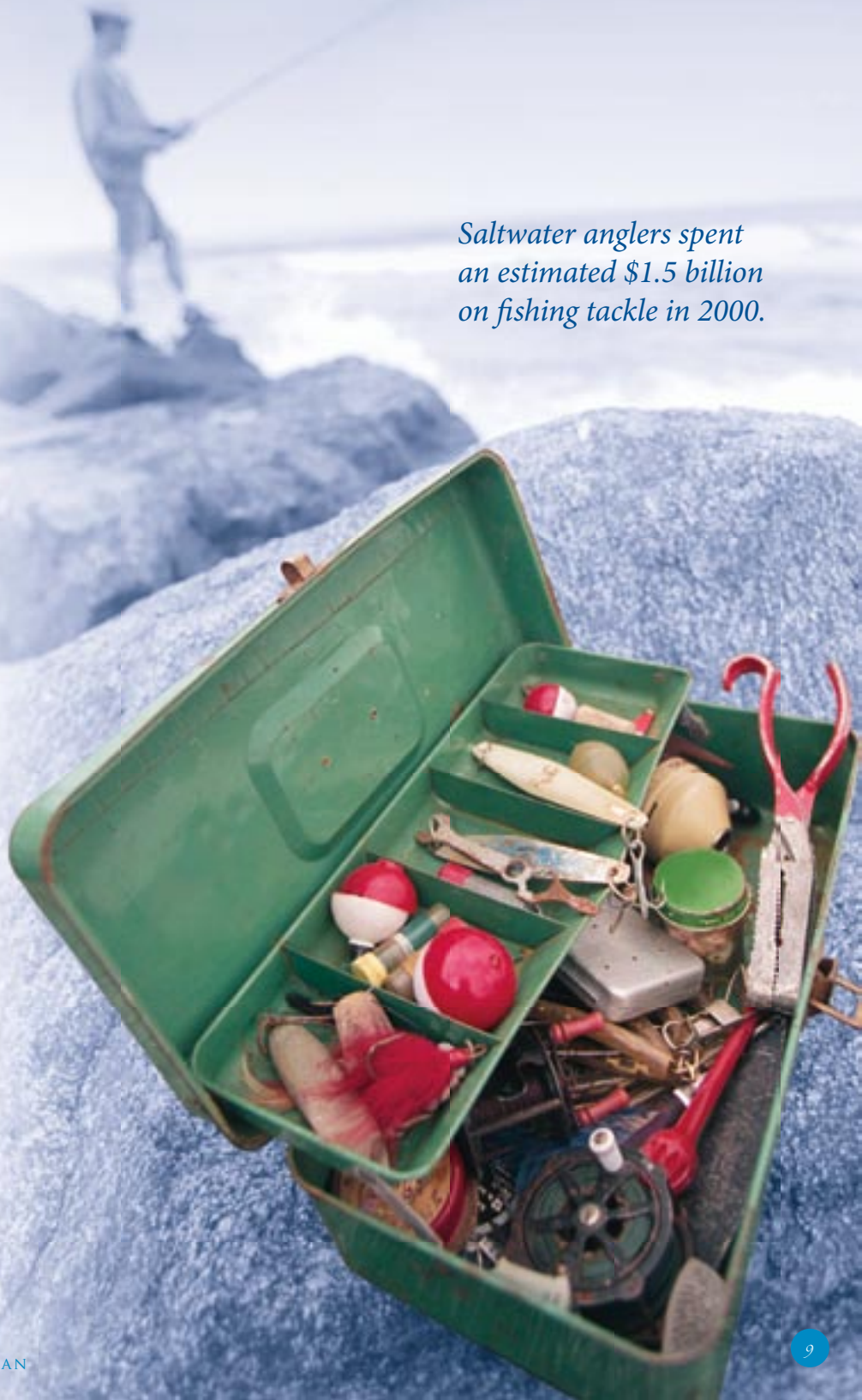
Improve intra-agency marine recreational fisheries cooperation.

NMFS is committed to building strong internal communications in order to achieve our common goals. By tapping into the varied expertise of NOAA professionals, we are better able to identify problem areas early and develop cooperative solutions. Improving our internal coordination and cooperation will result in better service to the recreational fishing community.

Strategy 6.1 Establish a formal NOAA Recreational Fisheries Team to implement this strategic plan. This interdisciplinary team should include representatives appointed from each of the NMFS program offices, regional offices, science centers, the National Marine Sanctuary Program, the Marine Protected Area Center, and the National Sea Grant College Program. The Recreational Fisheries Services Branch within the Office of Constituent Services will lead this team.

Strategy 6.2 Coordinate with the NOAA Ecosystem Goal team to improve representation of recreational fishing issues in NOAA's budget and program planning processes.

Strategy 6.3 Consult regularly with the NOAA Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee's Marine Recreational Fisheries Working Group.



Saltwater anglers spent an estimated $1.5 billion on fishing tackle in 2000.

Science Goal

Improve recreational fishing through the use of cooperative, timely, credible, and accurate science

Objective #1

Support data collection and research that matches management needs.

Credible science and accurate data are central to wise decision-making. To ensure that science and management priorities are in agreement, NMFS will work cooperatively with internal and external partners in planning relevant science initiatives, sharing data, and communicating findings.

Strategy 1.1 Collect more accurate recreational landings data through sample size increases and survey improvements.

Strategy 1.2 Facilitate angler participation in cooperative research and the science development process.

Strategy 1.3 Determine the most useful data for supporting the management process by consulting twice annually with councils, interstate commissions, state agencies, and stakeholders.

Strategy 1.4 Respond to management needs for better discard data by increasing the amount of recreational at-sea sampling.

Strategy 1.5 Provide ongoing evaluation of data collection activities to ensure that the highest-quality data products possible are being provided to resource managers.

Strategy 1.6 Provide timely stock assessments for recreational species and support the NMFS Stock Assessment Improvement Plan (SAIP), especially in assessing recreational species.

Objective #2

Use advanced technologies in fisheries science and data management.

NMFS is committed to incorporating ever-evolving technological advances into our science programs to supply managers with the best, most accurate data and information. At the forefront of this commitment is the enhancement of a national Fisheries Information System (FIS) designed to link existing federal and state fisheries information systems; expand regional marine recreational fisheries data collection systems such as GULFIN, RECFIN, ACCSP, and WESPACFIN; and provide for more effective information sharing. Further, we believe that our science is also improved by working cooperatively with anglers to include their on-the-water knowledge. This inclusive and proactive approach to science ensures that we will continue to

provide the most accurate and reliable fisheries data.

Strategy 2.1 Build regional fisheries information expert teams to share ideas, successes, and experiences in the management of fisheries information.

Strategy 2.2 Promote and implement data collection methodologies that use the latest technology (electronic reporting, verifiable self-reported data, GPS technology, etc.) for improved geospatial data collection.

Strategy 2.3 Coordinate joint research projects with federal, state, and community partners to provide high-priority recreational information to managers.

Objective #3
Ensure that data are comparable.

Fisheries and angler data are collected in various ways by various Federal agencies, states, and stakeholders. The resulting variability in the data has led at times to credibility concerns and confusion about the characteristics of the marine recreational fishery. To raise confidence and ultimately provide more accurate data for fishery policy and management decisions, NMFS will serve as the clearinghouse for all marine fishery data and ensure that such information is easily available to fishery managers and the public.

Strategy 3.1 Establish mechanisms for ensuring consistent methodologies and data structure (e.g., units of measurement and coding systems) by integrating all state and federal cooperative data-collection programs.

Strategy 3.2 Implement data consistency (formats, types, and labels) across all appropriate data collection programs.

Strategy 3.3 Facilitate angler participation in data reviews and quality assurance through annual constituent data review meetings.

Strategy 3.4 Establish a general reporting protocol for releasing data reports to the public.

Objective #4
Maintain and expand the collection of economic and sociocultural data for use in developing policy-relevant models.

Economic and sociocultural data are used to accurately illustrate the impact of management policies. When paired with catch and biomass data, these data form the core components of most regulatory and allocation decisions. NMFS will continue to assist the decision-making process by providing managers with informative analyses of these data. In collaboration with Fishery Management Councils, interstate commissions, and other partners, NMFS will also continue to seek new ways to enhance data collection efforts and provide new analyses that meet management needs.

Striped bass, salmon, and shad are among the prized fisheries to benefit from the nearly $200,000 in grants awarded to nine coastal states through a community-based fisheries habitat restoration program sponsored by the American Sportfishing Association's FishAmerica Foundation and the NOAA's Habitat Restoration Center.

Photo courtesy of Tampa Bay Watch

Strategy 4.1 Collect and publish data on angler expenditures and economic impact every five years.

Strategy 4.2 Incorporate the Highly Migratory Species (HMS) recreational fishery in future expenditure surveys.

Strategy 4.3 Improve valuation models of marine resources to include consumptive and nonconsumptive users.

Strategy 4.4 More accurately assess the impact of management decisions by collecting a suite of cost and earnings data from industries involved in recreational fisheries, such as charter boats, head boats, tackle manufacturers, retailers, and boat builders.

Strategy 4.5 Develop easy-to-use economic models and data web queries to facilitate inclusion of economic information in the policy process.

Objective #5

Better understand the relationship between recreational fishing and habitat.

Both healthy fish populations and exceptional fishing opportunities rely on quality habitat. A better understanding of the relationship between fish and their habitat is central to NMFS's continued movement toward an ecosystem approach to management. While protecting and restoring natural systems will remain a top priority, the Agency is taking a leadership role in exploring new ways to enhance fish populations and habitat.

Strategy 5.1 Research the dynamic relationship between fish and their habitat to improve ecosystem-based management decisions.

Strategy 5.2 Improve understanding of the impact of all water-based recreational activities on habitat and develop strategies to minimize these impacts through improved management and stewardship.

Strategy 5.3 Identify priority habitat concerns associated with recreational fishing on popular and overfished species.

Strategy 5.4 Research the effectiveness of artificial reef programs, such as "rigs-to-reefs."

Strategy 5.5 Study the effectiveness of fisheries enhancement efforts (e.g., hatcheries and aquaculture) and their impact on ecosystem health.

Scientists from Stanford and Duke University, along with the Monterey Bay Aquarium and National Marine Fisheries Service, have placed over 700 electronic tags in bluefin tuna off the coast of the Carolinas. The data from implantable archival tags has been critical for establishing the basic biology of Atlantic bluefin and the patterns of movement to feeding and breeding grounds.

Photo courtesy of Tag-A-Giant

The International Game Fish Association and NOAA work together to train experienced anglers, captains and crews to become official IGFA-certified observers aboard offshore tournament boats.

Photo courtesy of International Game Fish Association

Outreach Goal

Promote sustainable recreational fishing opportunities, heighten awareness of marine recreational fishing issues, and advance marine conservation principles.

Objective #1

Increase the awareness of NMFS's conservation partnership with individual anglers by promoting environmental stewardship practices and informing anglers of NOAA's role in supporting healthy and viable marine recreational fisheries.

Both the Magnuson Act and Executive Order 12962 call on NOAA to take a lead role in promoting recreational fishing under sound conservation and management principles. Underlying these formal mandates is an understanding that the recreational fishing community and NMFS share common goals and should be natural allies in efforts to conserve, restore, and manage our coastal and ocean resources. Through new and existing outreach activities, NMFS will support management and science goals by engaging anglers, promoting sustainable fishing opportunities, and building stronger conservation partnerships with the recreational fishing community.

Strategy 1.1 Build tomorrow's environmental stewards by promoting the participation of youth in ethical angling programs.

Strategy 1.2 Provide easy-to-understand information on the status of stocks for fisheries of interest to anglers, via printed brochures and online, starting with regional publications (print and web) on top species in 2005.

Strategy 1.3 Promote public education and outreach through hands-on angler involvement in living marine resource and fisheries habitat conservation and restoration projects.

Strategy 1.4 Develop new multilingual educational materials on recreational fisheries stewardship.

Strategy 1.5 Inform recreational anglers about related laws and regulations, including the Essential Fish Habitat Program, Marine Mammal Protection Act, and Endangered Species Act.

Strategy 1.6 Host a regular recreational fishing conference as a forum for discussing timely science- and policy-related issues. The event should be planned in cooperation with industry and angler groups.

Strategy 1.7 Enhance working relationships with outdoor media, Fishery Management Councils, and interstate marine fisheries commissions to improve communication about recreational fisheries issues.

Strategy 1.8 Create educational materials for anglers on NOAA's role in using economic and other scientific information to improve recreational fisheries.

Objective #2

Ensure that the recreational fishing community and our partner agencies are informed in a timely manner of issues that may impact anglers.

Effective communication between stakeholders is key to building stronger partnerships. Many decisions of federal and state agencies, commissions, tribes, and members of the fishing community affect and are affected by NMFS's actions. Management of our coastal and ocean resources will benefit from more frequent communication that is open and timely.

Strategy 2.1 Regularly attend recreational fishing group meetings to enhance working relationships and increase exchanges of information.

Strategy 2.2 Ensure that NOAA Recreational Fisheries reports, management actions, presentations, and websites are understandable and designed for easy access by anglers and the general public.

Strategy 2.3 Establish partnership programs with angling organizations, federal and state agencies, and other interested groups to enhance the implementation of the NOAA Recreational Fisheries Strategic Plan.

Strategy 2.4 Develop outreach strategies to foster communication with the angling community.

Objective #3

Improve interagency function and collaboration with tribal, state, and federal partners for issues related to recreational fisheries.

NMFS will benefit from communications that have a clear and unified message. The Office of Constituent Services is positioned to work throughout the Agency to better coordinate NOAA's internal activities, form strong partnerships, and amplify key messages.

Strategy 3.1 Provide a focused in-reach initiative to NMFS and other appropriate components of NOAA to ensure that staff are aware of the NOAA Recreational Fisheries Strategic Plan and, where appropriate, are fully engaged in its implementation.

Strategy 3.2 Participate in recreational fisheries-related programs set up under the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act.

Strategy 3.3 Develop regular communications plans for information exchange with state, tribal, and federal natural resource managers.

Strategy 3.4 Appoint a NMFS representative to various interagency recreational fishing groups, boards, and committees.

Photo courtesy of Nicole Barlett

Objective #4

Expand the use of technology to streamline the consultation and education process, improve the efficiency of information exchange, and increase the timely distribution of recreational fisheries information.

Advances in technology allow more streamlined, immediate, and efficient communications with recreational fishing organizations and other interested constituents across the Nation. NOAA will improve its service to anglers by taking full advantage of these technologies to enhance our web and e-mail products.

Strategy 4.1 Create a one-stop NOAA website for the recreational fishing community.

Strategy 4.2 Develop a real-time website-based reporting system for the Atlantic recreational fishery billfish reporting system.

Strategy 4.3 Develop a recreational fisheries constituent database for information exchange.

Strategy 4.4 Provide the recreational fishing community with timely news and information via e-mail/list serve.

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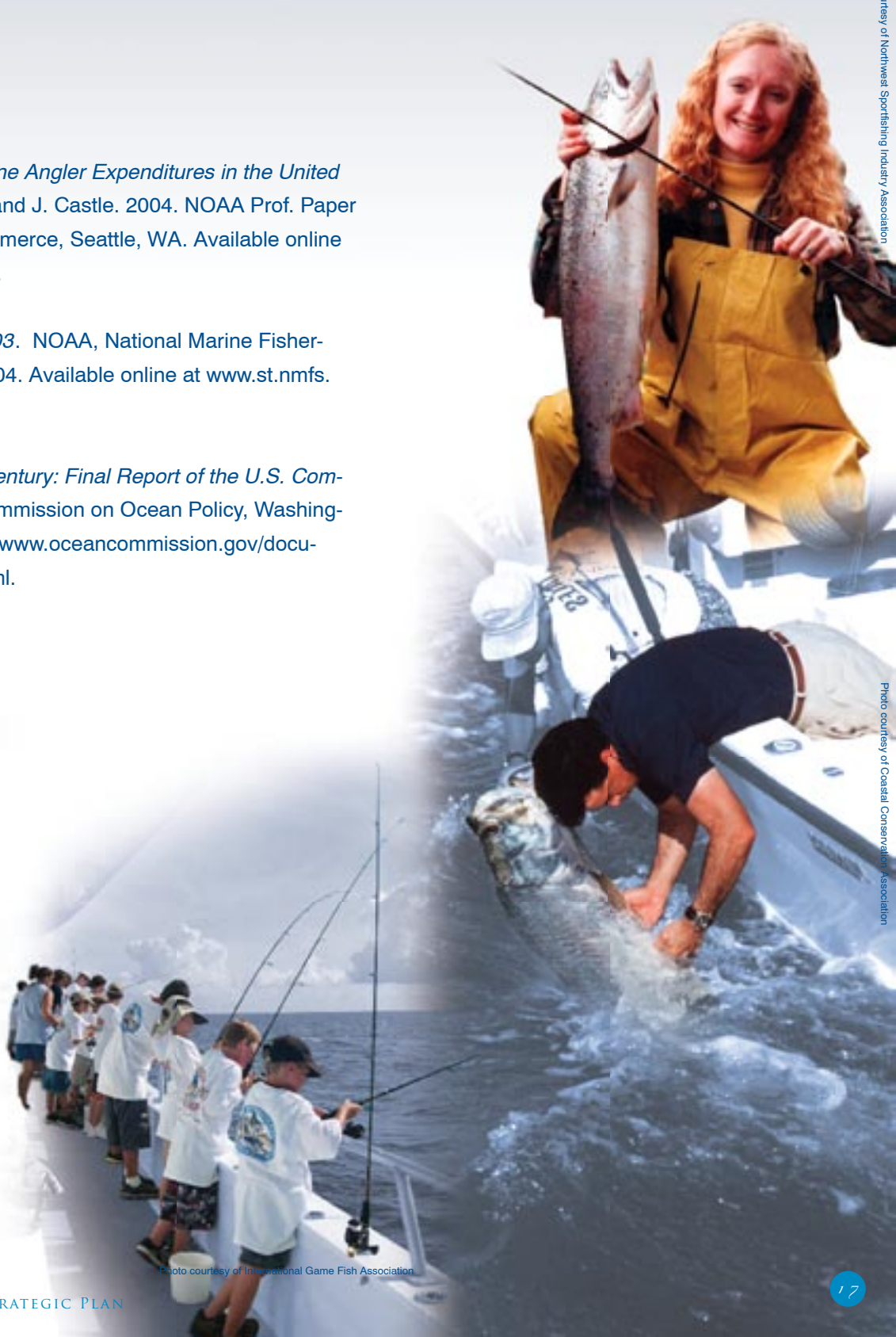

Photo courtesy of Northwest Sportfishing Industry Association

Photo courtesy of Coastal Conservation Association

Photo courtesy of International Game Fish Association

From the rivers to the ocean, from charter boats or from the shore, recreational fishing is enjoyed in a variety of ways. Anglers themselves are also a diverse bunch. Men and women, young and old, fishing is one of America's most popular pastimes. It is NOAA's responsibility to ensure that the public will continue to enjoy a diversity of recreational fishing experiences and benefit from the riches of a healthy marine ecosystem.

Glossary of Fishery Management Terms

Bycatch
The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act defines bycatch as "fish which are harvested in a fishery, but which are not sold or kept for personal use, and includes economic discards and regulatory discards …[but not] fish released alive under a recreational catch and release fishery management program."

Catch
The total number or poundage of fish captured from an area over some period of time. This includes fish that are caught and released or discarded instead of being landed. Note: "catch," "harvest," and "landings" are different terms with different definitions.

Ecosystem Approach
Management that is adaptive, is specified geographically, takes into account ecosystem knowledge and uncertainties, considers multiple external influences, and strives to balance diverse social objectives.

Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)
All waters from the seaward boundary of coastal states out to 200 nautical miles. This area may also be referred to as "federal waters."

Executive Order 12962
President Clinton signed this Executive Order on recreational fisheries on June 9, 1995. The order calls for "Federal agencies… in cooperation with States and Tribes, [to] improve the quantity, function, sustainable productivity, and distribution of U.S. aquatic resources for increased recreational fishing opportunities."

Fisheries Information System (FIS)
FIS provides a context for the design, development, and implementation of data collection and data management for fishery-dependent statistics nationwide to improve the timeliness and accuracy of data. FIS is a portal that identifies the existing federal and state fisheries information systems or databases (data collections) and provides integrated business solutions for effective information-sharing. FIS supports fisheries management decisions by developing a virtual application environment and providing integrated business solutions and data sources in a web browser interface.

Fishery Management Council (FMC)
A group of individuals selected to develop management and regulatory measures in conformance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act for fish and invertebrates in a specific geographic area that is under federal jurisdiction.

Fishery Management Plan (FMP)
A federal plan developed by a Fishery Management Council to manage and regulate a single species or group of species.

Harvest
The total number or weight of fish caught and kept from an area over a period of time.

Highly Migratory Species (HMS)
Under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, HMSs are defined as tunas, oceanic sharks, and billfishes and include such popular species as dolphin and wahoo. HMSs are man-

aged differently from most fish because their extensive migrations necessitate coordinated management across many jurisdictions.

Interstate Commissions

Regional organizations of states designed to facilitate the management and data collection efforts for marine fish across state lines. There are three commissions: Atlantic States, Gulf States, and Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commissions.

Landings

The number or weight of fish caught, kept, and brought to shore. Fish caught as bait are also included in this definition.

Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson Act)

The federal law that created the regional councils and is the federal government's basis for fisheries management in the Exclusive Economic Zone.

Marine Fisheries

The stock of fisheries that spends at least part of its life cycle in an ocean or coastal area. This includes both anadromous and catadromous species, such as salmon and striped bass, over which NOAA has jurisdiction. This plan covers fisheries in coastal, marine, Great Lakes, and riverine ecosystems.

Marine Protected Area (MPA)

According to Executive Order 12158, an MPA is defined as "any area of the marine environment that has been reserved by federal, state, territorial, tribal or local laws or regulations to provide lasting protection to part or all of the natural or cultural resources therein."

Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFSS)

An annual survey by NMFS to estimate the number, catch, and effort of recreational anglers.

Outreach

Two-way communication between NOAA and our partners designed to promote mutual understanding and involvement by influencing public attitudes and actions. All outreach functions are undertaken in support of the science and management goals.

Overfishing

Harvesting at a rate equal to or greater than that which will meet the management goal.

Recreational Fisheries Information Network (RecFIN)

Fisheries information networks (FINs) are regional cooperative state-federal programs that design, implement, and conduct marine fisheries statistics data collection programs and integrate those data into a single data management system that will meet the needs of fishery managers, scientists, and fishermen.

Stock Assessment Improvement Plan (SAIP)

NOAA's effort to provide data collection facilities and staff to collect, process, and analyze stock assessment data and to effectively communicate those results to managers and the public.

NOAA extends its thanks to all those who offered comments on the Recreational Fisheries Strategic Plan. The plan is a reflection of those thoughts and would not have been possible without them.

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is dedicated to the stewardship of living marine resources through science-based conservation and management and the restoration of healthy ecosystems.
As a steward, NMFS conserves, protects, and manages 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.
Visit us on the web at: http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov. Click on the "Constituent Services" link to find more information about recreational fisheries.

Please contact us with questions or comments.

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