Turning the Corner on Ending Overfishing

U.S. Fisheries Reaches Historic Milestone in 2012

NOAA FISHERIES SERVICE

In 2006 Congress made the bold decision to end overfishing once and for all by amending the Magnuson Stevens Fisheries Conservation and Management Act to require annual catch limits (ACLs) and associated accountability measures to be implemented for all federally managed fisheries in fishing year 2011. Through the commitment and tireless efforts of our fishermen, fishery management councils, scientists and managers, the U.S. is poised to achieve this historic milestone in natural resource management.

As of December 31, 2011, 40 of the 46 fishery management plans had ACLs and corresponding accountability measures in place. The remaining six management plans will have ACLs in place that are affective in the 2012 fishing season. Full implementation of ACLs establishes a robust process of science-based management that monitors and responds to the needs of the resource to sustain its long-term use and the economies that rely on our fisheries.

With the investment in stock assessments, cooperative research and innovation, and science-based management, the U.S. model of fisheries management has become an international hallmark for addressing the ecological and economic sustainability challenges facing global fisheries.

ACL Deadline Facts:

2010 Deadline: By the end of 2010, all stocks subject to overfishing were to have ACLs in-place, except those managed under international agreements. Of the 38 stocks, 25 have ACLs in place. Eight stocks did not require ACLs due to the MSA's international exemption. Of the 25 stocks, 5 stocks are in two Caribbean Council FMPs. ACLs for these five stocks were delayed in order to complete a biological opinion on the listing

"**Definition - Annual Catch Limits (ACL)** – *The amount of a particular fish species, stock or stock complex that can be caught in a given year (usually measured in weight). In order to end overfishing in U.S. waters, the reauthorized Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Conservation and Management Act required that managers implement ACLs by December 31, 2010 on all stocks subject to overfishing, and for all remaining stocks by December 31, 2011.*"

of some coral species that could be impacted by the fishery. The final rulemaking implementing the ACLs on these five stocks was completed on December 30, 2011.

2011 Deadline: By December 31, 2011, 40 of the 46 fishery management plans (FMPs) had ACLs in place.

For the remaining 6 FMPs, none are subject to overfishing and all ACL's will be in place in time for the 2012 fishing year. They include:

- South Atlantic comprehensive Amendment covering 4 FMPs (dolphin/wahoo, golden crab, sargassum, snapper/grouper) – an amended proposed rule published the last week of December 2011. This Amendment was delayed and a revised proposed rule required to include the new wreckfish stock assessment information needed to set the ACL. ACLs were already in place for all stocks subject to overfishing in these FMPs.

- Alaska High Seas Salmon FMP – These stocks are not subject to overfishing and are managed by the State of Alaska. The North Pacific Fishery Management Council took final action on an amendment in mid-December 2011 that will explain how the current salmon management process meets the ACL requirements. We anticipate the amendment to be in place by May 2012.

- NE Small-mesh component of the Northeast Multi-species FMP – The New England Council action was delayed to incorporate information from a new hake stock assessment. The stocks are not subject to overfishing. When it became apparent Council action would not occur in 2011, NMFS initiated a Secretarial amendment to implement ACLs for the May 1, 2012, start of the fishery.