



NEWS FROM NOAA

NATIONAL OCEANIC & ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION • US DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

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NOAA RELEASES ANNUAL STATUS OF U.S. FISHERIES REPORT FOR 2006

NOAA today released its annual report on the status of U.S. marine fisheries for 2006, tracking both population levels and harvest rates for species caught in federal marine waters, between three and 200 miles off U.S. coasts.

In 2006, the report shows population levels for 187 fish stocks and multi-species groupings known as complexes. Of these, 47 were overfished. NOAA scientists also assessed harvest rates for 242 stocks and found that 48 were subject to overfishing.

“Overfishing must be solved now,” said Bill Hogarth, director of NOAA Fisheries Service. “We have the right combination of legal tools to improve stewardship, and we’re moving full throttle ahead with implementing the new mandate to end overfishing so future generations of Americans can enjoy sustainable and healthy marine ecosystems.”

The first step to rebuilding a fish stock is to end overfishing. Last year, the Bush Administration gained bipartisan support in Congress to rewrite and strengthening the Magnuson-Stevens Act, which has governed management of America’s fisheries for 30 years. The reauthorized act now requires fishery managers to revise fishery management plans to end overfishing by 2010, a call made by the Bush Administration in the 2004 U.S. Ocean Action Plan.

Each year, NOAA issues a report on the state of U.S. fisheries to inform Congress and the American public of the agency’s progress in restoring fish stocks to sustainable population levels. The annual report tracks the population and harvesting status of marine fisheries in the United States.

NOAA recently completed nine public meetings and a 45-day comment period to hear ideas from fishing communities about ways to end overfishing. NOAA is evaluating all the public comments and will release a range of proposals for further public review and comment this summer.

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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Status of Stocks Report to Congress - 2006: www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/statusoffisheries/SOSmain.htm
NOAA Fisheries Service: www.nmfs.noaa.gov
NOAA: www.noaa.gov