

# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

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ASSISTANT INTERIOR SECRETARY ROBERT HERBST  
TO CHAIR GREAT LAKES FISHERY COMMISSION

Assistant Secretary of the Interior Robert L. Herbst was selected chairman of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission at the international group's annual meeting June 5 in Duluth, Minnesota.

Herbst will serve a two-year term as head of the Commission, which was established in 1955 by the United States and Canada to control the sea lamprey in the Great Lakes and rehabilitate a substantial fishery badly damaged by the lamprey, overfishing and loss of fish habitat.

"I am very proud to be selected to head the Commission during its Silver Anniversary year," Herbst said. "In twenty-five years it has worked a near miracle in restoring a fishery that appeared to be on the brink of extinction."

"We now have a sport and commercial fishing resource in the Great Lakes with a total economic value of \$1.16 billion, which is a graphic demonstration of an international program which has made a tremendous improvement to a complex marine environment, improving economic and recreation resources for millions of Americans and Canadians."

Herbst noted that the Commission is sponsoring a research program to develop a Great Lakes strategic fishery plan. "This fishery was almost destroyed by our inability to see problems until they almost overwhelmed us," Herbst said. "We certainly have a clear mandate to collect the hard information and do the advance planning that will protect this resource against future threats of all kinds."

The Great Lakes Fishery Commission has eight members, four appointed by the President and four by the Prime Minister of Canada. Most of its research is done through the offices of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans in Canada. It also cooperates with a wide variety of sport and commercial fishing programs sponsored by the eight Great Lakes States, the Province of Ontario, Indian tribes and private fishing and conservation groups.