

# ANNUAL REPORT TO CONGRESS ON THE STATUS OF U.S. FISHERIES—2007

## Major Points in the Report:

- The report provides the 2007 status determination for 528 stocks or stock complexes<sup>1</sup>. Status determinations are “subject to overfishing,” “overfished,” “approaching an overfished condition,” or “unknown.”<sup>2</sup>
- 244 stocks or stock complexes have overfishing determinations
  - 203 (83 percent) are not subject to overfishing
  - 41 (17 percent) are subject to overfishing.
  - The *percentages* represent a slight improvement from last year’s report. In 2006, 80 percent were not subject to overfishing, 20 percent were subject to overfishing.
  - The *number* of stocks subject to overfishing *decreased* from 48 in 2006 to 41 in 2007.
  - *Seven* stocks were *removed* from the overfishing list: *monkfish – north, monkfish – south, winter skate, Gulf of Mexico red grouper, petrale sole, yellowfin tuna – Central Western Pacific, and bigeye tuna – Atlantic.*
  - No new stocks have *become subject* to overfishing.
- 190 stocks are known with respect to their overfished determinations
  - 145 (76 percent) are not overfished
  - 45 (24 percent) are overfished.
  - The *percentages* represent a slight improvement from last year’s report. In 2006, 75 percent were not overfished, 25 percent were overfished.
  - The *number* of overfished stocks has *decreased* from 47 to 45.
  - Four stocks are no longer overfished: *canary rockfish, Pacific ocean perch, blue king crab – Saint Matthews Island, and bigeye tuna – Atlantic.*
  - Two stocks have become overfished: *winter skate and summer flounder.*
- 23 stocks are both overfished and subject to overfishing. In 2006, 25 stocks were both overfished and subject to overfishing.
- For 2007, three stocks have rebuilt to 100% of their B<sub>MSY</sub> levels: *Silver hake - Southern Georges Bank/Middle Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico red grouper, and Tanner crab - Eastern Bering Sea.*
  - Four additional stocks have biomass levels of at least 80% of their B<sub>MSY</sub> levels: *dolphin, Pacific whiting, shortbelly rockfish, and arrowtooth flounder.* Continued, sustainable management should lead these stocks to achieve optimal levels.

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<sup>1</sup> Compared to 530 in the 2006 report: 4 Alaska salmon stocks were combined into a single complex, and black rockfish – south was added, for a net reduction of 2 stocks.

<sup>2</sup> For 2007, determinations of *both* overfishing and overfished status were made for 179 stocks/complexes; an additional 76 have *either* an overfishing or overfished determination.

## Additional Points in the Report

This year the report also looks at our success in rebuilding stocks if overfishing is controlled:

- The report highlights that biomass and mortality trends for 34 stocks in rebuilding plans.
  - Fisheries managers control fishing mortality (F) through management measures, but cannot directly control the response of the stock's biomass to those measures.
  - Biomass (B) is affected by a number of factors in addition to fishing, including habitat conditions, environmental conditions, and interactions with other species.
  - Controlling F is necessary for rebuilding and we would expect that by reducing F, B would increase and the stock would rebuild.
- Of the stocks evaluated 24 stocks (71%) have had F controlled<sup>3</sup> by the end of the time series.
  - For these 24 stocks, 18 (75%) show increases in biomass and 6 stocks (25%) show declines or flat trends in biomass.
- For the remaining 10 stocks (29%) where F has not been adequately controlled, 7 stocks (70%) show declines or flat trends in biomass.

## Issues related to release of the report:

- 2007 represents the best single-year improvement in the number of stocks subject to overfishing.
- Guidance proposed for implementing annual catch limits and accountability measures under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Reauthorization Act of 2006 will strengthen NMFS and the Councils' efforts to end overfishing by 2010.
- The agency's FY 2009 request includes important new funding that will help end overfishing and rebuild fish stocks. In particular, an additional \$5.1 million is requested for ACL implementation, \$8.5 million to expand stock assessments, and \$3.0 million to improve recreational fisheries statistics.
- Based on the results for 2007, the agency's Fish Stock Sustainability Index, a key Government Results and Performance Act performance measure, increased from 506.5 in 2006 to 531 in 2007. The agency's 2007 score exceeded the agency's estimate.

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<sup>3</sup> For this discussion, "controlled" means that F is reduced below, or kept under, the overfishing level.