

# Performance, People, and Partners



*America's fisheries are among the richest in the world.*

**America's fisheries offer opportunity to millions of Americans and in their abundance and absence they provide the clearest evidence yet of our successes and opportunities for the people who make up the U.S. Fish and Wildlife's Fisheries Program, its conservation partners, and the millions who enjoy the nation's aquatic resources.**

According to the American Sportfishing Association, recreational fishing contributes roughly \$40 billion to America's economy, and that generates more than \$116 billion in economic activity. Anglers and boaters have contributed more than \$4.5 billion over five decades to help our partners conserve important fish stocks and aquatic habitat. Working with our partners, we are freeing hundreds of miles of streams through our fish passage program; restoring unimpeded flows and fish migration. However, we still face important challenges. The loss and degradation of habitat, the introduction of aquatic invasive species, inadequate water flows, and pollution are among the many challenges.

For more than 130 years, the Service's Fisheries program has worked with partners to protect, restore and maintain self-sustaining populations of fish, their habitats, and other native aquatic species for the benefit and enjoyment of the American people. One example is the American shad, a population whose numbers are once again increasing due to restoration activities of the Service and its partners. A little more than a year ago the Fisheries Program put forth its *Vision for the Future*, marking a key moment that formed the foundation for a strategic plan that is nearing completion and will guide the program, its partners, and stakeholders into the future.



USFWS Photo

The notion is simple as we work to meet Service Director Steve Williams' goal to put the fish back in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: Healthy fish and healthy habitats lead to a healthy economy and healthy people. Over the next five years here is how we are going to do just that.

## Performance

- Working with our partners, the Fisheries Program is going to restore hundreds of acres of wetlands and upland habitat and more than 1,000 miles of streams and riparian habitat. We will remove or bypass more than 450 barriers to fish passage opening more than 3,200 miles of streams and more than 32,000 acres of habitat.
- The Fisheries Program will continue to focus on the most imperiled groups of species that live in America's waterways. The National Fish Hatchery System now works with double the number of threatened and endangered fish species than it did just five years ago.
- The Fisheries Program will build on its status as a leader in the use of innovative technologies and sound science to restore, recover and maintain fish and their habitats.
- Working through the Sportfishing and Boating Partnership Council, the Fisheries Program and its partners will continue to develop a National Aquatic Habitat Plan to address critical habitat needs of America's fisheries and establish a framework to help meet important interjurisdictional fisheries opportunities. Indeed, more than seven of every 10 fish species that have gone extinct over the past 75 years can be attributed to loss and degradation of

habitat. That is a trend that needs to change and the establishment of joint ventures such as the Eastern Brook Trout Initiative will play a key role in future success.

## People

- The Fisheries Program will continue to be an advocate for millions of anglers and boaters. These Americans already contribute nearly \$500 million to the conservation of those resources each year, and they bolster our economy with more than \$116 billion in economic activity annually.

## Partnerships

- Working with state fish and wildlife agencies that provide roughly 30 million licenses to anglers annually, other federal agencies and Tribal governments, and conservation organizations that represent more than two million anglers and boaters, the Fisheries Program is committed to meeting the goals set in its strategic plan that will guide the program over the next five years.



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The Service is ready to seize the opportunity to make a real difference conserving American's fisheries. By aligning the program with the priorities of our partners, the Service and its Fisheries Program are poised to build on 130 years of conserving America's fisheries by addressing the challenges and opportunities facing our fish and their habitats well into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

