

U.S. Ocean Action Plan

**The Bush Administration's
Response to the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy**

responsibilities in fisheries management and enforcement, these strategies complement each other and, when used together, form the National Strategy for Fisheries Enforcement.

Advance Offshore Aquaculture

The United States imports a large amount of seafood from other nations and currently suffers a seafood trade deficit of \$7 billion annually. The U.S. offshore aquaculture industry is attempting to establish aquaculture facilities in the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) but faces a confounding array of regulatory and legal obstacles. The Administration has taken the following actions to support the development of environmentally sound aquaculture in the EEZ and internationally.

- **Propose National Offshore Aquaculture Legislation.** In the 109th Congress, the Administration will propose a National Offshore Aquaculture Act that provides the Department of Commerce clear authority to regulate offshore aquaculture. This bill will empower the Department of Commerce to assist the private sector in obtaining necessary Federal agency approval for establishing an offshore aquaculture facility. The Department of Commerce has primary responsibility for the management and conservation of living marine resources in the EEZ and, as such, will ensure that offshore aquaculture enterprises operate in an environmentally sustainable manner that is compatible with existing uses.
- **Established Aquaculture Effluent Guidelines.** EPA has authority under the Clean Water Act to regulate pollutant discharges to waters of the United States. This authority applies to concentrated aquaculture facilities, including marine aquaculture, and is administered under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Program. Under this authority, EPA recently issued guidelines for discharges from aquaculture facilities to help protect water quality.
- **Support Aquaculture in the Americas.** In 2005, working with Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) partners, the Administration will support two workshops in South America to promote sustainable aquaculture and the development of an aquaculture network in the Americas.

Improve Marine Managed Areas

- **Coordinate and Better Integrate the Existing Network of Marine Managed Areas.** National Parks, National Wildlife Refuges, National Marine Sanctuaries, and National Estuarine Research Reserves conserve a rich assemblage of coral reefs, estuaries, wetlands, kelp forests and beaches. These parks, refuges, sanctuaries, and estuarine reserves were established under separate legal authorities and are separately managed by the Department of the Interior (parks and refuges) and the Department of Commerce (marine sanctuaries) or are cooperatively managed by the Department of Commerce and States (estuarine reserves). Many National Marine Sanctuaries, National Parks, National Wildlife Refuges and National Estuarine Research Reserves around the nation overlap, adjoin or lie near each other at various sites. The Administration proposes to further integrate the management of existing parks, refuges, sanctuaries, and estuarine reserves in marine and coastal areas. These actions, where appropriate, will complement actions under Executive Order 13158, regarding Marine Protected Areas. Taking steps to integrate the existing marine managed areas network represents a new way to promote coordination of research, public education and management activities at neighboring parks, refuges, sanctuaries, and estuarine