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NATIONAL  
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ADMINISTRATION

Contact: Susan Buchanan  
(301) 713-2370

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### **NOAA FISHERIES SEEKING INPUT ON NEW RESEARCH PLAN**

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) is seeking input from the public on its research direction and priorities for the coming years, as required by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. The National Marine Fisheries Service is part of the Commerce Department's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

“This plan affirms the agency’s ongoing commitment to science-based conservation and management and will serve as a guide for carrying out our science activities for the next five years,” said Bill Hogarth, NOAA Fisheries director. “I strongly encourage the public to review and comment on the research priorities presented in this plan.”

NOAA Fisheries is required by the Magnuson-Stevens Act (Act) to develop a plan to cover four major areas of research: (1) research to support fishery conservation and management; (2) conservation engineering research; (3) research on the status of fisheries; and (4) information management research. The Act requires that the plan be updated every three years.

The draft plan outlines several objectives, including: continued implementation of the *Marine Fisheries Stock Assessment Improvement Plan*, establishing an inventory of living marine resource habitats and implementing measures to monitor the trends in habitat availability, and improving the socio-economic data and models that are available both to monitor the performance of federally managed fisheries and to support the analysis of fishery management actions.

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The plan is consistent with the recently released *Priorities for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: NOAA Fisheries' Strategic Plan for FY 2003 - FY 2008* and also aligns with NOAA's *Strategic Plan for FY 2003- FY 2008 and Beyond: New Priorities for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Both require the support of research to meet their objectives.

NOAA Fisheries' research program consists of fisheries research and the publication of peer-reviewed studies and analyses. Agency scientists provide this information to industry, environmental groups, resource managers, and others who are dependent on fisheries science to accomplish their missions. Ensuring that this information is of the highest quality and responsive to stakeholders' needs is a major aim of this plan.

The draft strategic research plan is available online at: [www.st.nmfs.gov/st2/index.html](http://www.st.nmfs.gov/st2/index.html). NOAA Fisheries will accept comments through January 6, 2004. Comments may be sent to Mark Chandler, Research, Office of Science and Technology; NOAA Fisheries; 1315 East-West Highway; Silver Spring, MD 20910-3225; by fax to 301-713-1875, or e-mail to [mark.chandler@noaa.gov](mailto:mark.chandler@noaa.gov).

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) is dedicated to protecting and preserving the nation's living marine resources and their habitat through scientific research, management, and enforcement. NOAA Fisheries provides effective stewardship of these resources for the benefit of the nation, supporting coastal communities that depend upon them, and helping to provide safe and healthy seafood to consumers and recreational opportunities for the American public.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources.

On the Web:

NOAA: <http://www.noaa.gov>

NOAA Fisheries: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov>

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