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**COMMERCE DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCES
2004 OCEAN FISHERY COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS**

The Commerce Department today announced the appointment of 17 members to the eight regional fishery management councils. The appointments of two members to obligatory seats on the South Atlantic and Pacific Councils will be made by August 11.

The councils, established by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, prepare fishery management plans for marine fish stocks in their respective geographical areas of responsibility. The management plans are submitted for review by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) and approved by the secretary.

"I am pleased to present this group of highly qualified people who will undoubtedly be strong and effective stewards of our living oceans," said Bill Hogarth, director of NOAA Fisheries. "I look forward to working with them to continue our progress, and I have confidence in the abilities of this group to meet our challenges."

"I also want to thank the outgoing council members," Hogarth added. "Due to their dedication and commitment, we have rebuilt four fish stocks this year and taken 10 more off the overfished list as they continue rebuilding. We have made great progress over the past several years, and we owe a debt of gratitude to those who have served as council members."

Council members represent diverse interests, including commercial and recreational fisheries as well as environmental, academic, and other interests from each geographic area. Terms of the council members expire annually on August 10 for approximately one-third of the 72 obligatory and at-large members appointed to the eight regional councils. On behalf of the secretary, the director of NOAA Fisheries solicits nominations from the governors of fishing states and oversees the annual appointments process. Governors must submit completed gubernatorial nominations by March 15, and the secretary of commerce announces the selections by approximately June 27. New members take their seats on August 11.

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Under the Magnuson-Stevens Act, the secretary selects from the list of gubernatorial nominees a council member for each appointed obligatory and at-large seat that has become open due to an expiring term, a resignation, or other reason. Obligatory seats are state-specific, while at-large seats are regional in scope.

Last year's agency report on council membership is available on the Internet at: http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/reg_svcs/councils.htm

The new council members identified below will begin service on August 11, 2004, their terms will expire on August 10, 2007. (Asterisks indicate incumbent council members.)

New England Council

The New England Council includes members from the states of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Rhode Island. The appointees for 2004 are for the New Hampshire obligatory seat, and two at-large seats:

Obligatory seat

- David T. Goethel – commercial fisherman – Hampton, NH

At-large seats

- Colin M. "Rip" Cunningham, Jr. – Editor In Chief and Publisher, *Salt Water Sportsman* – Dover, MA
- Philip R. Ruhle, Sr. – commercial fisherman – North Kingstown, RI

Mid-Atlantic Council

The Mid-Atlantic Council includes members from the states of Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Virginia. The appointees for 2004 are for the Delaware obligatory seat, and three at-large seats:

Obligatory seat

- *Ronal W. Smith – field and laboratory biologist, University of Delaware College of Marine Studies – Lewes, DE

At-large seats

- *Yvonne M. Peabody – Owner, Peabody Corporation (packing facility) – Hampton, VA
- Frances E. Puskas – joint-owner of a commercial dock – Barnegat Light, NJ
- *Lawrence W. Simns – President, Maryland Watermen's Association – Rock Hall, MD

South Atlantic Council

The South Atlantic Council includes members from the states of Florida, Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina. The appointment for the South Carolina obligatory seat is pending. The appointee for 2004 is for the North Carolina obligatory seat:

Obligatory seat

- Rita G. Merritt – co-owner of a commercial fishing business – Wrightsville Beach, NC

Caribbean Council

The Caribbean Council includes members from the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The appointee for 2004 is for one at-large seat:

At-large seat

- *Monica M. Lester – Office Manager, Tropical Trappin' Corporation – St. Thomas, U.S. VI

Gulf Council

The Gulf Council includes members from the states of Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas. The appointees for 2004 are for the Mississippi and Texas obligatory seats, and one at-large seat:

Obligatory seats

- Norman D. Adams, III – Aon Corporation – Houston, TX
- Philip D. Horn – Clark Seafood Company, Incorporated – Moss Point, MS

At-large seat

- *Julie K. Morris – Director, New College Environmental Studies Program, New College of Florida – Sarasota, FL

Pacific Council

The Pacific Council includes members from the states of California, Idaho, Oregon and Washington. The appointment for the Idaho obligatory seat is pending. The appointee for 2004 is for one at-large seat:

At-large seat

- *Roger Thomas – President, Golden Gate Fishermen's Association – San Francisco, CA

North Pacific

The North Pacific Council includes members from the states of Alaska and Washington. The appointees for 2004 are for the Alaska obligatory seats:

Obligatory seats

- Douglas W. Hoedel – commercial fisherman – Anchorage, AK
- *Stephanie D. Madsen – Vice President, Pacific Seafood Processors Association – Juneau, AK

Western Pacific Council

The Western Pacific Council includes members from the American-flagged Pacific islands of American Samoa and Guam, the state of Hawaii, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The appointees for 2004 are for two at-large seats:

At-large seats

- *Edwin A. Ebisui, Jr. – attorney – Haleiwa, HI
- *Frank W. McCoy – General Manager and Owner, Northwest Fisheries & McCoy's Icehouse – Tafuna, Pago Pago, AS

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) is dedicated to protecting and preserving our nation's living marine resources, and the habitat on which they depend, 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, while helping to provide safe and healthy seafood to consumers and recreational opportunities for the American public. To learn more about NOAA Fisheries, please visit: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov>.

The Commerce Department's 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. To learn more about NOAA, please visit: <http://www.noaa.gov>.

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