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NATIONAL  
OCEANIC AND  
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ADMINISTRATION

Contact: Susan Buchanan  
(301) 713-2370

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**MARINE RECREATIONAL ANGLERS ARE CATCHING –  
AND RELEASING – MORE FISH**

Marine recreational anglers have been catching more fish in recent years, but they are also releasing their catch more often, according to new data included in a report by NOAA Fisheries. NOAA, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is an agency of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

Marine recreational fishing supported nearly 350,000 jobs and generated \$30.5 billion in economic impact to the nation according to a 2004 NOAA Fisheries report, "The Economic Importance of Marine Angler Expenditures in the United States."

Another 2004 report, "Fisheries of the United States," showed that the 10-year trend for fish caught recreationally is up by 11 percent since 1994. However, the number of fish the anglers actually keep has remained flat, showing no significant growth over the past decade.

"I'm encouraged by these recreational fishing trends," Hogarth said. "The healthier and more abundant we can make the fish populations, the better the fishing experience for the American public. This translates into more jobs and money going into coastal communities."

Of the 10 most popular recreational species, the majority of fish (60 percent on average) are released alive. The report identified anglers' top catches as spotted sea trout, Atlantic croaker, summer flounder and striped bass.

Recreational fishing continues to be one of the most popular outdoor sports. Anglers took nearly 82 million saltwater trips in 2003. While participation in marine recreational fishing fell eight percent from the previous year, the 10-year trend is still positive with the number of anglers up seven percent and the number of trips up nine percent. The statistics are based on survey data collected in the Northeast in 1998, Southeast in 1999, and on the Pacific Coast in 2000.

Both of these reports are available on the NOAA Fisheries Statistics Web site: [www.st.nmfs.gov/st1/index.html](http://www.st.nmfs.gov/st1/index.html) or by contacting the Recreational Fisheries Services Branch in the Office of Constituent Services at [forbes.darby@noaa.gov](mailto:forbes.darby@noaa.gov) or (301) 713-2379 extension 127.

The Top 10 Most Popular Recreational Fish (ranked by total catch in millions of fish)

Top 10 Species	Total Catch	Total Harvest	% of Fish Released
Spotted Seatrout	32.8	10.5	68%
Atlantic Croaker	26.5	11.5	57%
Summer Flounder	20.6	4.6	78%
Striped Bass	17.4	2.5	86%
Black Sea Bass	15.7	4	74%
Bluefish	15.7	6.2	60%
Scup	14.7	9.5	35%
Spot	12.5	9.3	26%
Red Drum	10.6	3.2	70%
Kingfishes	10	5.7	43%

NOAA Fisheries is dedicated to providing 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.

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.

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On the Web:

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

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