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NEWS

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NATIONAL
OCEANIC AND
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**NOAA FISHERIES INVITES MARINE ANGLERS TO DISCUSS PROPOSED
RECREATIONAL FISHERIES STRATEGIC PLAN IN DANIA BEACH, FLORIDA**

The Commerce Department's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) will host a constituent meeting at the International Game Fish Association (IGFA) Headquarters, to receive input for the development of a marine recreational fisheries management plan for the next five years. The first meeting is May 4, in Seal Beach, Calif. The plan will set a road map for addressing science, management and education outreach issues related to recreational fisheries. The final plan is expected to be available to the public in early September 2004.

"The constituent meetings will help ensure that this management plan reflects the priorities of marine anglers," said Bill Hogarth, director of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries). "Getting their input is critical to through public meetings and written comment is critical to ensure the final plan will include the recreational anglers' viewpoint."

These public meetings will give anglers an opportunity to discuss data collection, marine managed areas, artificial reef programs, management processes, information exchange, cooperative research and more.

The meeting is scheduled for May 10, 2004, from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the IGFA Headquarters, 300 Gulf Stream Way, Dania Beach, Florida. Meetings on the East Coast also are planned for Tuckerton, New Jersey, on June 2, 2004, and on dates to be determined in Providence, RI, and Virginia Beach, VA.

In addition to the public meetings, written or comments by e-mail will also be accepted. Comments may be sent to Michael Kelly, Chief, Division of Constituent Services (Room 9554), NOAA Fisheries (F/CS), 1315 East-West Hwy., Silver Spring, Maryland 20910. Comments should be received by July 30, 2004 to ensure that they are given full consideration. Copies of the draft plan and the e-mail submission address can be found on the Web at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/recfish>.

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.

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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.

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On the Web:

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

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

Pervious Plan: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/ocs/anglerinfo.html>

Draft Plan: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/recfish>

International Game Fish Association: <http://www.igfa.org>