



NEWS FROM NOAA

NATIONAL OCEANIC & ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION • US DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

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NOAA SEEKS INPUT ON OCEAN FISHERIES RESEARCH PLAN

Opportunity to Comment on Agency's Science Priorities

NOAA Fisheries Service is seeking public comment on its research direction and priorities for the coming years. The agency's "Strategic Plan for Fisheries Research," first developed in 1998, covers 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 Magnuson-Stevens Act requires that the plan be updated every three years.

NOAA Fisheries Service's research program consists of peer-reviewed science that is used by industry, environmental groups, resource managers and others who are dependent on fisheries science to accomplish their tasks. One of the major goals of this draft plan is to ensure that NOAA's fisheries science information is of the highest quality.

"This plan affirms the agency's ongoing commitment to science-based conservation and management and will serve as a guide for carrying out our research activities for the next five years," said Bill Hogarth, director of NOAA Fisheries Service. "I encourage people to review and comment on the research priorities we present."

The draft plan outlines a number of research objectives. Among them are: monitoring trends in the availability and degradation of fish habitat, and improving the collection of socio-economic data and the models used to analyze and assess the performance of management actions.

The plan also discusses the priorities for studies on seafood safety, research to develop environmentally sound marine aquaculture practices, and further implementation of the national Fisheries Information System.

The agency also is seeking input on proposed studies in bycatch, the unintentional catch of protected species and marine mammals by fishers targeting fish species managed under the Magnuson-Stevens Act. This research improves fish conservation and management while also making important contributions to supporting Endangered Species Act and Marine Mammal Protection Act science.

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NOAA Fisheries Service will accept comments on the draft through February 23, 2007. Comments should be sent to Mark Chandler; Office of Science and Technology; NMFS; 1315 East-West Highway; Silver Spring, MD 20910-3225 (301-713-2367 ext. 152); by fax to 301-713-1875; or via e-mail at NSPFR.comments@noaa.gov. A copy of the draft strategic research plan may be obtained by contacting the same office or online at www.st.nmfs.gov.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, is celebrating 200 years of science and service to the nation. From the establishment of the Survey of the Coast in 1807 by Thomas Jefferson to the formation of the Weather Bureau and the Commission of Fish and Fisheries in the 1870s, much of America's scientific heritage is rooted in NOAA.

NOAA is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and information service delivery for transportation, and by providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), NOAA is working with its federal partners, more than 60 countries and the European Commission to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes, predicts and protects.

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On the Web:

NOAA Fisheries Service: www.nmfs.noaa.gov

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