

Fact Sheet: Preserving the Legacy of Healthy Oceans and Sustainable Marine Resources

U.S. Secretary of Commerce Carlos M. Gutierrez Discusses Preserving the Legacy of Healthy Oceans and Sustainable Marine Resources at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

“One of the most important duties that all Administrations and all citizens share is to treat our natural resources as assets to be valued and protected.”

*U.S. Secretary of Commerce Carlos M. Gutierrez
January 8, 2009*

Ocean Action Plan

- **Healthy oceans and coasts are a source of recreation, food, transportation, medical tools and American jobs and a top priority of the Bush Administration and the Commerce Department.**
 - President Bush’s Ocean Action plan was developed to make our oceans, coasts and Great Lakes cleaner, healthier and more productive.
 - Over one-third of the U.S. Gross Domestic Product originates in coastal areas.
 - In 2006, U.S. commercial and recreational fishing generated more than \$185 billion in sales and supported more than two million jobs.
 - Seaport-related businesses add an estimated \$2 trillion in economic activity.
 - One of every six jobs in the United States is marine-related.
- **Commerce’s National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has been instrumental in advancing the Ocean Action Plan and helping the Administration to meet or be on target to meet all 88 actions in the Plan.**
 - NOAA and our partners at the Department of Interior will be the key leads for management of three areas of the Pacific Ocean recently designated by President Bush as Marine National Monuments, the Marianas Trench, the Pacific Remote Islands, and the Rose Atoll, which combined represent the largest marine protected area in the world.
 - NOAA worked with our partners to create the single largest conservation area in the United States, the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, which comprises nearly 140,000 square miles with more than 7,000 marine species.
 - NOAA helped to create, restore or protect some of the 3.6 million acres of wetlands across the United States, as part of President Bush’s 2004 goal of increasing U.S. wetlands.

Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act

- **Commerce worked with Congress to pass the reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, which requires an end to overfishing by 2010, and has worked quickly to implement the Act.**
 - NOAA’s National Marine Fisheries Service “2007 Status of U.S. Fisheries” stock report indicated that seven stocks were removed from the overfishing list, the largest number removed in a single year since NOAA began compiling the report in 1997.
 - Importantly, no new stocks were added to the overfishing list.
- **Commerce promoted the use of Market-Based Fishery Management Programs and is on track to double the number in place by 2010.**
 - Market-based Dedicated Access Privilege Programs (DAPPs) help end the race for fish, improve product quality, enhance safety at sea and make fishing operations more efficient.
 - Commerce has implemented seven new DAPP programs including Gulf of Mexico Red Snapper and Pacific Sablefish, with four more under development.
 - Commerce now has important new tools from the reauthorized Magnuson-Stevens Act to implement these programs.

Ocean and Climate Research Leadership

- **Commerce has played a leading role in expanding ocean research and building an integrated ocean observation system as part of President Bush's Ten-Year Ocean Research Priorities Plan.**
 - NOAA created a program to develop an Integrated Ocean Observing System that will:
 - Improve our understanding of serious ocean conditions like red tides
 - Discern more about the effect of oceans on climate change
 - Increase resilience to natural hazards such as hurricanes
- **More than 120 NOAA scientists were major contributors to last year's Nobel Peace Prize-winning Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.**
 - NOAA is the lead agency in the U.S. Climate Change Science Program, directing research to answer questions on the science and impact of climate change such as the effect of carbon dioxide on ocean chemistry.
- **Commerce has made great strides in predicting severe weather to better protect lives and property.**
 - NOAA's Geophysical Fluid Dynamics Laboratory hurricane forecast model achieved high accuracy during the 2008 hurricane season.
 - NOAA introduced more geographically targeted severe weather alert, reducing areas warned by as much as 70 percent, potentially saving hundreds of thousands of dollars per mile of unnecessary coastline evacuations and other preparations.
 - NOAA created a Tsunami Warning System covering the entire Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.
 - NOAA increased the lead time on tornado warnings by 50 percent.
- **Commerce, with the help of other agencies, has provided emergency alert radios to all K-through-12 public schools across the country.**
 - These radios signal an alarm when hazardous weather or other emergencies threaten an area.
 - Emergency Alert Radios have also been distributed to more than 180,000 preschools and other non-public schools and school offices.

Aquaculture

- **Commerce has been working aggressively to advance U.S. aquaculture to help meet the growing demand for seafood.**
 - The Administration introduced an aquaculture bill which would provide the regulatory certainty needed to stimulate domestic investment in aquaculture, while simultaneously ensuring that it was conducted in an environmentally responsible manner.
 - In June 2007, Commerce hosted an Aquaculture Summit with government, business and science leaders to explore developing the U.S. aquaculture industry and increasing domestic sources for the 80 percent of seafood consumed in the United States that is imported.