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**NOAA releases regional saltwater recreational fishing plans  
designed to improve fishing, stewardship and science**

NOAA today released the first regional saltwater recreational fishing action plans designed to help improve fishing opportunities and address recreational fishing priorities in each of the nation's six coastal regions and for the angling community that fishes for tunas and other highly migratory species.

Saltwater angling is a treasured national pastime that provides significant benefits – jobs, income and sales - to our nation's economy. In 2010, saltwater recreational fishing contributed \$50 billion in sales to the U.S. economy and supported 326,000 jobs in fishing and across the broader economy.

The new action agendas mark the first time NOAA has both national and regional strategies in place to address the priorities of the nation's estimated 11 million saltwater anglers who took approximately 73 million fishing trips in 2010. The plans are based on goals and objectives identified by participants at the 2010 Saltwater Recreational Fishing Summit.

"We worked closely with saltwater anglers and their supporters on plans designed to improve stewardship and fishing today and for future generations," said Eric Schwaab, assistant NOAA administrator for NOAA's Fisheries Service. "We'll revisit the regional action plans regularly to ensure we continue to address our shared goals."

A few examples of top priorities in the six regions include:

- Hawaii and the Pacific Islands: A project to increase the number of fish available in the future by improving the survival of fish caught and released by anglers.
- Alaska: A project to identify and restore important fish spawning habitat by opening up fish passages on rivers and streams and removing marine debris.
- Northwest: A project to develop and evaluate a new, more flexible management approach for Chinook salmon that may allow for increased recreational fishing.
- Southwest: Multiple cooperative scientific research projects with anglers to improve survival of fish caught and released by anglers and improve information on recreational catch and effort.
- Northeast: A project to work with the regional fishery management councils to ensure that Atlantic herring, mackerel, squid and butterfish populations are maintained at healthy levels. This project would also focus on reducing the unintended catch of forage fish such as river herring, which are important food for striped bass and other fish prized by saltwater anglers.
- Southeast: A project to investigate more flexible management strategies to provide greater fishing opportunities to the charter boats and other recreational "for-hire" boats.

Each of the regional action agendas includes projects that address the five national recreational fishing action goals which are:

- Improving recreational fishing opportunities
- Improving recreational catch, effort and stock status data
- Improving social and economic data on recreational fisheries
- Improving communications
- Improving institutional orientation to promote greater understanding of saltwater angling issues.

The new action agendas include ongoing projects or projects expected to be completed in the next 12 to 24 months. The projects improve science and stewardship and help build stronger partnerships with the saltwater angling community through a more visible and responsive regional NOAA presence. To read the regional saltwater angler action agendas go to: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/stories/2011/12/recfish.html>

NOAA's mission is to understand and predict changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and to conserve and manage our coastal and marine resources. Join us on [Facebook](#) , [Twitter](#) and our other [social media channels](#).