

# NOAA Fisheries

Sustaining, Protecting, and Rebuilding Our Nation's Living Oceans



**The National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) is the Federal agency responsible for the stewardship of the Nation's living marine resources and their habitat within the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone (from state waters to 200 nautical miles offshore). As a steward, NOAA Fisheries works to conserve, protect, and manage living marine resources in a way that ensures their continuation as functioning components of marine ecosystems, while also affording economic opportunities and enhancing the quality of life for the American public.**

## History

NOAA Fisheries is the oldest conservation agency in the United States. Renamed the National Marine Fisheries Service and reorganized as part of the newly established National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in 1970, the genesis of NOAA Fisheries dates back to 1871 with the creation of the Commission of Fish and Fisheries. The Commission initiated the Nation's first scientific studies of fish species and biology off the coasts of New England in Woods Hole, MA.

## Authorities

NOAA Fisheries derives its mandates and authorities from numerous statutes, most importantly the **Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA)**, the **Endangered Species Act (ESA)**, and the **Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA)**. Using the tools provided by the MSA, NOAA Fisheries assesses and predicts the status of fish stocks, ensures compliance with fisheries regulations, and works to reduce wasteful fishing practices. Under the MMPA and the ESA, NOAA Fisheries conserves and recovers protected marine species (e.g., whales and turtles) without unnecessarily impeding economic and recreational opportunities.

## Stakeholders and Partners

Working with eight Fishery Management Councils established by the Magnuson-Stevens Act and through six regional offices, NOAA Fisheries collaborates with States and communities to address fishery management issues. The Agency works with its stakeholders to ensure sustainable fisheries and to prevent lost economic potential associated with overfishing, declining species, and degraded habitats. From collaborating with commercial and recreational fishermen for the collection of biological data, to coordinating science and management strategies with regional and State interests, NOAA Fisheries relies on a diverse array of partnerships to rebuild, sustain, and protect the Nation's living marine resources. NOAA Fisheries continually strives to balance competing public needs and interests in the use and enjoyment of the Nation's ocean resources.

NOAA Fisheries also plays a supportive and advisory role in the management of living marine resources in coastal areas under State jurisdiction, provides scientific and policy leadership in the international arena, and implements international conservation and management measures as appropriate.



## Vision

The American people enjoy the riches and benefits of healthy and diverse marine ecosystems.

## Mission

Stewardship of living marine resources through science-based conservation and management and the promotion of healthy ecosystems.

## Agency Facts & Figures

Employees: 2,643

Headquarters: Silver Spring, MD;  
12 regional field units

Annual Budget: Approximately  
\$800 million