



NEWS FROM NOAA

NATIONAL OCEANIC & ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION • US DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

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NOAA: Seven Stocks Removed from Overfishing List, None Added *2007 status of U.S. fisheries report released*

NOAA announced today that seven stocks have been removed from the overfishing list and no new stocks added in their annual report to Congress on the status of fishing stocks.

The report tracks both population levels and harvest rates for species caught in federal waters between three and 200 miles off U.S. coasts. This year's report indicates that seven stocks have been removed from the overfishing list, four stocks have increased population levels and are no longer overfished, and three stocks are now listed as fully "rebuilt."

"This is great news for the American people and for the scientists who devote their lives to the study of fish populations," said Jim Balsiger, NOAA acting assistant administrator for NOAA's Fisheries Service. "Ending overfishing on these stocks and preventing overfishing from occurring on others is critical to maintaining and rebuilding our valuable fisheries resources, and this year we took a giant step forward in this regard."

NOAA's Fisheries Service and the eight regional fishery management councils took significant steps toward ending "overfishing"—when too many fish in a species are caught in a year—and rebuilding stocks in 2007.

Among the report's findings:

- 244 stocks and stock complexes were reviewed for their overfishing status.
 - 203 (83 percent) are not subject to overfishing, while 41 (17 percent) are.
 - Seven stocks were taken off the overfishing list in 2007, the largest number removed in a single year since NOAA has been compiling the report.
- 190 stocks and stock complexes were reviewed for their overfished status.
 - 145 (76 percent) are not overfished, while 45 (24 percent) are. A stock or complex is considered to be overfished when its population numbers fall below a certain level.
 - Four complexes are no longer overfished.
 - Three complexes have fully rebuilt to target levels.

"No new stocks were subject to overfishing in 2007, which is very good news as well," Balsiger said. "The economic, recreational and ecological stakes for sustaining these resources are incredibly high."

"NOAA Fisheries scientists are learning more all the time about how to help fish populations," he added. "Our agency is working hard to end overfishing by 2010, as required by the Magnuson Stevens Act. Continued and new sustainable management practices such as annual catch limits are one of the tools we are using."

NOAA recently proposed guidelines to establish catch limits and targets for each stock to prevent overfishing. These annual catch limits are the amount of fish allowed to be caught in a year, and are required by a 2007 amendment to the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation

and Management Act. Additionally, the act calls for measures to ensure these limits are followed and do not exceed the scientific recommendations made by the regional fishery management councils' scientific committees.

The proposed guidelines may be viewed online at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/msa2007/>. Public comments on the proposed revisions will be accepted through Sept. 8.

NOAA's Fisheries Service develops the annual status of U.S. fisheries report using the best available scientific information available and the status determination criteria specified in fishery management plans.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, 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 70 countries and the European Commission to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes, predicts and protects.

On the Web:

Status of Stocks Report to Congress - 2007:

<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/statusoffisheries/SOSmain.htm>

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