
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF
COMMERCE

NEWS

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20230

NATIONAL
OCEANIC AND
ATMOSPHERIC
ADMINISTRATION

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NOAA04-R135
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 27, 2004

**NOAA FISHERIES INVITES MARINE ANGLERS
TO DISCUSS PROPOSED STRATEGIC PLAN**

The Commerce Department's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) will host the first in a series of constituent meetings on the West Coast and Hawaii to receive input for the development of a Recreational Fisheries Strategic Plan for the next five years. The first meeting is May 4, in Seal Beach, Calif. The plan will set a road map for addressing science, management and education outreach issues related to recreational fisheries. The final plan is expected to be available to the public in early September 2004.

"The constituent meetings will help ensure that our strategic plan reflects the priorities of marine anglers," said Bill Hogarth, director of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries). "Getting their input through public meetings and written comments is critical to ensure the final plan will include the recreational anglers' viewpoint."

These public meetings will give anglers an opportunity to discuss data collection, marine managed areas, artificial reef programs, management processes, information exchange, cooperative research and more.

The first meeting will be 6 to 9 p.m. May 4, 2004, in the City Council Meeting Room, City of Seal Beach Administration Building, 211 Eighth Street. Meetings are also planned for Portland, Oregon, on May 26, 2004, and Honolulu, Hawaii, on June 23, 2004.

In addition to the public meetings, written comments will also be accepted. Comments may be sent to Michael Kelly, Chief, Division of Constituent Services (Room 9554), NOAA Fisheries (F/CS), 1315 East-West Hwy, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Comments should be received by July 30, 2004 to ensure that they are given full consideration. Copies of the draft plan and the e-mail submission address can be found on the Web at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/recfish>.

NOAA Fisheries is dedicated to providing and preserving the nation's living marine resources and their habitat through scientific research, management, and enforcement. NOAA Fisheries provides stewardship of these resources for the benefit of the nation, supporting coastal communities that depend upon them, and helping to provide safe and healthy seafood to consumers and recreational opportunities for the American public.

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On the Web:

NOAA: <http://www.noaa.gov>

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

Pervious Plan: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/ocs/anglerinfo.html>

Draft Plan: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/recfish>