

SUSTAINABLE U.S. SEAFOOD: CELEBRATING THE MAGNUSON-STEVENSON FISHERY CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT ACT (MSA) 40TH ANNIVERSARY



How does NOAA Fisheries help bring healthy seafood to my plate?

Fisheries have always been important to the U.S. as a key source of food, as well as for trade, economic opportunities and quality of life. Government officials recognized early on that all of these activities put increasing demands on our fish populations, and that it would be critical to balance these demands with the health of our fisheries. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries service (or NOAA Fisheries) has been working to maintain that balance.

Sustainable seafood: It's all about balance

Conserving our natural resources, whether on land or at sea, is something we all should be concerned about. For this reason, laws were created that ensure these resources are available for future generations.

The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Reauthorization Act of 2006 (MSA), originally enacted as the Fishery Conservation and Management Act in 1976, is the principal law governing U.S. marine fisheries. The MSA mandates that NOAA Fisheries limit the amount of fish harvested to prevent or end overfishing in U.S. federal waters from 3-200 miles off our coasts.

Science

Limiting the amount of fish harvested may sound easy, but it is challenging. NOAA Fisheries scientists conduct extensive surveys of ocean waters and work with fishermen to collect catch data to best determine how much fish can be safely harvested. Scientists are working to maintain healthy fish populations to ensure that the food needs of other animals in the ecosystem are met.

Management

Management measures are determined through a public process where scientists, fishermen, resource managers, tribes and citizens work together on "Fishery Management Councils." Scientists provide recommendations for harvest

limits. The council then determines a safe amount that fishermen can catch each year, which may be at the harvest limit or below it.

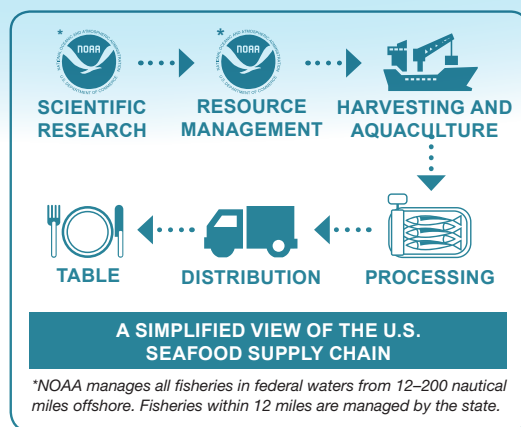
Community

Healthy fish populations and responsible management help protect the local economies and communities dependent on these resources.

Scientists in the Pacific Northwest and Alaska provide information to sustainably manage our fisheries and are pioneering new studies on how contaminants from human activities and natural toxins affect fish and human health.

With the help of advanced technologies — from scanning electron microscopes to unmanned aircraft systems to submersibles, underwater vehicles similar to submarines, and remotely operated vehicles — we are learning things about ocean life that our predecessors could scarcely imagine.

Managers also work closely with Alaska natives, tribes, the fishing industry, other government agencies and the public to help minimize or avoid human impacts.



TIMELINE HIGHLIGHTS IN FISHERIES — PACIFIC NORTHWEST AND ALASKA

1900s: First federal fish hatchery in Alaska. Gala celebration held in 1914 to dedicate Fishermen's Terminal.

1910s: World War I food shortages spur research into aquatic food supplies and health benefits of fish oil.

1920s: Large Pacific herring fishery develops in Aleutian Islands.

1930s: Exploration of crab resources in the Bering Sea begins.

1940s: Growing demand for protein during World War II fosters research on ways to preserve seafood longer. Tagging of fur seal pups begins in Alaska.

1950s: Exploratory cruises in North Pacific Ocean lead to discovery of vast Alaskan groundfish fishery, the largest in the world. Alaska becomes 49th U.S. state.

1960s: Alaska state takes over management of salmon.

1970s: Scientists develop process for making surimi. NOAA Fisheries is established. Fishery Conservation and Management Act passed in 1976, paves the way for fully domestic fisheries in U.S. waters. Fishery observers are placed on foreign vessels in 1973.

1980s: Pioneering research on chemistry of fish oils leads to better understanding of health benefits in human diet. Development of passive integrated transponder (PIT) tag technology for tracking salmon migration revolutionizes fisheries research.

1990s: Scientists assess damage from Exxon Valdez oil spill. Genetic tools help protect several West Coast salmon populations. North Pacific Groundfish Observer Program formed, creating the largest fishery observer program in the U.S. Alaska pollock and Pacific whiting catch share cooperatives created, forming one of the largest private catch share programs in the world. Congress passes American Fishery Act in 1998.

2000s: Toxic hot spot for harmful algal blooms is discovered in Puget Sound. Contaminant sampling after Hurricane Katrina ensures seafood safety.

2010s: U.S. waters of the Arctic closed to commercial fishing. Bering Sea flatfish gear, developed by Alaska Seafood Cooperative and NOAA Fisheries, required on all vessels fishing flatfish.

Economics + Environment +
Community = Sustainability

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