



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Contact: ASA, [Mary Jane Williamson](#), 703.519.9691, x227; TBF, [Pete Johnson](#), 408.951.3654; CCC, [Jeff Angers](#), 225.382.3755; CCA, [Ted Venker](#), 281.953.6614; IGFA, [Jason Schratwieser](#), 954-927-2628
NMMA, [Christine Pomorski](#), 202.737.9774

Sportfishing Industry and Partners Call on Administration to Make Major Marine Fisheries Management Changes

Immediate administrative action needed to avoid significant problems with fisheries management

WASHINGTON, D.C. – February 23, 2010 – Today, a coalition of marine recreational fishing, boating, and conservation organizations and businesses called on the Obama administration to take immediate action to address a crisis within the federal fisheries management system. In a letter to National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Administrator Dr. Jane Lubchenco, the [American Sportfishing Association \(ASA\)](#), [The Billfish Foundation \(TBF\)](#), the [Center for Coastal Conservation \(CCC\)](#), the [Coastal Conservation Association \(CCA\)](#), the [International Game Fish Association \(IGFA\)](#), and the [National Marine Manufacturers Association \(NMMA\)](#) laid out an initial framework to immediately address serious and escalating problems resulting from inadequate implementation of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act and the chronic problems that exist within the federal marine fisheries management system.

The coalition emphasizes that there are available administrative actions that can be taken right away to address the concerns of the sportfishing and boating industries and the nation's 13 million saltwater anglers who depend on well-managed, healthy marine fisheries. Read the full letter sent to Dr. Lubchenco [here](#).

Given NOAA's recent ban on recreational fishing for red snapper from North Carolina through Florida and the potential for additional bans on key recreational saltwater fisheries, much of the frustration that exists in the grassroots recreational fishing community over these management decisions has boiled over into organized protests including, one being held Wednesday, February 24, in Washington, D.C.

With today's letter, the coalition called upon the administration to:

- Take decisive, immediate action to improve recreational fisheries data by redirecting existing funds and personnel to focus on real-time management data.
- Collect socio-economic data on recreational fishing in the communities most likely to be impacted by near-term or expected fisheries closures.
- Provide federal level direction to the fishery management councils to use common-sense in their management approaches while the administration collects the requisite data to make sound management decisions.
- Develop a recreational fishing program and staff within NMFS commensurate with the national economic contribution of recreational saltwater fishing.

The coalition's groups look forward to working closely with the Obama administration and NOAA to implement solutions to effectively deal with our nation's marine fisheries resources.

Below are comments made today by the coalition's group leaders:

[American Sportfishing Association](#)

Mike Nussman, President and CEO

"We support healthy fisheries and good fishery management. It's good for anglers, our business and our economy. We've developed common-sense administrative and appropriations proposals that address the need for timely, accurate data while preserving efforts to rebuild our marine fisheries. We see these as a starting point for actions that must be implemented to address the short and long term problems."

"Unfortunately, what we are seeing now is crisis management rather than fisheries management and this must stop before more jobs are lost and more of the nation's recreational anglers are unnecessarily shut out."

[The Billfish Foundation](#)

Ellen Peel, President

"Stock assessments for recreationally important species have been a lower priority for NMFS than is justified by the economic contribution of the recreational fishing community. Recreational fishing accounts for only three percent of the marine finfish harvested by weight, yet it produces 56 percent of the jobs from all saltwater fisheries."

[The Center for Coastal Conservation](#)

Jeff Angers, President

"The groups represented in this effort are demanding conservation-oriented measures that deliver the best possible opportunity not only for America's anglers and the businesses that depend on them, but also for America's marine resources to achieve their fullest potential. We expect to see the same commitment from NMFS. Their failure to do so has led to the current crisis of confidence and is threatening to bring the entire system to a standstill."

[The Coastal Conservation Association](#)

Pat Murray, President

"There is a great deal of frustration among recreational anglers, much of it attributable to an agency that doesn't have the data, the science or the will to properly manage us. Recreational anglers have always been willing to do what is right to maintain healthy marine resources, but it is hard to have faith in many of the management measures we are seeing out of NMFS right now. There is a better path than the one they are on."

[International Game Fish Association](#)

Rob Kramer, President

"We must deal with the unintended consequences of the 2006 Magnuson-Stevens Act reauthorization. We hope that our recommendations will help to get this agency, on which 13 million recreational saltwater anglers depend, back on track."

[National Marine Manufacturers Association](#)

Thomas J. Dammrich, President

"NOAA Fisheries' severe restrictions on recreational fishing are a direct result of the agency's failure to collect important data on these fisheries, including the impacts of recreational fishing and boating. Unless NOAA takes quick and decisive action to improve its data and management of recreational fisheries, these large-scale closures will drive down boat sales and negatively impact U.S. marine industry jobs."