



NOAA FISHERIES SERVICE

Status of Stocks

Annual Report to Congress on the Status of U.S. Fisheries

In this 35th anniversary year of the Magnuson Stevens Act, the nation's cornerstone for managing living marine resources, NOAA Fisheries releases the 14th Annual Report to Congress on the Status of the Nation's Fisheries. This report documents our national journey toward ending overfishing and rebuilding the nation's fisheries.

Stocks at a Glance

Overfishing Status

- 213 stocks (84%) are not subject to overfishing
- 40 stocks (16%) are subject to overfishing

Overfished Status

- 159 stocks (77%) are not overfished
- 48 stocks (23%) are overfished

Summary of Changes

	2009	2010
Subject to Overfishing	38 (15%)	40 (16%)
Overfished	46(23%)	48(23%)

Investing in Our Economy

NOAA Fisheries plays a significant role in the health of our ocean and the nation's economy and coastal communities. The commercial and recreational fishing industries depend on healthy and abundant fish stocks and marine ecosystems to provide lasting jobs, food and recreational opportunities. In fact, fishing alone generates \$72 billion per year and 1.9 million full and part-time jobs. Fully rebuilt, U.S. fisheries are anticipated to add another \$31 billion to the economy and an additional 500,000 jobs. During this difficult economic time, ensuring our nation remains on track toward rebuilding and sustaining its fisheries is more important than ever.

About the Report

Each year since 1997, NOAA Fisheries reports to Congress the number of stocks and complexes that are and are not subject to overfishing, and those that are or are not overfished. These findings are based on determinations made throughout the reporting year and years prior. This annual report summarizes the best available science on our stocks to inform the management process to take appropriate action with the goal of ending overfishing and reaching sustainable populations of fish. All quarterly reports are posted online throughout the year, and annual reports are posted in their entirety at www.nmfs.noaa.gov.



The status of the spiny dogfish fishery along the Atlantic Coast changed to "rebuilt" in 2010.

Overfishing is when the rate of removal from a stock is too high. A priority for the U.S. is ending overfishing so that all stocks can rebuild and be sustained at rebuilt levels.

Overfished is when the population is too low, or below a prescribed threshold. A population can be overfished but be managed under a rebuilding plan that over time returns the population to health.



During the 1990s, efforts to rebuild depleted Atlantic sea scallop populations led to their full recovery by 2001. The Atlantic sea scallop fishery is now not only one of America's most valuable, but also the most valuable wild scallop fishery in the world.

By the Numbers - 2010 Status of Stocks

As of December 31, the assessments and data analyses show the majority of our nation's fisheries are at sustainable levels and management measures continue to be implemented to prevent overfishing and rebuild overfished stocks.

- Each Category – overfishing and overfished – increased by a total of two
- 213 stocks (84%) are not subject to overfishing
- 40 stocks (16%) are subject to overfishing – All have ACLs in place or other measures to end overfishing.
- 159 stocks (77%) are not overfished.
- 48 stocks are overfished – Rebuilding plans are in place for all but 8 which were newly determined in 2009 and 2010 and have two years for plans to be put in place.
- A total of 54 rebuilding plans are in place.
- 3 additional stocks were rebuilt, bringing the current national total of fully rebuilt stocks since 2000 to 21.

Changes in Stock Determinations 2010

	Reason	Total # of stocks	Region	Stock
Overfishing	no longer subject to overfishing	2	Northeast	Yellowtail flounder - Georges Bank
			Southeast	Black grouper - Southern Atlantic Coast
	not subject to overfishing (previously unknown)	3	Northeast	Atlantic halibut – Northwestern Atlantic Coast
			Southeast	Black grouper - Gulf of Mexico
			Northwest	Pacific cod – Pacific
	now subject to overfishing	3	Northeast	Windowpane - Gulf of Maine/Georges Bank Windowpane - Southern New England / Mid-Atlantic Witch flounder - Northwestern Atlantic Coast
subject to overfishing (previously unknown)	1	Southwest/Pacific Islands	Pacific bluefin tuna - Pacific SW/PI	
Is unknown (previously not subject to overfishing)	1	Northeast	Winter flounder – Gulf of Maine	
Overfished	no longer overfished and rebuilt	1	Northeast	Haddock - Georges Bank
	no longer overfished	4	Northeast	Haddock - Gulf of Maine American plaice - Gulf of Maine/Georges Bank Cod - Gulf of Maine Windowpane - Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic
	not overfished (previously unknown/undefined)	3	Southeast	Black grouper - Southern Atlantic Coast Black grouper - Gulf of Mexico
			Southwest/Pacific Islands	Pacific bluefin tuna - Pacific SW/PI
	now overfished	5	Northeast	Windowpane - Gulf of Maine/Georges Bank Witch flounder - Northwestern Atlantic Coast Winter flounder - Georges Bank
			Northwest	Chinook salmon - California Central Valley: Sacramento (fall)
			Alaska	Southern Tanner crab - Bering Sea
	overfished (previously listed as unknown)	2	Northeast	Atlantic wolffish - Gulf of Maine/Georges Bank
		Southeast	Red grouper - Southern Atlantic Coast	
Is unknown (previously listed not overfished)	1	Northeast	Winter flounder – Gulf of Maine	

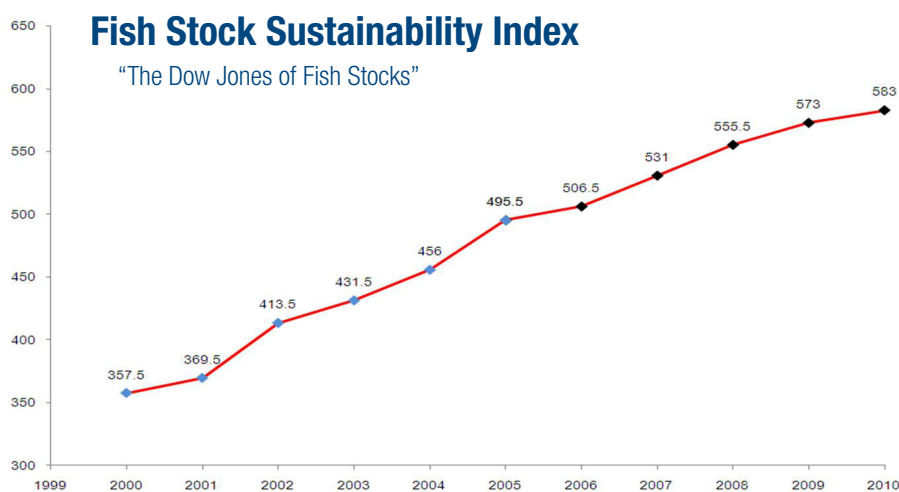
As depicted in the graph, during the year, some stocks were determined to have no overfishing or to not be overfished, and others were added to these lists. This constant shifting is normal and expected and some of these changes are due to new information on stocks with a previously unknown status, or which had not previously been included with a fisheries management plan.



Annually assessed, the tanner crab stock was determined to be rebuilt in 2007. With little change occurring in the level of catch by fishermen, scientists are puzzled by this year's determination as overfished. They will be monitoring this population closely including whether or not environmental factors are involved.

“At this point, we are turning the corner toward a future when ending overfishing can be a concern of the past, and where maintaining sustainable fisheries is a shared commitment to our future.”

- Eric Schwaab, NOAA Assistant Administrator for Fisheries



In order to provide a more accurate assessment of our progress to ensure the long-term trend and health of U.S. fisheries, NOAA Fisheries developed the Fish Stock Sustainability Index. Akin to the Dow Jones, the index provides a performance measure for the sustainability of the 230 stocks comprising the most commercial and recreational important species in the U.S.

Behind the Results

In 2010, each category of overfishing and overfished increased by two. This increase is in part due to a procedural requirement in which determinations made on several Northeast stocks in 2008, could not formally be adopted until the fish management plan was amended, a public process that takes time and was not completed until 2010.

Just as important, many of the stocks listed are carried over from previous years and cannot be removed until they are re-assessed and a new status determination is made. Generally, stocks are assessed every 3-5 years.

Behind the Science

NOAA Fisheries hopes to increase the number of stock assessments conducted each year in order to verify overfishing has ceased and optimum catch levels can safely be put into place to support sustainability and economic vitality. The President's FY12 request will allow NOAA Fisheries to increase the percentage of major fish stocks with adequate assessments from 57 percent in 2010, to 63 percent by 2016.

Beyond Fishing - Environmental Factors

Although it is often assumed that an overfished status has its root cause in overfishing, there are many other factors that influence the health and abundance of a fish stock. These factors include natural mortality, disease, natural population cycles, habitat degradation, and environmental changes to name just a few. For example, scientists have concluded that the apparent decline in pink shrimp abundance along the Southeast coast are due to factors other than fishing, such as environmental and climatic factors.

Ending Overfishing - Turning the Corner

U.S. fisheries are on track for all being harvested under annual catch limits with accompanying accountability measures. This science-management combination work to proactively prevent overfishing from occurring, and to allow quick response by management to make adjustments should overfishing be found. NOAA and the fishery management councils are working hard to complete implementation of annual catch limits and accountability measures by the end of 2011.



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