



International Game Fish Association

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Marine Spatial Planning in the United States

Position Statement
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Pursuant to a June 12, 2009 United States Presidential Memorandum, the Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force was established with the mission of recommending to the President ways to enhance U.S. oceans policy coordination and outline a National Oceans Policy. While IGFA supports reasonable policy mechanisms to enhance interagency dialogue and improve federal, state, and local agency coordination on ocean policy, we have concerns for the U.S. recreational fishing industry over the yet to be defined details and how this process will be implemented.

Although this is a very lengthy document and there will be much work evolving over the next several years on this issue, some of our specific concerns are as follows:

- Ocean management is complex and warrants significant, sustained discussion in a transparent public policy processes. There should be ongoing mechanisms that ensure the ability of stakeholders to meaningfully influence and develop a new national oceans policy. It is currently not clear on how this will take place.
- Marine spatial planning must be a policy that seeks to better inform decision-making in the ocean environment and address gaps in science and data to improve conservation and management objectives. Marine spatial planning must not be a means to catalogue, map and designate vast marine areas as marine restricted “set-asides”.
- According to the U.S. National Marine Fisheries Service, the recreational fishing sector contributes over \$82.2 billion in sales and provides over 533,000 jobs. Additionally, fishing license sales generate nearly \$560 million in annual revenues for state conservation and education programs. Given the scope of the economic, conservation, and social contributions of recreational fishing, it is imperative that any national ocean policy encourage, promote and celebrate recreational activities in the marine and freshwater environments.

We recommend that U.S. anglers remain vigilant and get involved in this process wherever possible. The IGFA will continue to provide updates on this process and make anglers aware of ways to provide input into the process.