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Most Massachusetts Saltwater Fishermen Will Need To Register with NOAA Beginning January 1

*Saltwater Angler Registry Part of Improved Data Program
To Help Protect Long-Term Sustainability of Recreational Fishing*

MRIP – Under a new federal law, most Massachusetts saltwater fishermen will be required to register with the new National Saltwater Angler Registry before they go fishing next year.

Beginning January 1, 2010, Massachusetts fishermen will need to register if they:

- Fish for or catch anadromous species in tidal waters; these are fish like smelt, shad or river herring that live in the oceans but spawn in fresh water, OR
- Fish in the Federal waters more than three miles from the ocean shore or from the mouth of Chesapeake Bay, OR
- Don't meet any of the exceptions in the law.

Those exceptions include anglers who are under the age of 16; only fish on licensed charter, party or guide boats; hold a Highly Migratory Species Angling permit; or hold and are fishing under a valid commercial license. In addition, out-of-state saltwater anglers who are already registered with NOAA do not need to re-register to fish in Massachusetts.

Registration is quick and easy and will be free in 2010. Beginning January 1, anglers simply need to log on to **www.countryfish.noaa.gov** and click on the Angler Registry link, or call the toll-free registration line at **1-866-MRIP411** (1-866-674-4411). Anglers will need to provide their name, date of birth, address and telephone number, and will receive a registration number that will allow them begin fishing immediately. After approximately 30 days, they will receive a registration card in the mail.

The registry is an important tool that will help fishermen and policy makers work together to better account for the contributions and impacts of saltwater anglers on ocean ecosystems and coastal economies. It is part of a national overhaul of the way NOAA collects and reports recreational fishing data. The goal of the initiative – known as the Marine Recreational Information Program, or MRIP – is to provide the most accurate information possible that can be used to determine the health of fish stocks. Reliable, universally trusted data will in turn aid anglers, fisheries managers and other stakeholders in their combined efforts to effectively and fairly set the rules that will ensure the long-term sustainability of recreational fishing.

For more information, visit www.countryfish.noaa.gov.