

For Sitka Regional Fishery Management Council Chair's Meeting

U.S. Coral Reef Task Force - Update

- The U.S. Coral Reef Task Force was created by Executive Order 13089. The Task Force is co-chaired by the Department of Interior and NOAA (representing the Dept. of Commerce) and includes the Federal agencies with responsibilities for coral reef conservation as well as the states and territories with coral reefs. In March 2000, the Task Force published the *National Action Plan to Conserve Coral Reefs*.
- The next meeting of the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force will take place in Puerto Rico, on or around October 2 and 3, 2002. Councils with interests in coral reefs and coral reef fisheries are invited to attend.
- The meeting will be preceded by a regional workshop on *Coral Reef Fisheries: Collaboration on Successful Management, Enforcement and Education Methods*. The workshop was requested by the states and territories with coral reefs and is being funded by NMFS and Sea Grant. The Caribbean Council will participate in the workshop. A subsequent NMFS-funded workshop for the Pacific region is also being planned.
- On April 19, 2002, the request for proposals for the *NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Grants Program* was published in the Federal Register notice. This includes a total of \$1.5 million available to the four Fishery Management Councils with coral reefs. The closing date for proposals is May 24, 2001. NMFS is working with the Councils on the development of proposals for cooperative agreements.
- NOAA is also in the process of finalizing a *National Coral Reef Action Strategy* called for by the *Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000*. The *Action Strategy* builds on the *National Action Plan*, and sets out priorities for implementation over the next two years.
- In FY-2002, NOAA received \$28.25 million for coral reef conservation

NOS	\$16 million
NMFS	\$11 million
OAR	\$0.75 million
NMFS	\$0.50 million

As of mid-May, NOAA was still awaiting Congressional approval of the FY-2002 Coral Reef Spending Plan.

Drafted: T. Hourigan; F/HC; 301-713-2319; 5/13/2002