



DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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DRAFT NATIONAL RECREATIONAL FISHERIES POLICY ANNOUNCED

Have you given thought to what trout angling or bass fishing might be like in the 21st century? Concerned about catfish or worried about walleye?

While these questions about the future of fishing in America may not concern individual anglers, they are very much on the minds of a number of prominent state, private and Federal fishery managers around the country. The result of their concern and collective efforts is the draft National Recreational Fisheries Policy published recently by the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

"We want this policy to establish guiding principles, goals and objectives for the conservation and improvement of this nation's recreational fish populations and the habitats upon which they depend," according to Fish and Wildlife Service Director Frank Dunkle. "As the number of anglers continues to grow, so too does the need to acknowledge the deepening value of recreational fisheries." Dunkle added that he hoped the final policy statement would provide a "blueprint for good fishing that local, state, Tribal, and Federal fisheries agencies can build on well into the 21st century."

The draft document, submitted for public review by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and authored by more than a dozen fishery experts from government, industry, and conservation organizations, outlines the national economic and social importance recreational fisheries have achieved in recent decades and offers long-term common goals for conserving and enhancing the Nation's recreational fishery resources.

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"It is not a Federal policy," Dunkle emphasized. "It is a national statement of goals and consensus. We are not creating rules and regulations; we are trying to build cooperation. This policy maintains that everyone interested in the well-being of recreational fisheries has a responsibility to help further fisheries conservation."

The draft policy resulted from a preliminary outline issued by the Service and reviewed in 1987 by more than 65 agencies, groups and individuals, in addition to fishery management agencies in the 50 states.

"I am very pleased that the Fish and Wildlife Service could play a role in helping shape this policy statement," said Dunkle. "I think all the authors are to be commended -- they have done an excellent job of addressing timely issues in fisheries management, and they have set the foundation for preserving healthy and abundant recreational fisheries. If all goes well, our grandchildren and great grandchildren will have much for which to be thankful."

The final policy, incorporating public comment and input, is scheduled to be issued for national recognition during the first week of June (National Fishing Week) 1988.

National policies on recreational fishing or fisheries have been developed by several countries. Among them are Canada, New Zealand, and Ireland.

The draft policy was published in the January 8, 1988 Federal Register. Copies of the draft can be obtained from the Assistant Director - Fisheries, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D.C. 20240. Public comments will be accepted through February 15, 1988, and should be sent to the address listed above.