



Photos: Dusan Smetana

FISHERIES

CHALLENGE

Our ocean and coastal resources are impacted by a growing number of proposed activities and pressures, from energy development to commercial and recreational fishing. A balanced approach is needed to manage the multiple and competing uses while still conserving the vital resources found within our oceans. What's more, policy makers at the National Atmospheric and Oceanographic Administration and the National Marine Fisheries Service have a tremendous impact on how our marine fisheries are managed and directly affect sportsmen's ability to pursue their passion and catch these fish. The TRCP is committed to working with our partners to make sure the voice of the recreational angler and the interests of marine fisheries conservation are heard and considered when policy and fisheries management decisions are made.

Recreational saltwater anglers know firsthand the benefits of smart fishing practices, conservation efforts and sound data when making management decisions. More than 8.5 million saltwater anglers are on the front lines of marine fisheries conservation – not only through their activity but through the hundreds of millions of dollars this activity injects into fisheries management and conservation through fishing license sales and federal excise taxes on fishing gear, boats and fuel. Spending a combined 85.7 million days on the water every year, saltwater anglers not only spearhead funding for conservation efforts but are an enormous economic engine for the entire country. The American Sportfishing Association estimates that saltwater fishing injects more than \$30 billion annually and creates more than 260,000 jobs.

HISTORY

In the years since the last Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA) reauthorization, it has become increasingly clear that a strong and focused effort from the recreational fishing and conservation community is needed to better educate policy makers at the National Atmospheric and Oceanographic Administration (NOAA) and at the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) on matters of conservation policy and marine fisheries management practices. Too often, we have seen examples of federal fisheries managers who do not understand the perspective of the recreational fishing community or the management of our marine fisheries resources through a commercial fishing prism. Moreover, there have been voices emerging in the public debate that purport to represent the sportsmen perspective but really do not consider science or conservation in their approach to affecting policy change.

OUR STRATEGY

Through collaboration by allies such as the American Sportfishing Association, Billfish Foundation, Bonefish Tarpon Trust, Coastal Conservation Association, Center for Coastal Conservation and International Game Fish Association, the TRCP seeks to amplify and broaden the voice of saltwater recreational anglers when it comes to marine fisheries conservation and management issues. Our long-term goal is to improve fisheries and access to recreational fishing opportunities through a deliberate, focused and organized communications and education effort.

To further this effort and to raise the profile of recreational saltwater angling, the TRCP is hosting our inaugural Saltwater Media Summit in October at Mote Marine Laboratory in Sarasota, Fla. Long a successful TRCP event held in the West, we are expanding this unique effort in 2011 to bring together conservation leaders, opinion makers and the nation's leading outdoor writers and journalists to focus on the issues affecting marine fisheries conservation and the future of saltwater sportfishing.

GUARANTEEING ALL AMERICANS A PLACE TO HUNT AND FISH

ACTION

Saltwater recreational anglers need a dedicated effort to help coordinate and vocalize the responsible recreational fishing community's efforts to better conserve marine habitats, identify efficient management practices and ensure responsible recreational access to these natural resources. The TRCP is committed to providing successful coalition-building and communications outreach to grow this important initiative.



"America's saltwater recreational anglers are not only on the front lines of key conservation issues such as improving fisheries management or restoring the Gulf, but their activity also provides an important economic boost to the rest of the country."

Geoff Mullins
Senior Director of Policy
Initiatives and Communications

WHY THE TRCP?

The TRCP was founded in 2002 for the sole purpose of strengthening the voice of sportsmen and the conservation community so that policy decisions in Washington, D.C. are not made in a vacuum. We seek to strengthen the laws, policies and practices affecting fish and wildlife conservation by leading partnerships that influence decision makers. In short, the TRCP works with our partners to guarantee all Americans quality places to hunt and fish.

Financial support of our Center for Marine Fisheries is essential to maintaining a strong presence on these important issues and continuing to engage in them at both a policy development and communications level.

To learn more about the TRCP and the work we're doing, visit www.trcp.org or contact Meg McKinnon, Development Manager, at mmckinnon@trcp.org or 202-639-8727, ext. 24.

ISSUES

Marine fisheries conservation efforts face a range of policy challenges - both near- and long-term - in the United States. A focused effort by the TRCP and our partners and allies can lead to improvements or solutions to management practices that might not be considered otherwise by federal fisheries managers. A range of challenges to our marine resources already exist or are growing:

- **NOAA Budget Issues** – The single most important way to affect NOAA policies and federal fisheries management is to support strong federal funding for the agency to carry out its mission. The recreational angling voice (in concert with the environmental community voice) is much needed here.
- **Gulf Restoration** – As the various federal processes to allocate money to Gulf recovery efforts progress, recreational angler input on those funds will be critical. The TRCP has facilitated an effort to gather ideas and information but needs to continue disseminating the information and building public support.
- **Marine Spatial Planning** – A growing need given the competing interests for areas of our oceans (e.g., fishing, energy development, energy transmission, etc.).
- **Improved Data Collection and NMFS Management** – the TRCP has been active in producing new ideas and alternatives, but more education and outreach is needed at NMFS for this to bear fruit.
- **Catch Shares** – Good compromises have been reached in the past year between the recreational and environmental communities related to the final catch shares policy released by NOAA. For this policy to progress, continued engagement among these groups is necessary to address any implementation challenges that arise.
- **Management of Data Poor Stocks** – Joint recommendations from the recreational and environmental communities are key to helping NOAA prioritize and invest in efforts to help rebuild stocks that do not have updated stock assessments.
- **Bycatch and Fish Mortality** – Reducing catch-and-release mortality rates through angler education and use of better tackles and equipment.
- **Magnuson-Stevens Act Reauthorization** – As the next reauthorization draws near, our coalition must examine and prioritize areas of need well in advance of the actual legislative process.