



Simple Facts about Catch Shares

In response to a campaign to distort the position of our coalition of marine industry and fishery conservation groups, the bullet points below are meant to clarify some key points on the coalition's history of involvement with catch shares, and the related issue of allocation, and the coalition's position.

- Catch share programs have been used sporadically in commercial fisheries for decades.
- Allocations between recreational and commercial sectors have historically been based on catch history, often using time frames as short as selected three-year segments. Given the history of federal managers to promote commercial fisheries, the time frames were often not favorable to the recreational sector.
- The allocations are essentially frozen, despite the growth of recreational angling and the growing economic contribution of the recreational sector. More and more recreational anglers have been trapped chasing a stagnant allotment of fish, resulting in shorter seasons and tighter restrictions.
- The Obama Administration created the Catch Share Policy Task Force in 2009, signaling a new focus to widely force catch share systems into federal fisheries, including those enjoyed by recreational anglers. As previously implemented, catch shares threatened to lock in outdated allocations forever.
- In an effort to be involved in the process of shaping the new policy, our coalition of marine industry and fishery conservation groups engaged the Administration on the issue of catch shares. The decision to engage was spurred by the Obama Administration's tendency to enact far-reaching policies in extremely short time frames.
- The coalition also initiated debates and exchanges with environmental groups that were heavily promoting catch share systems, including Environmental Defense Fund.
- As a result of its engagement with the Administration and the environmental community, the coalition created a list of position points to pursue in the creation of any federal catch share policy:
 - The coalition is against catch shares in any purely recreational fishery. The coalition does not believe they are a tool to manage recreational anglers in any instance.

- The coalition is against separating the recreational sector into for-hire/charter and private boat designations.
- In mixed-use fisheries – those that have a quota for both recreational and commercial fishers – catch shares may be an appropriate tool for the commercial sector. However, before implementing a commercial catch share system, the allocation must be redefined and updated using economic, social and conservation criteria.
- Once set, the new allocation must be reviewed periodically using those same criteria.
- In mixed-use fisheries that employ a catch share system for the commercial sector, the commercial shares must be made available for purchase by the recreational sector to allow for the growth of the recreational sector. The mechanism for purchasing commercial shares could include state agencies.

The groups of the coalition have engaged to shift the Catch Share Policy from one that was initially poised to work against recreational anglers, to a tool that may be used to address the persistent allocation problems that have plagued anglers for decades. Other groups took the position early in the debate to “Just Say No” to catch shares. The coalition of groups listed here did not believe that was an effective policy strategy given the momentum that was behind this Administration’s ocean management initiatives.

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