

STAFF SUMMARY FOR JUNE 22-23, 2016

16C. OTHER ITEMS – FEDERAL AGENCIES REPORT**Today's Item**Information Action

Standing agenda item to receive reports on any recent federal agency activities of interest not otherwise addressed under other agenda items.

Summary of Previous/Future Actions (N/A)**Background**

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA): Released a report that shows U.S. fisheries stocks are rebuilding and that two species on the Pacific Coast—canary rockfish and petrale sole—were rebuilt to target levels in 2015 (Exhibit C1).

U.S. Department of the Interior (USDOI): Earlier this year President Obama designated three national monuments in the California desert—Mojave Trails, Sand to Snow and Castle Mountains—that connect Mojave National Preserve, Joshua Tree National Park, San Bernardino National Forest, and fifteen wilderness areas to create a series of protected lands totaling nearly 2 million acres (Exhibit C2).

Significant Public Comments (N/A)**Recommendation (N/A)****Exhibits**

- C1. [NOAA news release: New report shows U.S. fisheries rebuilding, dated Apr 20, 2016](#)
- C2. [USDOI news release: Secretary Jewell Joins Communities in Southern California to Celebrate Monument Designation, dated May 5, 2016](#)

Motion/Direction (N/A)



National Oceanic and Atmospheric
Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce

New report shows U.S. fisheries rebuilding

Overfished stocks remain near all-time low

Fisheries | fisheries

April 20, 2016 — The number of domestic fish stocks listed as overfished or subject to overfishing remain near all-time lows, according to the 2015 Status of U.S. Fisheries report to Congress.



The [2015 report](#) highlights the United States' continued progress towards managing fish stocks sustainably. This is a result of the combined efforts of NOAA Fisheries, commercial and recreational fishermen, the regional fishery management councils, states, and other partners.

"It's fitting that this report aligns with the [40th anniversary of the Magnuson-Stevens Act](#)," said Eileen Sobeck, assistant NOAA administrator for fisheries. "Magnuson-Stevens provided the dynamic, science-based management process that is proving successful year after year at keeping U.S. fisheries among the world's most sustainable and resilient. This year's report highlights the act's continued success."

In 2015, eight stocks came off the overfishing list:

- greater amberjack in the Gulf of Mexico
- gray triggerfish in the Gulf of Mexico;
- hogfish in the Eastern Gulf of Mexico;
- thorny skate in the Gulf of Maine;
- winter skate in Georges Bank/Southern New England;
- windowpane flounder in the Gulf of Maine/Georges Bank;
- Puerto Rico scups and porgies complex (similar species that occur in the same area)
- Puerto Rico wrasses complex.

In addition, two stocks are no longer listed as overfished—blueline tilefish in the South Atlantic and canary rockfish along the Pacific Coast.

A stock is on the overfishing list when the annual catch rate is too high. A stock is on the overfished list when the population size of a stock is too low, whether because of fishing or other causes, such as environmental changes.

The report also found that two fish stocks—canary rockfish and petrale sole, both on the Pacific Coast—were rebuilt to target levels in 2015. That brings the total number of rebuilt U.S. marine fish stocks to 39 since 2000.

“This rebuilding success demonstrates the importance of the scientific monitoring and responsive management approach Congress built in to the Magnuson-Stevens Act,” said Sobeck. “It also shows that managing fisheries to sustainable levels in an ever-changing environment is an ongoing process of science informing management.”

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U.S. Department of the Interior

Secretary Jewell Joins Communities in Southern California to Celebrate Monument Designation

Office of the Secretary

President's designation honors community vision for public lands to preserve spectacular desert landscapes and recreational uses

Date: May 5, 2016

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PALM SPRINGS, Calif. – U.S. Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell today joined hundreds of community members and local leaders to celebrate the Mojave Trails, Sand to Snow and Castle Mountains National Monuments, which were designated by President Obama earlier this year. Located in San Bernardino and Riverside counties, about one hour from the Los Angeles metropolitan area, and one hour from the Las Vegas metropolitan area, the three desert monuments protect nearly 2 million acres of spectacular landscapes, fragile wildlife habitat, unique historic resources, and important cultural sites.

The community celebration, hosted by The Wildlands Conservancy, took place at the Whitewater Preserve, a recreation area near Palm Springs and a gateway to the Sand to Snow Monument. Secretary Jewell was joined by U.S. Representative Raul Ruiz, San Bernardino National Forest Supervisor Jody Norion and other representatives from the U.S. Forest Service, California Natural Resources Agency Secretary John Laird, San Bernardino County Supervisor James Ramos, and local business, faith and community leaders.

“A decades-long campaign, led by Senator Feinstein with help from many Congressional leaders, stakeholders, and local leaders, paved the way for President Obama to preserve these spectacular desert landscapes and recreational uses for generations to come,” Secretary Jewell said. “Thanks to their collective vision, leadership and tenacity, our children, grandchildren, and their grandchildren will have the opportunity to know and love these places as we do.”

The monuments are the result of nearly two decades of leadership by U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein, who drafted legislation to protect the special places of the California desert. In October 2015, senior Administration officials visited Palm Springs, at the senator's invitation to hear from the community about its vision for conservation in the California desert. Supporters of protecting these areas include local counties and cities, area business groups, tribes, hunters, anglers, faith-based organizations, recreationists, local land trusts and conservation groups, and students from local schools.

“The designation of three monuments in the Mojave Desert—Mojave Trails, Sand to Snow and Castle Mountains—is the capstone to our desert conservation efforts,” Senator Feinstein said. “I'm especially proud of the diverse coalition we brought together on this issue. These monuments, covering 1.8 million acres, encompass majestic mountain views, iconic endangered species like the bighorn sheep and desert tortoises, historic tribal cultural resources and striking vegetation like the Joshua trees and spring wildflowers. There's still work to be done on related recreation and conservation provisions, but today

these new monuments are truly a testament to how much we can accomplish when we bring stakeholders together and achieve consensus.”

The three designations connect Mojave National Preserve, Joshua Tree National Park, San Bernardino National Forest, and fifteen wilderness areas previously designated by Congress, creating a series of protected lands stretching hundreds of miles. The monuments protect all current uses of the land, including military training operations, off-highway vehicle recreation, transportation, utility corridors and existing mining operations.

The national monuments, comprised exclusively of existing federal lands, will be managed by the Department of the Interior’s Bureau of Land Management, the National Park Service and by the Department of Agriculture’s Forest Service. The proclamations direct the agencies to engage the public in comprehensive planning for the management of these areas, building upon the provisions outlined in the proclamations.

“Community-led efforts have brought people together in a powerful way to protect public lands of great ecological and cultural significance,” said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. “The Sand to Snow National Monument contains part of the San Bernardino National Forest, provides critical habitat for migratory birds as they adapt to a changing climate, and includes the San Gorgonio Mountain, which is sacred ground for several tribal communities. These new monuments represent a renewed commitment to conserving and protecting our natural resources- and preserving our cultural heritage- for the benefit of all Americans.”

The [Sand to Snow National Monument](#) encompasses approximately 154,000 acres of federal lands, including just over 100,000 acres of already Congressionally-designated wilderness east of Los Angeles and will be managed jointly by the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management. Rising from the floor of the Sonoran Desert to San Gorgonio Peak, the tallest in Southern California, the monument includes lush desert oases, significant archeological sites, and thirty miles of the world-famous Pacific Crest Trail. The area is a favorite for camping, hiking, hunting, horseback riding, photography, wildlife viewing, and even skiing. The area is renowned for its rich diversity of rare and fragile wildlife and is one of the most biodiverse areas in Southern California.

The [Mojave Trails National Monument](#) spans 1.6 million acres of federal lands, including more than 350,000 acres of already Congressionally-designated wilderness, managed by the Bureau of Land Management between Barstow and Needles, Calif. It is a stunning mosaic of rugged mountain ranges, ancient lava flows, and spectacular sand dunes. The monument contains the longest remaining undeveloped stretch of Route 66 and some of the best preserved sites from the World War II-era Desert Training Center. Connecting the Mojave National Preserve with Joshua Tree National Park, the Mojave Trails National Monument ensures the biological connectivity of this landscape while preserving traditional uses such hunting and off-highway vehicle recreation.

The [Castle Mountains National Monument](#) consists of approximately 21,000 acres of federal land surrounded by the existing Mojave National Preserve and will be managed by the National Park Service. An integral piece of the Mojave Desert, the area has important flora, fauna, water, and historic resources, and its designation as a national monument helps to preserve related resources set aside for protection in the Preserve. The monument has some of the finest Joshua tree forest and native desert grassland in the Mojave Desert and contains important cultural resources including Native American archeological sites and vestiges of mining, ranching, and the railroad from the period of western expansion.

President Obama has designated twenty-three national monuments under the Antiquities Act, an authority exercised by sixteen presidents starting with President Theodore Roosevelt in 1906 and used to protect treasures such as the Grand Canyon, the Statue of Liberty, and Colorado's Canyons of the Ancients. Last month, the president designated [Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument](#) formerly the Sewall-Belmont House and Museum, permanently protecting the site that became emblematic of the mission to advance women's rights throughout the 20th century. President Obama has protected more than 265 million acres of public lands and waters – more than any other President – and has preserved sites that help tell the story of significant people and extraordinary events in American history.

<https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/secretary-jewell-joins-communities-southern-california-celebrate-monument-designation>