

NOAA Chief appoints Eric Schwaab of Maryland to head National Marine Fisheries Service

The following message has been released by NOAA Administrator, Dr. Jane Lubchenco

February 10, 2010

It gives me great pleasure to announce Eric Schwaab as the new assistant administrator for fisheries, starting February 16. We are excited to have someone with Eric's experience and proven leadership to bring a fresh perspective to the management of NOAA's [National Marine Fisheries Service](#). Eric will lead NOAA's efforts to rebuild our fisheries and the jobs and livelihoods that depend on them. His immediate priorities include improving outreach and relationships with recreational and commercial fishermen, better aligning federal and regional fisheries priorities, restoring confidence in fisheries law enforcement, and promoting management approaches that will achieve both sustainable fisheries and vibrant coastal communities.

Eric brings more than 25 years of experience in local, state and federal natural resource management. He has spent the majority of his career at the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, where he began as a natural resources police law enforcement officer in 1983. He eventually served as director of the Maryland Forest Service; director of the Maryland Forest, Wildlife and Heritage Service; and director of the Maryland Fisheries Service. In 2003, Eric left the Maryland Department of Natural Resources to serve as resource director for the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies until 2007. He then returned to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources as the deputy secretary. Eric has also served as a member of the U.S. Department of Commerce Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee.

Eric is a creative and proven manager, consensus builder and leader. He has developed and implemented solutions to address challenges in regional habitat restoration, including Chesapeake Bay restoration issues, fish and wildlife conservation, public lands management, natural resources law enforcement, public agency administration, strategic planning and leadership development.

I am excited to welcome Eric to the NOAA family. He will work with NOAA leadership, the fisheries service, his fellow assistant administrators and our many constituents to further our efforts to protect and manage the nation's fisheries, our other trust resources including marine mammals and sea turtles, and the ecosystems upon which they depend. Welcome Eric!

I would also like to take this opportunity to express my deep appreciation to Dr. Jim Balsiger, the acting assistant administrator, for his superb and sustained leadership. Jim has led the fisheries service for over two years in this capacity, far from his home in Alaska, and done so with distinction. He was especially instrumental in engaging the fishery management councils in the process of developing the draft catch shares policy. Dr. Balsiger will soon return to his position as NOAA Fisheries regional administrator for Alaska, but before doing so will assist Eric with his transition into the fisheries service and NOAA. I'd also like to thank the entire team at NOAA Fisheries who have done an excellent job during this period.