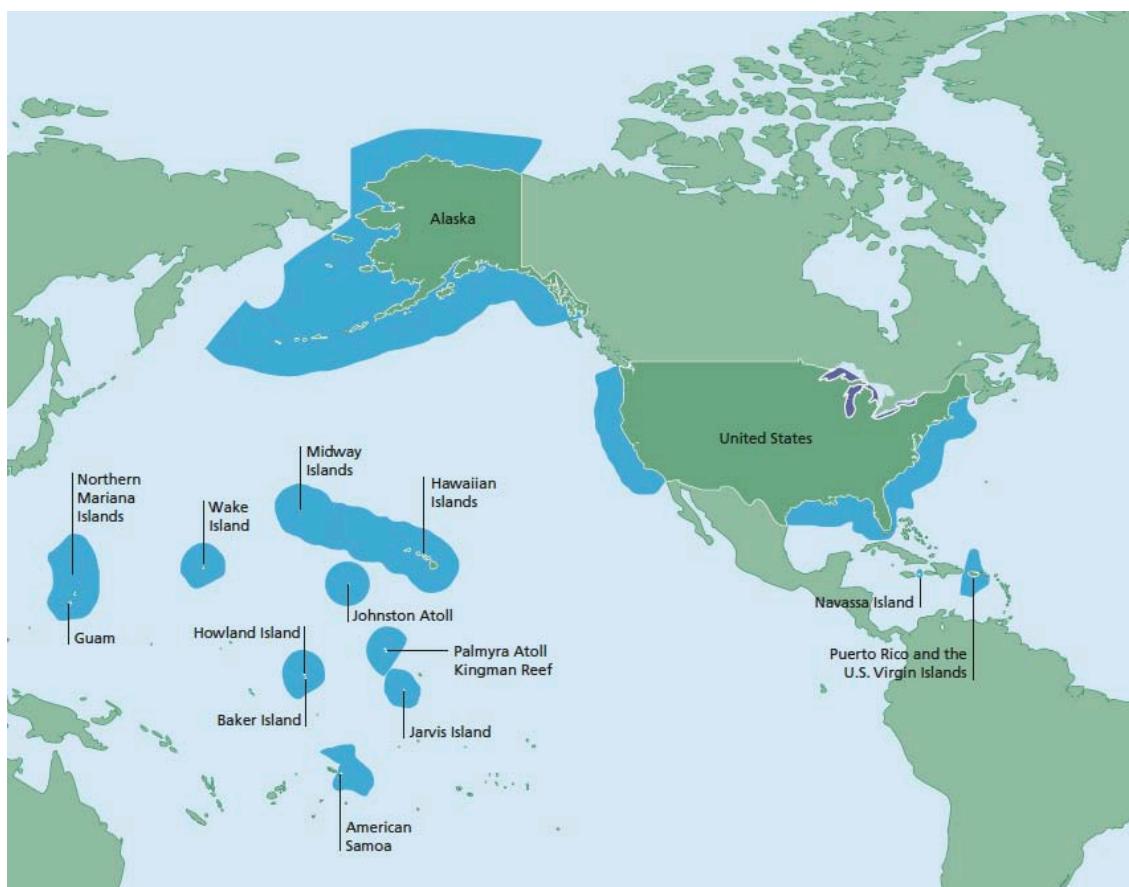


Fishery Basics – Where do we fish?

National Waters



Map of the United States Exclusive Economic Zone in dark blue. Source: NOAA National Ocean Service (<http://oceanservice.noaa.gov/facts/eez.html>).

Federal (national) **fisheries** operate within a nation's **Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)**. An EEZ includes all waters extending from 3 nautical miles (5.6 km) seaward of the coast to 200 nautical miles (370 km) from the coast. Foreign vessels may only operate within a nation's EEZ if an accepted agreement has been made between the host nation and the foreign nation. The **United States EEZ** is largest EEZ in the world. The U.S. EEZ includes waters around coastal states as well as the waters surrounding any territories that fall under U.S sovereignty. In total, the U.S. EEZ spans over 20,900 km (13,000 mi) of coastline and encompasses more than 8.5 million km² (3.3 million mi²). The federal waters off the United States are home to many highly valuable fisheries, including **groundfish**, **coastal pelagic species**, **anadromous species**, **highly migratory species** and various species of **shellfish**. The **National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)** and eight **regional fishery management councils manage the federal waters** (See National Management) of the United States. The federal waters of the United States include a diverse range of habitat types that help to shape many productive fisheries.

Fishery Basics – Where do we fish?

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Additional Resources

NOAA Fisheries Service – [Pacific Islands Regional Office – International Fisheries](#)

Sea Around Us Project – [Fisheries, Ecosystems and Biodiversity](#)

[U.S. Regional Fishery Management Councils](#)