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GOVERNOR'S PRESS OFFICE

ROCKFISH HOTLINE: A CONVENIENT CONNECTION

ANNAPOLIS, MD (March 11) -- The Maryland Office of Tourism Development will once again "lure" fishermen into the state by providing a convenient fishing hotline to help anglers make the most of the spring rockfish trophy season.

The hotline, 1-800-ROCK-FISH, or 1-800-762-5347 is operated by the Maryland Office of Tourism Development, part of the Maryland Department of Economic and Employment Development, with the assistance of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. Callers will learn where rockfish are biting and receive information on how to contact charter boat captains throughout the Chesapeake Bay region.

"Maryland has a long, proud fishing tradition," said Governor Schaefer. "We want to help anglers fully enjoy their experience this fishing season."

Charter boats can accommodate groups of up to 50 people and their captains have an extensive knowledge of the Bay including where the fish are biting, improving the odds of a recreational angler bringing home a rockfish by the end of the day.

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Spring rockfish season opens on May 1 and continues through May 31. Anglers are limited to the waters on the main stem of the Chesapeake Bay, south of the Bay Bridge (in an effort to protect spawning rockfish, fishing is prohibited north of the Bridge or in its tributaries). One rockfish (minimum size 34 inches) may be caught per day.

The 1993 Maryland rockfish season was the best since the fishing ban was lifted in 1989. Last year's catch is estimated to have been over 2 million pounds of rockfish. The new fishing regulations allow anglers to catch more fish than they could during previous seasons; this measure will hopefully make May another "banner" season for fishermen.

For additional information on outdoor recreation and other tourism activities, the public may contact the Maryland Office of Tourism Development at 1-800-543-1036 or write to the Maryland Office of Tourism Development, 217 East Redwood Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21202.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, CONTACT: Liz Barnes

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