



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
PROGRAM PLANNING AND INTEGRATION
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

DEC 28 2009

To All Interested Government Agencies and Public Groups:

Under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), an environmental review has been performed on the following action.

TITLE: Environmental Assessment on the final rule on spearfishing for the Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary

LOCATION: Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary, off the coast of Georgia

SUMMARY: The final rule prohibits the use of all spearfishing gear in Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary (GRNMS) and also prohibits possession of such gear within the sanctuary, except when stowed on a vessel transiting the sanctuary. This final rule amends an existing sanctuary regulation, which prohibits the use of spearfishing gear, if such gear includes a "powerhead" (also commonly known as a "bang stick" or "shark stick"). This amendment was proposed for two reasons. First, the prohibition will better protect resources within the sanctuary. Second, the final action would facilitate enforcement efforts. Law enforcement officials have repeatedly expressed the need to prohibit all spearfishing due to the difficulties in distinguishing between powerhead and non-powerhead spearfishing.

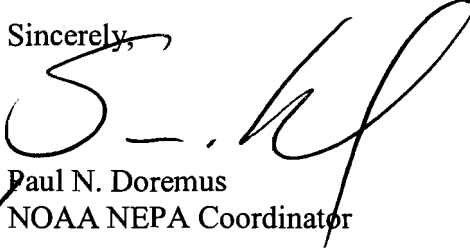
RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL: Daniel J. Basta, Director
Office of National Marine Sanctuaries
1305 East West Highway, N/ORM-6
Silver Spring, MD 20910
(301) 713-3125, Extension 235

The environmental review process led us to conclude that this action will not have a significant effect on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared. A copy of the finding of no significant impact (FONSI) including the supporting environmental assessment (EA) is enclosed for your information.



Although NOAA is not soliciting comments on this completed EA/FONSI, we will consider any comments submitted that would assist us in preparing future NEPA documents. Please submit any written comments to the responsible official named above.

Sincerely,



for Paul N. Doremus
NOAA NEPA Coordinator

Enclosure