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, an environmental review has been performed on the following action.

TITLE: Initial Implementation of the Convention on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean

LOCATION: Area of Application of the Convention on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean

SUMMARY: The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) proposes regulations to implement, in part, the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Convention Implementation Act (WCPFCIA; Pub. L. 109-479, Sec 501, et seq., and codified at 16 U.S.C. § 6901 et seq). Pursuant to the WCPFCIA, NMFS is promulgating regulations that would implement the provisions of the Convention on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (Convention) that are fully specified; that is, provisions for which no further action is required by the Commission for the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean prior to implementation.

The regulations would establish requirements related to the operation of U.S. fishing vessels that are used for commercial fishing for highly migratory species (HMS) in the area of application of the Convention (Convention Area). U.S. vessels from three major sectors, purse seine, longline, and albacore troll, engage in HMS fishing on the high seas in the Convention Area. U.S. vessels from other sectors, including pole-and-line, handline, and tropical troll, may also be affected by the rule, as may U.S. support vessels, such as fish carriers and bunkers. The dominant U.S. fisheries for HMS in the Convention Area target skipjack tuna (*Katsuwonus pelamis*), yellowfin tuna (*Thunnus albacares*), bigeye tuna (*Thunnus obesus*), albacore (*Thunnus alalunga*), and swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*).
The regulations relate to the following: obtaining fishing authorizations; submitting vessel information; carrying and using vessel monitoring system units; accepting observers; accepting transshipment inspectors;

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accepting boarding and inspection; vessel marking; maintaining and submitting information about fishing effort and catch; at-sea transshipments of HMS from purse seine vessels; and procedures for protecting the confidentiality of information.

RESPONSIBLE
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The environmental review process led us to conclude that this action will not have a significant impact on the environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement was not prepared. A copy of the finding of no significant impact (FONSI), including the 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, Ph. D.
NOAA NEPA Coordinator

Enclosure