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

NOV 23 2011

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 Effects of the Issuance of a Scientific Research Permit (File No. 16439) to Conduct Scientific Research on Shortnose Sturgeon in the Hudson River*

LOCATION: Netting would take place within the Hudson River Estuary from New York Harbor to Troy Dam.

SUMMARY: The current Environmental Assessment (EA) analyzed the effects of shortnose sturgeon research on the environment within the Hudson River Estuary. Specifically, the applicant is seeking a five-year scientific research permit characterizing habitat use, population abundance, reproduction, juvenile recruitment, age and growth, temporal and spatial distributions, diet selectivity, and contaminant load of shortnose sturgeon captured from the Hudson River Estuary from New York Harbor to Troy Dam. The applicant would use anchored and drift gill nets and trawls capturing up to 240 and 2,340 shortnose sturgeon during year 1-3 and year 4-5, respectively. Research activities would also include: measuring, weighing; tagging unmarked individuals with passive integrated transponder and Floy tags; and sampling tissue for genetic analysis. A first subset of fish would be anesthetized and tagged with acoustic transmitters; a second subset would have fin rays sampled for ageing; and a third subset of fish would have gastric contents lavaged for diet analysis, as well as have blood samples taken for contaminant testing. A total of four unintended mortalities are requested over the life of the permit.

The proposed action analyzed in the EA would not have significant environmental effects on the target or non-target species; public health and safety would not affected; no unique geographic area would be affected; and the effects of this study would not be highly uncertain, nor would they involve unique or unknown risks. Issuance of this permit would not set a precedent for future actions with significant effects, nor would it represent a decision in principle about a future consideration. There would not be individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts associated with the proposed action, and there would not be adverse effects on historic resources. The permit would contain mitigating measures to avoid unnecessary stress to the subject animals.

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RESPONSIBLE
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The environmental review process led us to conclude 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 EA is enclosed for your information.

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

Sincerely,

Paul N. Doremus, Ph.D.
NOAA NEPA Coordinator

Enclosure