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

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 for the Issuance of 12 Scientific Research Permits for Research on Atlantic Sturgeon

LOCATION: U.S. Atlantic coastal rivers and near-shore marine environment

SUMMARY: The proposed action is issuance of 12 scientific research permits that would authorize research activities on Atlantic sturgeon. These activities would include capture, morphometric measurements, photography, collection of tissue, blood, and fin ray samples, use of external identification and passive integrated transponder tags, external tag telemetry attachment, internal telemetry tag implantation, anesthetizing, laproscopic and boroscopic procedures, gastric lavage, biopsy sample collection and the directed mortality of eggs and larvae. A limited number of unintentional mortalities would be authorized. This research would create a better understanding of sturgeon movements and habitat utilization, spawning, population demographics, genetic structure, foraging behavior, and threats posed by anthropogenic impacts. Specific objectives for each permit vary, but all would continue long-term research. Impacts from these activities would be short-term and minimal to individual animals and negligible to the species. A biological opinion concluded that the proposed action would not likely jeopardize the continued existence of the species and would not likely destroy or adversely modify designated critical habitat. The permits would be valid for five years.

RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL:

Helen Golde
Acting Director, Office of Protected Resources
National Marine Fisheries Service
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
1315 East-West Highway, Room 13821
Silver Spring, MD 20910
(301) 427-8400

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.

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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,

Patricia A. Montanio
NOAA NEPA Coordinator

Enclosure

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