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

MAY 15 2012

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 Issuing a Permit for Scientific Research on Protected Shortnose Sturgeon in the Gulf of Maine

LOCATION: Gulf of Maine waters, including the Penobscot, Kennebec, Saco, and Merrimack Rivers, as well as other small coastal rivers of New Hampshire and Maine

SUMMARY: The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) proposes to issue a scientific research permit for takes of shortnose sturgeon, listed as endangered, under the Endangered Species Act. The objective of the permitted research is to monitor shortnose sturgeon populations in Gulf of Maine waters by examining habitat utilization patterns, dietary preferences, and ageing. The preferred alternative is not expected to have more than short-term effects on shortnose sturgeon and will not significantly impact the quality of the human environment.

RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL: Helen M. 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) 713-2332

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 Patricia A. Montanio
NOAA NEPA Coordinator

Enclosure

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