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

SEP 17 2012

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: Environmental Assessment (EA) for a Rule to Implement the 2011 International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) Recommendation on Silky Sharks (RIN 0648-BB96)

LOCATION: Federal waters in the U.S. Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico, and Caribbean Sea

SUMMARY: NMFS is implementing the ICCAT Recommendation 11-08 (Recommendation by ICCAT on the Conservation of Silky Sharks Caught in association with ICCAT Fisheries), which requires fishing vessels operating in ICCAT-managed fisheries to release all silky sharks whether dead or alive, and prohibits retaining on board, transshipping, or landing any part or whole carcass of silky shark (*Carcharhinus falciformis*). In this action, NMFS also prohibits the storing, selling or purchasing of silky sharks. This rule affects primarily the commercial HMS pelagic longline fishery for tunas and swordfish in the Atlantic Ocean, including the Caribbean Sea and Gulf of Mexico. Silky sharks are already prohibited in the recreational fishery. This action is consistent with the Atlantic Tunas Convention Act, and furthers domestic management objectives under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. This action will not significantly impact the quality of the human environment, and all beneficial and adverse impacts of the action have been addressed to reach the conclusion of no significant impacts.

RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL: Emily H. Menashes
Deputy Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
1315 East West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910
(301) 427-8500

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 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

Printed on Recycled Paper