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

APR - 8 2013

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 Permit No. 16556 for Ecological Research on Protected Sea Turtles in the Western North Atlantic Ocean

LOCATION: Western North Atlantic Ocean and associated bays, estuaries, and high seas from Maine to Florida

SUMMARY: The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) proposes to issue Permit No. 16556 to the NMFS Northeast Fisheries Science Center. The purpose of the research is to provide data on sea turtle abundance, distribution, ecology, behavior, genetics, population dynamics, and interactions with fisheries. Loggerhead, Kemp's ridley, leatherback and green sea turtles would be directly captured by one of several methods or come from other legal sources authorized to incidentally take sea turtles such as federally-managed fisheries. A suite of procedures would be performed on sea turtles including marking, morphometrics, biological sampling, and tagging before release. Sea turtles could be tracked and observed by vessel or a remotely operated vehicle. Effects to most sea turtles would be short-term and minimal. One sea turtle of any species could be accidentally killed annually.

RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL:

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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