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

APR 22 2013

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 for Amendment 37 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico: Modifications to the Gray Triggerfish Rebuilding Plan Including Adjustments to the Annual Catch Limits and Annual Catch Targets for the Commercial and Recreational Sectors.
RIN 0648-BC66

LOCATION: Gulf of Mexico

SUMMARY: The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) approved Amendment 37 during its meeting in October 2012 for modifications to the gray triggerfish rebuilding plan including adjustments to the annual catch limits (ACLs) and annual catch targets (ACTs) for the commercial and recreational sectors. The purpose of this amendment is to end overfishing of gray triggerfish and rebuild the stock by the end of 2017.

The environmental assessment analyzes the impacts of the proposed action. The implementing Rule for this Amendment adjusts the commercial sector ACL and ACT for Gulf of Mexico gray triggerfish to 64,100 lbs and 60,900 lbs, respectively, adjusts the recreational sector ACL and ACT to 241,200 lbs and 217,100 lbs, respectively, establishes a 12-fish commercial trip limit and a 2-fish recreational bag limit within the 20-reef fish aggregate bag limit, replaces the current recreational sector accountability measures (AMs) with an in-season closure authority based upon the recreational ACT, and adds an overage adjustment to the recreational AMs when the ACL is exceeded, when the gray triggerfish is in the overfished status. The intent is to end overfishing, modify the rebuilding plan, and achieve optimum yield for gray triggerfish.

RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL: Roy E. Crabtree, Ph.D., Regional Administrator, Southeast Regional Office, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, Florida 33701, (727) 824-5305, FAX (727) 824-5308.

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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, including the environmental assessment, is enclosed for your information.

Although NOAA is not soliciting comments on the 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