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

MAY 28 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: Clearance of Proposed Rule for Amendment 9 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Shrimp Fishery of the South Atlantic Region (Amendment 9) [RIN: 0648-BC58]

LOCATION: Exclusive economic zone in the South Atlantic Region

SUMMARY: Amendment 9 is intended to modify the criteria and process for South Atlantic states to request concurrent closure of federal waters to penaeid shrimp fishing when state waters close to protect overwintering white shrimp. The amendment adds a temperature threshold that could be used as a triggering criterion for states to request closures of federal waters to shrimp harvest, in lieu of, or in addition to, the current abundance criterion. Additionally, Amendment 9 would streamline the administrative process for a state to request that federal waters be closed to shrimp harvest adjacent to a state's closed waters after severe cold weather events by allowing a state to request a closure to shrimp harvest via a letter to the Regional Administrator containing the scientific data indicating a closure threshold had been reached. This new process eliminates the South Atlantic Shrimp Review Panel and the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council review of a state's request for closures of federal waters to penaeid shrimp harvest. Amendment 9 also includes an action to update the current B_{MSY} proxy for pink shrimp, which is used in overfished and overfishing definitions for the species. The actions in Amendment 9 are largely administrative in nature and do not significantly impact the human environment.

RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL: Roy E. Crabtree, Ph.D.
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The environmental review process led us to conclude that this action will not have a significant impact on the environment (EA). Therefore, an environmental impact statement was not prepared. A copy of the finding of no significant impact (FONSI), including the environmental assessment, 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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