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

MAY 21 2014

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 Amendment 5 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Dolphin and Wahoo Fishery of the Atlantic with Environmental Assessment (Dolphin Wahoo Amendment 5) (RIN 0648-BD08)

LOCATION: Exclusive economic zone off the Atlantic coast

SUMMARY: The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council has submitted the subject amendment for review and implementation by the Secretary of Commerce. The purpose of Dolphin Wahoo Amendment 5 is to revise the acceptable biological catch (ABC) estimates, annual catch limits (ACLs), and recreational annual catch targets (ACTs) for dolphin and wahoo. The revisions incorporate updates to the recreational data as per the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP), as well as updates to commercial and for-hire landings. The revisions are necessary to avoid triggering accountability measures (AMs) for dolphin and wahoo based on ACLs that were established by the Comprehensive ACL Amendment using recreational data under the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFSS) system. National Marine Fisheries Service no longer uses the MRFSS and now estimates recreational landings using the MRIP.

Additionally, Amendment 5 would revise the AMs and update the framework procedure for dolphin and wahoo. The intent is to include the best scientific information available to specify ABCs, ACLs, and recreational ACTs, and prevent unnecessary negative socio-economic impacts in the dolphin wahoo fishery and fishing community, in accordance with the provisions set forth in the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL:

Roy E. Crabtree, Ph.D.
Regional Administrator
National Marine Fisheries Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
263 13th Avenue South
St. Petersburg, Florida 33701
727-824-5305

The environmental review process led us to conclude that these actions 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 and can be accessed at http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/s_atl/dw/2013/am5/index.html.

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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