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

APR 29 2014

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: Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA) On the Issuance of a Modified Scientific Research Permit (File No. 16482-01) to the Warnell School of Forest Resources, Fisheries Division, to Conduct Scientific Research on Endangered Shortnose and Atlantic sturgeon in Georgia and Florida Waters.

LOCATION: Concurrent sampling of Atlantic and shortnose sturgeon with gill and trammel nets will occur in rivers in the action area in Georgia and Florida. In the Savannah River, netting will take place from the mouth to the Augusta diversion dam. Sampling in the Ogeechee River will occur from the mouth to river mile 150, as well as on the Canoochee River, a tributary of the Ogeechee River, from its confluence with the Ogeechee to river mile 50. Sampling will occur in the entire length of Altamaha River (to river mile 215) and its tributaries, the Oconee River (from the confluence to the Sinclair Dam) and in the Ocmulgee River. The Satilla River will be sampled along its entire length from the mouth upstream to river mile 150. Sampling in the St Marys River will take place from Kings Bay at the mouth to river mile 125. New sampling, the subject of the consultation, will also take place in the Nassau River from the mouth to river mile 40 and St. Johns Rivers to Palatka at Highway 100 bridge and also the interconnecting waterways.

SUMMARY: The main objectives of the proposed modification are identical to those of the original individual permit, which, when issued, would continue to update information on the abundance, population dynamics, seasonal movements, diet, general ecology, and environmental tolerance of both Atlantic sturgeon and shortnose sturgeon in the Savannah, Ogeechee, Altamaha, Satilla, and Saint Marys Rivers in Georgia waters, and in the Nassau and Saint Johns Rivers in Florida waters, to facilitate recovery of both species.

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RESPONSIBLE
OFFICIAL:

Donna S. Wieting
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National Marine Fisheries Service
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
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(301) 713-2332

The environmental review process led us to conclude that this action will not have a significant effect on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared. A copy of the finding of no significant impact (FONSI), including the supporting supplemental environmental assessment (SEA), is enclosed for your information.

Although NOAA is not soliciting comments on this completed SEA/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