



NEWS FROM NOAA

NATIONAL OCEANIC & ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION • US DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

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NOAA REJECTS LONGLINE SWORDFISH PERMIT BUT REMAINS COMMITTED TO RESEARCH IN CLOSED AREAS

NOAA Fisheries will not issue an exempted fishing permit to a fisherman's association to longline for swordfish in two areas off the Southeast coast that have been closed to pelagic longlining since 2001. However, NOAA Fisheries is exploring options to conduct rigorous scientific research in the closed areas on how recent gear changes in the pelagic longline fishery will affect catch and bycatch rates.

"In order for NOAA Fisheries to evaluate the closed areas, we must have a well-designed scientific study that helps us determine whether pelagic longlining can resume in a way that does not jeopardize the successful rebuilding of swordfish, lead to the excessive discard of juvenile swordfish or contribute to the bycatch of sea turtles," said William T. Hogarth, director of NOAA Fisheries.

Blue Water Fishermen's Association applied in February 2007 for an exempted fishing permit to collect fisheries data as well as harvest swordfish using 13 pelagic longline vessels in and around the Charleston Bump and Florida-East Coast pelagic longline closed areas.

NOAA Fisheries received many comments on the permit application. Most of those comments were opposed to granting the exempted fishing permit and a number of comments expressed concern about the scientific aspects of the proposal.

The decision is available in the Federal Register at:
<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/index.html>

NOAA Fisheries Service is dedicated to protecting and preserving our nation's living marine resources and their habitat through scientific research, management and enforcement. NOAA Fisheries Service provides effective stewardship of these resources for the benefit of the nation, supporting coastal communities that depend upon them, and helping to provide safe and healthy seafood to consumers and recreational opportunities for the American public.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, is celebrating 200 years of science and service to the nation. From the establishment of the Survey of the Coast in 1807 by Thomas Jefferson to the formation of the Weather Bureau and the Commission of Fish and Fisheries in the 1870s, much of America's scientific heritage is rooted in NOAA.

NOAA is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and information service delivery for transportation, and by providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), NOAA is working with its federal partners, more than 70 countries and the European Commission to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes, predicts and protects.

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On the Web:

NOAA: <http://www.noaa.gov>

NOAA Fisheries: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov>

NOAA Fisheries Highly Migratory Species: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms>