

Commerce, Room 1104. Tel: (202) 482-3575.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The U.S. Electronic Education Fairs for China and India are part of a joint initiative between the U.S. Department of Commerce and the U.S. Department of State. The purpose of the initiative is to inform Chinese and Indian students who are interested in studying outside of their home countries about the breadth and depth of the higher education opportunities available in the United States. The initiative utilizes a three-pronged multimedia approach through the Internet, on-ground activities, and television, including two twenty-three minute TV programs and a series of short, 1-2 minute programs airing on local cable and national satellite TV stations throughout China and India. All programming directs viewers to the corresponding Internet landing page. DVDs distributed through education trade fairs and EducationUSA advising centers throughout China and India will further this message.

Accredited U.S. educational institutions are invited to sponsor the China and India Internet landing pages. Sponsorships for China OR India will be available in Gold and Silver categories. Institutions that purchase Gold Sponsorship, priced at \$8,000, will receive a banner-sized ad with their school's logo and name which will link to their institution's Web site. Institutions that purchase Silver Sponsorship, priced at \$3,000, will have their name listed on the site with a link to their institution's Web site. If an institution would like to sponsor and purchase space on both the China and India Internet landing pages, they will receive a 50 percent discount for the second sponsorship, for a total of \$12,000 for Gold and \$4,500 for Silver.

Applications by qualifying institutions will be selected on a rolling basis, capacity permitting.

Dated: November 5, 2007.

David Long,

*Director, Office of Service Industries,
International Trade Administration.*

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XD52

Atlantic Highly Migratory Species; Exempted Fishing, Scientific Research, Display, and Chartering Permits; Letters of Acknowledgment

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of intent; request for comments.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces its intent to issue Exempted Fishing Permits (EFPs), Scientific Research Permits (SRPs), Display Permits, Letters of Acknowledgment (LOAs), and Chartering Permits for the collection of Atlantic Highly Migratory Species (HMS) in 2008. In general, EFPs and related permits would authorize collections of a limited number of tunas, swordfish, billfishes, and sharks from Federal waters in the Atlantic Ocean, Caribbean Sea, and Gulf of Mexico for the purposes of scientific data collection, public display, and chartering. Generally, these permits will be valid from the date of issuance through December 31, 2008, unless otherwise specified, subject to the terms and conditions of individual permits.

DATES: Written comments on these activities received in response to this notice will be considered by NMFS when issuing EFPs and related permits and must be received on or before December 10, 2007.

ADDRESSES: Comments may be submitted by any of the following methods:

- Email: HMSEFP.2008@noaa.gov.

Include in the subject line the following identifier: 0648-XD52

- Mail: Margo Schulze-Haugen, Chief, Highly Migratory Species Management Division (F/SF1), NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910.

- Fax: (301) 713-1917.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Michael Clark, phone: (301) 713-2347, fax: (301) 713-1917 or Jackie Wilson, phone: (240) 338-3936.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Issuance of EFPs and related permits are necessary for the collection of HMS for public display and scientific research because regulations (e.g., seasons, prohibited species, authorized gear, and minimum sizes) may prohibit the collection of live animals or biological samples for these purposes. Collection

for scientific research and display represents a small portion of the overall fishing mortality for HMS and this mortality will be counted against the quota of the species harvested, as appropriate. The terms and conditions of individual permits are unique; however, all permits will include reporting requirements, limit the number and species of HMS to be collected, and only authorize collection in Federal waters of the Atlantic Ocean, Gulf of Mexico, and Caribbean Sea.

EFPs and related permits are issued under the authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Reauthorization Act (Magnuson-Stevens RA) (16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*) and/or the Atlantic Tunas Convention Act (ATCA) (16 U.S.C. 971 *et seq.*). Regulations at 50 CFR 600.745 and 50 CFR 635.32 govern scientific research activity, exempted fishing, chartering arrangements, and exempted educational activities with respect to Atlantic HMS. Since the Magnuson-Stevens Act does not consider scientific research to be "fishing", scientific research is exempt from this statute, and NMFS does not issue EFPs for bona fide research activities (e.g., research conducted from a research vessel and not a commercial or recreational fishing vessel) involving species that are only regulated under the Magnuson-Stevens Act (e.g., sharks) and not under ATCA. NMFS requests copies of scientific research plans for these activities and indicates concurrence by issuing an LOA to researchers to indicate that the proposed activity meets the definition of research and is therefore exempt from regulation.

Scientific research is not exempt under ATCA. NMFS issues SRPs for collection of species managed under this statute (e.g., tunas, swordfish, and billfish), which authorize researchers to collect HMS from bona fide research vessels. EFPs are issued to researchers collecting ATCA-managed species and conducting research from commercial or recreational fishing vessels. NMFS regulations concerning the implantation or attachment of archival tags in Atlantic HMS require scientists to report their activities associated with implantation of these tags.

NMFS seeks public comment on its intent to issue EFPs for the purpose of collecting biological samples under at-sea fisheries observer programs. NMFS intends to issue EFPs to any NMFS employee or NMFS-approved contractor/observer to bring onboard and possess (for scientific research purposes, biological sampling, measurement, etc.) Atlantic tuna, swordfish, shark, or billfish provided

the fish is a tagged and recaptured fish, dead prior to being brought onboard, and specifically authorized for sampling by the Director of NMFS' Office of Sustainable Fisheries at the request of the Southeast or Northeast Fisheries Science Center. On average, several hundred swordfish, tunas, and sharks are collected by at-sea observers under such EFPs in any given year. Issuing these permits allows observers to utilize fish for scientific information that would have been discarded dead anyway. In 2006 and 2007, NMFS issued three exempted fishing permits per year authorizing observers to collect HMS while observing commercial fishing activities.

NMFS is seeking public comment on its intent to issue Display Permits for the collection of sharks and other HMS for public display in 2008. Collection of sharks and other HMS sought for public display in aquariums often involves collection when the commercial fishing seasons are closed, collection of prohibited species, and collection of fish below the minimum size for recreational permit holders. NMFS established a 60-metric ton (mt) whole weight (ww) (approximately 3,000 sharks) quota for the public display and research of sharks (combined) in the final Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Atlantic Tunas, Swordfish, and Sharks (1999 FMP). This quota has been analyzed in conjunction with other sources of mortality, and NMFS has determined that harvesting this amount for public display will not have a significant impact on the stock. Additionally, the number of sharks actually harvested for display and research has remained under the annual 60 mt quota every year since inception of the quota. For instance, in 2006, approximately 18 percent of sharks authorized for public display were actually collected. Only two, non-shark HMS were collected under display permits in 2006. A proposed rule (72 FR 41392, July 27, 2007) accompanying the draft Amendment 2 to the Consolidated HMS FMP is re-evaluating this display and scientific research quota for sharks

in light of the results of recent stock assessments. Specifically, the rule proposes that collections of sandbar sharks and dusky sharks collected under the auspices of EFPs and Display Permits be more restricted than in the past given the results of recent shark stock assessments. The rule does not propose modifying the overall 60 mt ww quota.

NMFS may also consider applications for bycatch reduction research in closed regions of the Atlantic Ocean, Gulf of Mexico, and Caribbean Sea to test gear modifications and fishing techniques aimed to avoid incidental capture of non-target species. These permits may require further National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analyses. NMFS will seek additional public comment on these applications, as necessary, unless the research is being conducted from bona fide scientific research vessels.

Comments are also requested on the issuance of Chartering Permits to vessels fishing for HMS while operating under chartering arrangements within the EEZ of other nations. Chartering Permits allow a U.S. fishing vessel to fish in a manner consistent with another country's regulations without violating U.S. regulations and ensure that such vessels report to the proper authorities, consistent with International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) recommendations. To date, NMFS has only issued one Chartering Permit for a pelagic longline vessel (2004). The Agency received an application for a chartering permit to allow a U.S. HMS permit holder to charter a Canadian flagged vessel that would fish in conformity with U.S. pelagic longline regulations yet attribute associated landings to quotas of the United States. The application was denied because it did not conform with domestic law that prohibits foreign vessels from fishing or landing HMS within the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone or the ICCAT recommendation (02-21) that authorizes Chartering Permits.

In 2007, NMFS issued an exempted fishing permit to collect Atlantic bluefin

tuna from a commercial fishing vessel in international waters (the central north Atlantic Ocean, including the Northeast Distant gear restricted area). This research is important to improving the understanding of the distribution of bluefin tuna during times they are not traditionally fished and to improve the knowledge of bluefin tuna stock mixing, migration, and life history patterns based on microconstituent analysis and biological sampling. NMFS seeks public comment on issuing permits authorizing similar activities in 2008.

The current preferred alternative in the proposed rule accompanying the draft Amendment 2 to the Consolidated HMS FMP would establish a shark research fishery. As proposed, a limited number of vessels (e.g. 5-10) with directed or incidental shark permits would be issued shark research permits and could participate in a small research fishery for sandbar sharks that would harvest the proposed commercial sandbar quota (116.6 metric tons dressed weight). These vessels would also be able to harvest, and sell, other authorized species of sharks subject to the terms and conditions of individual permits. If this measure is finalized, NMFS would publish a notice at that time outlining the research objectives for the fishery and seeking applications for the following fishing year.

The authorized number of species for 2007, as well as the number of specimens collected in 2006, are summarized in Table 1. The number of specimens collected in 2007 will be available when 2007 interim and annual reports are submitted to NMFS. In 2006, the number of specimens collected was less than the number of authorized specimens for all permit types. In all cases, mortality associated with an EFP, SRP, Display, or LOA (except for larvae) is counted against the appropriate quota. A total of 44 EFPs and related permits were issued by NMFS in 2006 for the collection of HMS. As of October, there have been 38 permits issued in 2007.

TABLE 1. SUMMARY OF HMS EXEMPTED PERMITS ISSUED IN 2006 AND 2007. AHMS@ REFERS TO MULTIPLE SPECIES BEING COLLECTED UNDER A GIVEN PERMIT TYPE.

	2006					2007		
	Number of Permits Issued	Number of Authorized Fish	Number of Authorized Larvae	Number of Fish Taken	Number of Larvae Taken	Number of Permits Issued	Number of Authorized Fish	Number of Authorized Larvae
EFP								
HMS	4	1,120	0	126	0	9	875	0
Shark	7	605	0	219	0	4	224	0
Tuna	10	590	0	71	0	4	275	0

TABLE 1. SUMMARY OF HMS EXEMPTED PERMITS ISSUED IN 2006 AND 2007. AHMS@ REFERS TO MULTIPLE SPECIES BEING COLLECTED UNDER A GIVEN PERMIT TYPE.—Continued

	2006					2007		
	Number of Permits Issued	Number of Authorized Fish	Number of Authorized Larvae	Number of Fish Taken	Number of Larvae Taken	Number of Permits Issued	Number of Authorized Fish	Number of Authorized Larvae
Billfish	3	179	0	57	0	2	73	1,000
SRP								
HMS	4	485	1,200	2	0	1	18	0
Shark	2	400	0	284	0	2	670	0
Billfish	1	0	500	0	0	0	0	0
Tuna	0	0	0	0	0	1	12	0
Display								
HMS	1	89	0	2	0	2	90	0
Shark	7	505	0	89	0	6	266	0
Total	39	3,973	1,700	850	0	31	2,503	1,000
LOA*								
Shark	5	2,853	0	1,021	0	7	3,120	0

*LOAs are issued for bonafide scientific research activities involved non-ATCA managed species (i.e., sharks). Collections made under an LOAs are not authorized; rather this estimated harvest for research is acknowledged by NMFS. Permittees are encouraged to report all fishing activities in a timely manner.

Final decisions on the issuance of any EFPs, SRPs, Display, and Chartering Permits will depend on the submission of all required information about the proposed activities, NMFS' review of public comments received on this notice, an applicant's reporting history on past permits issued, past law enforcement violations, consistency with relevant NEPA documents, and any consultations with appropriate Regional Fishery Management Councils, states, or Federal agencies. NMFS does not anticipate any significant environmental impacts from the issuance of these EFPs as assessed in the 1999 FMP.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 971 *et seq.* and 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: November 1, 2007.

Emily H. Menashes,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.
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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Department of the Army; Corps of Engineers

Intent To Prepare Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Revised Water Control Manuals for the Alabama-Coosa-Tallapoosa River Basin

AGENCY: Department of the Army, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, DoD.

ACTION: Notice of intent.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), Mobile District, intends to prepare an update of the water control manuals for the Alabama-Coosa-Tallapoosa (ACT) River Basin. Concurrent with that revision, a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be prepared, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The Draft EIS will address updated operating criteria and guidelines for managing the water storage and release actions of agency water managers and associated environmental impacts.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Questions about the manual update or NEPA process can be answered by: Mr. Chuck Sumner, Environment and Resources Branch, Planning Division, U.S. Army Engineer District-Mobile, Post Office Box 2288, Mobile, AL 36628-0001; Telephone (251)694-3857; or delivered by electronic facsimile at (251) 694-3815; or E-mail: lewis.c.sumner@usace.army.mil. You may also request to be included on the mailing list for public distribution of notices, meeting announcements and documents.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background. Water control manuals are guidance documents that assist federal water managers in the operation of individual and multiple interdependent federal reservoirs on the same river system. They provide technical, historical, hydrological, geographic, demographic, policy and other information that guide the proper management of reservoirs during times

of high water, low water, and normal conditions. The manuals also contain drought plans and zones to assist federal water managers in knowing when to reduce or increase reservoir releases, and how to ensure the safety of dams during extreme conditions. The authority and guidance for the Corps to prepare and update these manuals may be found in Section 7 of the 1944 Flood Control Act, the Federal Power Act, Section 9 of Public Law 436-83, and the following Corps of Engineer Regulations: ER 1110-2-240, ER 1110-2-241, ER 1110-2-1941 and ER 1110-2-8156.

The ACT Basin provides water resources for multiple purposes from northwestern GA down through central AL and to the Gulf Coast at the mouth of Mobile Bay, extending a distance of approximately 320 miles and encompassing an area of approximately 22,800 square miles. The master operating manual for the ACT River Basin and the individual reservoir manuals were last updated at various dates as far back as the early 1950's. Sixteen major dams and reservoirs (five Federal and eleven non-Federal) are located in the basin. In Georgia, these include Allatoona Dam and Lake, and Carters Dam and Lake, both owned and operated by the Corps. In Alabama they include Weiss Dam and Lake, H. Neely Henry Dam and Lake, Logan Martin Dam and Lake, Lay Dam and Lake, Mitchell Dam and Lake, Walter Bouldin Dam and Lake, Jordan Dam and Lake, Harris Dam and Lake, Martin Dam and Lake, Yates Dam and Lake, and Thurlow