



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Silver Spring, MD 20910

FEB 24 2005

Dear Consulting Party or Marine Fisheries Commission:

We are requesting your comments on the enclosed Pre-draft of the Consolidated Atlantic Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Fishery Management Plan. This fishery management plan would consolidate all existing HMS fishery management plans, including billfish, into one fishery management plan. An electronic version of the attached document is also available on the HMS Management Division's website at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms>.

Under §304(g)(1)(A) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act), NMFS is required to consult with affected Fishery Management Councils, ICCAT commissioners and advisory groups, and the Advisory Panels established under the Magnuson-Stevens Act regarding amendments to fishery management plans. The Pre-draft includes a summary of the purpose and need, a summary of impacts for management alternatives being considered at this time, and the 2005 Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) Report. Alternatives may be modified, removed, or supplemented based on comments received and additional analyses.

NMFS specifically solicits your opinions and advice on whether the range of alternatives is appropriate or if there are additional alternatives that should be considered. Additionally, please comment on the accuracy and completeness of the impacts described.

NMFS welcomes the opportunity to discuss this Pre-draft document, the upcoming Draft Fishery Management Plan and Proposed Rule package, or any other related HMS issue with the Fishery Management Councils and Marine Fisheries Commissions at their meetings. Please contact Karyl Brewster-Geisz, Megan Gamble, or Heather Stirratt to discuss scheduling.

Any written comments on the Pre-draft should be submitted to Christopher Rogers, Chief, HMS Management Division, National Marine Fisheries Service, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910 or faxed to (301) 713-1917 by **March 31, 2005**. For further information or hard copies of the enclosed document, contact Karyl Brewster-Geisz at 301-713-2347.

Thank you in advance for your comments.

Sincerely,

Christopher Rogers
Chief, Highly Migratory Species Management
Division

Enclosure



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