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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **NOAA Proposes Rule to Deny Port Entry to Illegal Fishing Vessels**

NOAA is seeking public comment on a proposed rule that would allow the NOAA assistant administrator for fisheries to deny a vessel entry into a U.S. port or access to port services if that vessel has been listed for engaging in illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing by one of the world's international fishery management organizations.

"Illegal fishing is a global problem that is depleting fish stocks and hurting the economies of nations and the livelihoods of people who depend on sustainable fishing," said Jim Balsiger, acting NOAA assistant administrator for NOAA's Fisheries Service. "Denying port access to vessels that engage in illegal fishing is an effective way to curb this damaging activity."

The rule would also prohibit persons and businesses from providing certain services to, and engaging in commercial transactions with, listed IUU vessels. Those services would include processing fish harvested by a listed IUU vessel or processing fish using a listed IUU vessel; joint fishing operations; providing supplies, fuel, crew, or otherwise supporting a listed IUU vessel; and entering into a chartering arrangement with a listed IUU vessel.

Current U.S. law has largely discouraged IUU fishing vessels from arriving in U.S. ports. However, there have been a few instances when transport vessels identified on IUU lists have reached U.S. ports. This rule would clarify actions that the U.S. can take to deny these vessels access to the United States.

In recent years, several organizations, such as the International Commission for Conservation of Atlantic Tunas and the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission, have adopted binding measures that establish both procedures for identifying vessels that engaged in IUU fishing activities and actions to be taken against such vessels. Such measures can act as a strong deterrent to engage in IUU fishing by reducing the profitability of such activities. Nations that are members of these organizations are required to take actions against the listed IUU vessels, such as denying port entry, essentially closing their markets to the vessels.

IUU fishing activities include fishing in an area without authorization; failing to record or declare catches, or making false reports; using prohibited fishing gear; re-supplying or re-fueling IUU vessels.

Comments on the proposed rule, identified by RIN 0648-AW09, may be submitted electronically by Feb. 25, 2010 via the Federal eRulemaking Portal at <http://www.regulations.gov>. Comments may also be mailed to:

Mi Ae Kim  
Trade and Marine Stewardship Division  
NOAA's Fisheries Service Office of International Affairs  
1315 East-West Highway  
Silver Spring MD 20910.

Links to relevant conservation measures and IUU vessel lists can be found at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/ia>.

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