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

SEP 23 2010

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: Regulatory Amendment to the Reef Fish Fishery Management Plan (FMP) of the Gulf of Mexico to Set Total Allowable Catch (TAC) for Red Grouper and Establish Marking Requirements for Buoy Gear

LOCATION: Exclusive economic zone in the Gulf of Mexico

SUMMARY: This regulatory amendment would adjust TAC from the existing 7.57 million pounds (MP) to 5.68 MP. This decrease in TAC is in line with the goals and objectives of the Council's FMP for the management of this species. Resultant rulemaking would adjust the commercial quota to 4.32 MP given the 76:24 percent commercial and recreational allocation of red grouper. In addition, the amendment would require buoy gear floats to be marked as part of the revised definition of this gear to improve the enforceability of buoy gear regulations. The environmental assessment (EA) provides a review of the NEPA criteria for significant effects (40 CFR Part 1508.27) and NOAA Fisheries Service criteria for significance (NAO 216-6 Section 6.02), and concluded no significant effect on the quality of the human environment is anticipated from this action.

RESPONSIBLE
OFFICIAL: Roy E. Crabtree, Ph.D.
Regional Administrator
Southeast Regional Office
National Marine Fisheries Service
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The environmental review process led us to conclude that this action will not have a significant impact on the environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement was not prepared. A copy of the finding of no significant impact (FONSI), including the EA, is enclosed for your information.

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Although NOAA is not soliciting comments on this completed EA/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 Paul N. Doremus, Ph.D.
NOAA NEPA Coordinator

Enclosure