


UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE

Southeast Regional Office

263 13th Avenue South

St. Petersburg, Florida 33701-5505

<http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov>

DRAFT

F/SER24:SB

Mr. Joe Jewell
 Mississippi Department of Marine Resources
 1141 Bayview Avenue
 Biloxi, MS 39530

Dear Mr. Jewell:

This Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) is issued, with limited special conditions, under procedures established at 50 CFR 600.745(b). The EFP exempts the activities described herein for a year-round 24-month period beginning on the date of issuance. If issued, the EFP would exempt, with certain conditions, for-hire vessels licensed by the State of Mississippi from regulations found at 50 CFR 622.91 (prohibition of possession of red drum in federal waters). The collection of red drum is intended to augment the data available to stock assessment scientists. Data will be collected for studies of population genetics, age and growth, reproduction, and food habits of older individuals found in federal waters.

In summary, Mississippi-licensed for-hire vessels identified on the enclosed list are permitted possession of one red drum per person per trip from federal waters with no length restrictions. A maximum of 30,000 pounds of red drum (ca. 2,000 fish) will be harvested over the two-year period. Anglers may keep their fish upon completion of data collection and removal of tissue/hard parts needed for analyses. Vessel captains must report each trip for dockside intercepts. Adjustments to collections would be made during the program to ensure the self-imposed 30,000-pound "quota" is not exceeded. All data collected within the EFP will be available for state-based and federal stock assessments upon request. The EFP applies to research activities conducted in federal waters in the Gulf of Mexico. Collecting efforts in protected areas must be authorized through appropriate government officials.

A copy of the EFP, the approved research plan, and the enclosed list must be onboard each participating vessel and available for inspection. This list of approved vessels and personnel may be amended during the course of the EFP. Requests for such amendments must be provided at least 30 days in advance. Reporting and other requirements are included in the following conditions of this EFP:

1. The holders of this permit may not conduct research within marine protected areas, marine sanctuaries, special management zones, or over artificial reefs, without additional authorization.
2. Please make a copy of any final report available to the Regional Administrator, NOAA Fisheries Service, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, Florida, 33701.

Sincerely,

DRAFT

Roy E. Crabtree, Ph.D.
 Regional Administrator

Enclosure

cc: F/EN4, SEFSC, SAFMC

