



College of Science & Engineering  
Marine Genomics Laboratory  
6300 Ocean Drive, Unit 5800  
Corpus Christi, TX 78412  
O: (361)-825-2859 F: (361)-825-5789

Mr. Andrew J. Strelcheck, Regional Administrator  
NOAA Fisheries Service  
Southeast Regional Office  
Sustainable Fisheries Division  
263 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue South  
St. Petersburg, FL 33701

21 July 2022

Dear Mr. Strelcheck,

I am writing this letter to request an Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) to allow for select commercial fishermen to retain speckled hind incidentally caught in the U.S. South Atlantic. In the spring of 2019, I was awarded a Marine Fisheries Initiative (MARFIN) grant to study the genetic population structure, connectivity, and life history of speckled hind in the U.S. South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico. However, since being awarded the grant, collaborators with both the National Marine Fisheries Service and South Carolina Department of Natural Resources have struggled to obtain the projected number of samples. Specifically, in the U.S. South Atlantic, only 11 of the 60 projected samples have been obtained to date. In an attempt to increase the sample size, I applied for and was issued an EFP in March of 2021 which allowed for the collection of up to 80 speckled hind in the U.S. South Atlantic. However, that EFP expires on August 31 of this year, and only 2 speckled hind have been obtained through the permit to date. We have continued to add additional fishermen to the EFP over the last 12 months, and we believe that having an additional two years to collect samples would contribute to the completion of our assessment of speckled hind population structure, connectivity, and life history in the U.S. South Atlantic. Additionally, because all speckled hind are caught incidentally (during routine commercial fishing trips), no additional environmental impacts would occur through the issuance of the EFP.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Portnoy".

Dr. David Portnoy  
Associate Professor  
Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi  
6300 Ocean Drive, Unit 5800  
Corpus Christi, TX 78412  
david.portnoy@tamucc.edu; (361)-825-2859

## Exempted Fishing Permit Application

1. **Date application submitted:** July 20, 2022  
**Research period:** September 18, 2022–August 31, 2024

2. **Project coordinator's information:**  
Dr. David Portnoy  
Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi  
6300 Ocean Drive, Unit 5800  
Corpus Christi, TX 78412  
(361)-825-2859  
david.portnoy@tamucc.edu

### **Applicant's information:**

Same as above.

3. **Point of contact:**  
Same as above.

4. **Statement of purpose and goals:**

In the spring of 2019, I was awarded a Marine Fisheries Initiative (MARFIN) grant to assess the population structure, connectivity, and life history of speckled hind in the U.S. South Atlantic and Gulf Mexico. However, over the first two years of sampling, colleagues with the National Marine Fisheries Service and the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources have struggled to obtain the projected number of samples. Specifically, in the U.S. South Atlantic, only 11 of the 60 projected speckled hind samples have been obtained to date. Consequently, I applied for and was issued an Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) in March of 2021 to allow select commercial fishermen to retain up to 80 incidentally caught speckled hind in the U.S. South Atlantic. However, since the EFP was issued, we have only obtained an additional 2 speckled hind samples, and the EFP expires on August 31 of this year. We have continued to add additional fishermen to the EFP over the last 12 months, and we believe that having an additional year to collect samples would contribute to the completion of our assessment of speckled hind population structure, connectivity, and life history in the U.S. South Atlantic. Additionally, because all speckled hind are caught incidentally (during routine commercial fishing trips), no additional environmental impacts would occur through the issuance of the EFP.

5. **Specific regulations for which an exemption is being requested:**

South Atlantic federal regulation: speckled hind closed to harvest and possession in federal waters (<https://safmc.net/regulations/regulations-by-species/speckled-hind/>). Exemption from the aforementioned regulation would allow select commercial fishermen to retain speckled hind in the U.S. South Atlantic, and would facilitate the completion of our assessment of speckled hind population structure, connectivity, and life history.

6. **Catch information:**

Species harvested under the EFP: Speckled hind (up to 40 per year)  
Incidental species harvested during exempted fishing: NA

Incidental species discarded: NA

Disposition of species harvested under the EFP: A fin clip will be taken from captured speckled hind and shipped to the Marine Genomics Laboratory at Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi. Speckled hind carcasses will either be shipped to the Marine Genomics Laboratory at Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi or to Beverly Barnett at the NMFS Southeast Fisheries Science Center for otolith extraction.

Anticipated impacts: As all commercial fishermen listed herein catch speckled hind incidentally (during routine commercial fishing trips), no additional impacts will occur through the issuance of the EFP and the retention of speckled hind.

7. **Anticipated effort (Mr. Moran, Mr. Freeman, Ms. Helmey, Mr. Robinson, Mr. McGraw, Mr. Ham):**

For fixed gear:

Type and size of gear to be used: Rod-and-reel

Amount of gear to be used (number of rods): 1-4

Number of gear hauls: NA

Average soak time: 1-5 minutes

Sampling months of year: All 12 months

Sampling location (including depth): Georgetown, SC to Cape Canaveral, FL; 70-600 feet

**Anticipated effort (Mr. Hull):**

For fixed gear:

Type and size of gear to be used: Black sea bass pots (24 in × 24 in × 24 in; 2 in square mesh wire)

Amount of gear to be used (number of pots): 20

Number of gear hauls: Variable

Average soak time: Variable

Sampling months of year: All 12 months

Sampling location (including depth): Within 30 miles of Ponce Inlet, FL; 60-110 feet

\* All below commercial fishermen were approved and added to the EFP issued in 2021.

8. **Information for the vessel to be used (Mr. Moran):**

Vessel name: Blackfish

USCG documentation number, state license, or registration: FL0435LD

Vessel home port: Mayport, FL (Jacksonville, FL)

Vessel owner information:

Jonathan Moran

1869 Cortez Road, Jacksonville, FL 32246

(904)-962-5169

chosen1.jm@gmail.com

Vessel captain name: Jonathan Moran

**Information for the vessel to be used (Mr. Freeman):**

Vessel name: In the Hole  
USCG documentation number, state license, or registration: FL8790SV  
Vessel home port: Port Orange, FL  
Vessel owner information:  
Double Trouble Fishing Corporation  
6216 Foxhaven Ct  
Port Orange, FL 32127  
(386)-795-3664  
mike@twojerks.com  
Vessel captain name: Benjamin Watkins

**Information for the vessel to be used (Mr. Hull):**

Vessel name: WORK-A-HULL-IC  
USCG documentation number, state license, or registration: 1024408  
Vessel home port: Ponce Inlet, FL  
Vessel owner information:  
Sea Farmers, Inc.  
111 West Granada Blvd.  
Ormond Beach, FL 32174  
(386)-547-1254  
hullsseafood@aol.com  
Vessel captain name: James G. Hull Jr.

**Information for the vessel to be used (Ms. Helmey):**

Vessel name: Miss Judy Too  
USCG documentation number, state license, or registration: 1020822  
Vessel home port: Savannah, GA  
Vessel owner information:  
Judy Helmey  
124 Palmetto Drive  
Savannah, GA 31410  
(912)-429-7671  
judyhelmey@gmail.com  
Vessel captain name: Judy Helmey

**Information for the vessel to be used (Mr. Robinson):**


Vessel name: Entertainer  
USCG documentation number, state license, or registration: 1024187  
Vessel home port: Georgetown, SC  
Vessel owner information:  
The Entertainer, Inc.  
PO Box 972  
Murrels Inlet, SC 29576  
Vessel captain name: David R. Robinson

**Information for the vessel to be used (Mr. McGraw):**

Vessel name: Can Do II  
USCG documentation number, state license, or registration: 625015  
Vessel home port: Georgetown, SC  
Vessel owner information:  
    Can Do Fishing, LLC  
    PO Box 972  
    Murrels Inlet, SC 29576  
Vessel captain name: Andrew R. McGraw

**Information for the vessel to be used (Mr. Ham):**

Vessel name: Kimberly L  
USCG documentation number, state license, or registration: 663048  
Vessel home port: Georgetown, SC  
Vessel owner information:  
    Head East II Seafood, Inc.  
    PO Box 972  
    Murrels Inlet, SC 29576  
Vessel captain name: David T. Ham

9. **Signature of Dr. David Portnoy:**  \_\_\_\_\_