



**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>

F/SER24:SB

Ms. Judy Jamison  
Gulf and South Atlantic Fisheries Foundation, Inc.  
5401 West Kennedy Boulevard, Suite 740  
Tampa, Florida 33609

Dear Ms. Jamison:

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 24-month period beginning October 2014. The EFP exempts, with certain conditions, personnel from the Gulf and South Atlantic Fisheries Foundation, Inc. (Foundation) from regulations found at 50 CFR 622, including but not limited to 622.181(b) (limited harvest species), 622.183(b) (seasonal closures), 622.184 (seasonal harvest limitations), 622.185 (size limits), 622.186 (landing fish intact), and 622.191 (trip limits) as they affect the commercial snapper and grouper sector in the South Atlantic Region. The EFP authorizes personnel from the Foundation to possess limited numbers of legal fish and marine resources as well as regulatory discards taken during the course of normal commercial snapper-grouper vertical hook-and-line fishing operations in South Atlantic federal waters as part of a NOAA Fisheries-funded research project. The research is intended to characterize catch and discard mortality within the South Atlantic commercial hook-and-line segment of the snapper-grouper fishery.

The EFP applies to research activities conducted in federal waters off the east coast of Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina. Collecting efforts in state waters and protected areas must be authorized through appropriate government officials. NOAA Fisheries understands most specimens will be examined onboard, with legal specimens becoming part of the vessel's commercial catch and sub-legal sized fish or other forms of regulatory discards being returned to the water as quickly as possible. As necessary, the EFP authorizes Foundation personnel to retain no more than 500 specimens (both legal and regulatory discard) outside of the allowable commercial harvest for extended onboard examination, later shoreside analyses, or quality control assurances.

The permit is valid for Foundation-associated observers and fishing vessels identified on the enclosed list. A copy of the EFP and the enclosed list must be onboard 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 before sampling begins.

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. The holders of this permit may not possess or retain Nassau or goliath grouper.
3. Foundation field personnel are considered designated agents of NOAA Fisheries while conducting work under a NOAA Fisheries-funded research grant, and as such, are authorized to handle sea turtles encountered during the course of this study. As outlined in the regulations at 50 CFR 222.310 and 50 CFR 223.206, an agent may aid and collect data from endangered or threatened sea turtles. Live turtles must be handled and resuscitation measures implemented according to procedures and requirements at 50 CFR 223.206(d)(1). Skin biopsy sampling is not allowed without separate authorization.
4. A report outlining the results of this study is due in accordance with the requirements of the Cooperative Agreement. The report should include a list of the species and their numbers retained under this EFP, as well as their final disposition. Please make a copy of this final report available to the Regional Administrator, NOAA Fisheries Service, 263 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, St. Petersburg, Florida, 33701.

Sincerely,

Roy E. Crabtree, Ph.D.  
Regional Administrator

Enclosure

cc: F/EN4, SEFSC, SAFMC