South Carolina Aquarium

November 21, 2011

Regional Administrator
Southeast Regional Office
9721 Executive Center Drive N.
St. Petersburg, FL 33702

Dear Regional Administrator:

The South Carolina Aquarium (SCA) requests a five (5) year effective Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) for the purpose of collecting specimens for public display. The applicant's contact information is as follows:

Rachel Kalisperis, Curator
South Carolina Aquarium
100 Aquarium Wharf
Charleston, SC 29401
Desk: (843) 579-8610
E-mail: rkalisperis@scaquarium.org

Statement of Purpose

The South Carolina Aquarium (SCA) is a 501 (c)(3) not-for-profit public institution dedicated to the understanding and conservation of South Carolina's natural habitats and resources. It is accredited by the American Zoo and Aquarium Association (AZA), and is located on the Cooper River in Charleston, SC.

The SCA displays and interprets the state's diverse range of aquatic habitats from the mountain streams of the Appalachians to the oceanic depths off the coast. Only species endemic to the South Carolina region are on permanent display. It is a major educational institution, with free admission to school children in prearranged program groups, extensive field studies and outreach programs. Our goal in requesting this permit is to showcase these charismatic fishes in conjunction with our mission to promote a powerful conservation message.

Animals collected will be for the purposes of public display. This will enhance their survival though promoting public stewardship and habitat preservation. The SCA has about 45 aquatic displays, both fresh and salt water, ranging in size up to a 330,000-gallon Great Ocean Tank, where most of our large fishes are displayed.

Collecting Vessels

The SCA would like to use a total of four (4) vessels for collecting purposes. Our two primary vessels belong to the SCA and therefore the contact information for these two vessels is the same as for the Curator. These vessels are

1) 28' abaco (ON THE CLOCK)
   registration number SC-5264-BW
   hull identification number SLPNB986E506

2) 17' Scout (CUB SCOUT)
   registration number SC-9288-BF
   hull identification number SLPL8051E999

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Because these vessels are owned by SCA, the captain will be one of several staff members:

Audra Seladi
Clint Ball
Jason Cassell
Jason Crichton
Jennifer Skoy
Joseph Rafalowski
Nigel Bowers
Rachel Kalisperis
Richard Arnold Postell
Sam David Wilkins
Sarah (Sallie) Miller
Shannon Teders

The third vessel, named MISTRESS, is privately owned and operated locally by a SCA staff member, Nigel Bowers:

3) 26' Glacier Bay (MISTRESS)
   registration number SC-5326-BS
   hull identification number GLKD1867G405

   Nigel Bowers
   7 Atlantic St.
   Charleston, SC 29401
   (843) 722-8503

The fourth vessel is owned and operated by staff at the North Carolina Aquarium at Fort Fisher. Collection trips using this vessel will be infrequent (we anticipate no more than 5 per year):

4) 25' Parker
   registration number NC5836P
   Hap Fatzinger
   The North Carolina Aquarium at Fort Fisher
   900 Loggerhead Road
   Kure Beach, NC 28449
   1-866-301-3476, ext. 217

Species Requests

The following table lists the names and quantities of federally managed species that the SCA is asking permission to collect per calendar year. Desired specimens will be collected and transported live to the SCA for public display purposes. No impacts on marine mammals or endangered species are anticipated.

Common Name	*Scientific Name*	Request per calendar year
black snapper	*Apsilus dentatus*	10
blueline tile	*Caulolatilus microps*	15
cero	*Scomberomorus regalis*	12
cobia	*Rachycentron canadum*	6
coney	*Cephalopholis fulva*	10
dolphinfish	*Coryphaena hippurus*	50
florida pompano	*Trachinotus carolinus*	25
golden crab	*Chaeceon fenneri*	5
graysby	*Cephalopholis cruentata*	10
groupers	*Epinephelus spp.*	40
groupers	*Myctoperca spp.*	50
grunts	*Haemulon spp.*	250
hogfish	*Lachnolaimus maximus*	8
jacks	*Caranx spp.*	100
jacks	*Seriola spp.*	100
king mackerel	*Scomberomorus cavalla*	15
little tunny	*Euthynnus alletteratus*	25
longspine porgy	*Stenotomus caprimus*	50
ocean triggerfish	*Canthidermis sufflamen*	10
porgies	*Calamus spp.*	65
porkfish	*Anisotremus virginicus*	15
puddingwife	*Halichoeres radiatus*	2
queen snapper	*Etelis oculatus*	2
red drum	*Sciaenops ocellatus*	12
red porgy	*Pagrus sedecim*	25
sand tilefish	*Malacanthus plumieri*	13
scup	*Stenotomus chrysops*	50
sea basses	*Centropristis spp.*	100
sheepshead	*Archosargus probatocephalus*	15
shovelnose lobster	*Scyllarus chacei*	12
white shrimp	*Litopenaeus setiferus*	200
pink or brown shrimp	*Farfantepenaeus sp.*	200
snappers	*Lutjanus spp.*	75
spadefish	*Chaetodipterus faber*	50
spanish mackerel	*Scomberomorus maculatus*	15
spiny lobster	*Panulirus argus*	25
tilefish	*Lopholatilus chamaeleonticeps*	15
triggerfish	*Balistes spp.*	12
vermilion snapper	*Rhomboplites aurorubens*	75
wahoo	*Acanthocybium solandri*	5
wreckfish	*Polyprion americanus*	10
yellowtail snapper	*Ocyrurs chrysurus*	15

Location and Frequency of Collections

The SCA ideally would like to collect in federal waters off the coast of South Carolina once a week during the months of May through September and twice a month for all other months. In reality, weather conditions and personnel schedules make actual collection trips less frequent. The aquarium would also like to collect in federal waters off the coast of North Carolina; however, collecting trips to this location would be far less frequent (we anticipate no more than five trips per year).

Collecting will usually take place during mid-day hours with prior notification before each trip made to our National Marine Fisheries Service Special Agent Mark Kinsey at P.O. Box 61420, North Charleston, SC 29419, (843) 572-5801. Notification will include intended time of collecting, location of collecting, gear type that will be deployed and associated sizes and amounts of said gear. Estimated time of collecting per collecting trip should not exceed five hours in duration. The SCA feels the impact on the environment will be minimal.

Collection Gear and Methods

The SCA uses a variety of collection methods, detailed below:

1) Scuba diving with small hand nets and "dip netting" on the surface from a boat in areas around sargassum mats. Incidental collection of sargassum weed from dip netting is anticipated to be none or very low.

Below is a table explaining the different types of nets used by the SCA.

Name	Hoop Dimensions	Handle Length	Net Depth	Mesh
Hand Net	11"x11" square	12"	17"	Clear vinyl with ¼" Delta weave nylon mesh bottom
Hand Net	15" dia. round	8"	22"	1" square knotted monofilament
Hand Net	13"x13" square	8"	22"	1" square knotted monofilament
Dip Net	21"x26" teardrop	48"	21"	½" King weave nylon
Dip Net	21"x26" teardrop	48"	21"	¼" Delta weave nylon

2) Vertical hook and line and trolling with rod and reel. No more than six lines will be deployed at the same time. Both artificial and natural bait will be used.

3) Sea bass pots, spiny lobster traps and golden crab traps that meet the construction requirements of 50 CFR 622.40. These traps will be deployed and retrieved during individual collection trips (i.e. the traps will be deployed for no more than 5 hours at a time). No more than 5 traps at a time will be set and they will be on individual lines.

4) Bait Traps, Habitat Traps and Octopus Traps as described below:

   a) Bait Fish Traps (Figures 1-3). These traps will only be deployed during SCUBA dives (maximum 5 hours). Any non-target species retained in the traps will be released unharmed after a maximum period of 5 hours. Each trap will be retrieved when divers exit the water.

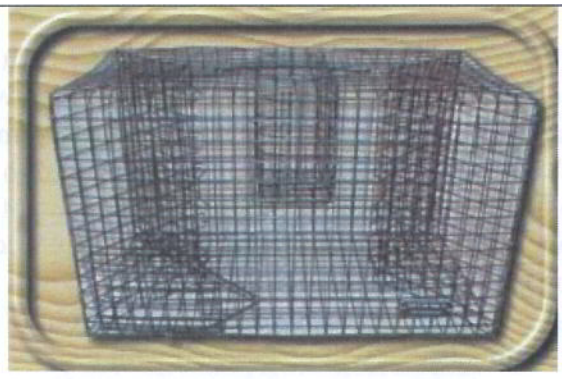

Figure 1. Mid size fisherman's classic bait fish trap
Dimensions 14" High x 13" Wide x 24" Long, 1" square mesh, rubber coated galvanized wire, 2 high entries at 14"

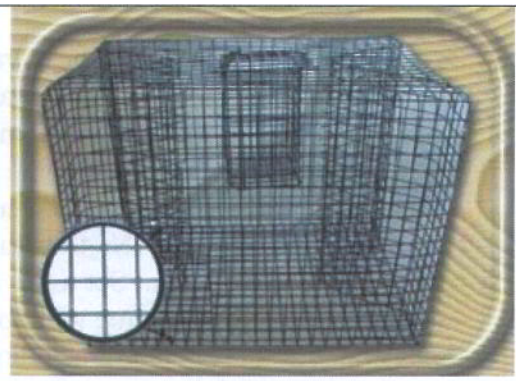

Figure 2. Jumbo size fisherman's jumbo plus bait fish trap
Dimensions 24" High x 24" Wide x 24" Long, 1" square mesh, rubber coated galvanized wire. 2 high entries at top.

Figure 3. Minnow Trap ¼" galvanized uncoated wire mesh.

b) Habitat Traps (Figure 4). These traps are designed to target benthic fishes. They are made of four inch high sections of 20" diameter PVC pipe. A piece of ¼" pvc sheet is permanently attached to the bottom of each trap and another piece is attached to the top using plastic cable ties so that it can be removed if necessary. A three inch diameter hole is drilled through the side of the trap to act as an entrance/exit and is left open to allow animals to enter and exit at will. 3-4 lbs of cement are secured to the bottom of the trap on the inside. A 3' (1 m) length of ¼" nylon line is used to attach a longline snap to the front of the trap near the opening. These traps are then deployed unbaited on a longline of not more than 500 feet total length with an anchor and buoy at each end; or they may be hand placed by divers in the same areas. Set times are expected to be about 7 days but may vary slightly with weather conditions (set time will not exceed 14 days). There are no internal compartments to this habitat trap and the 3" diameter opening is not blocked in any way so that animals can come and go at will. Any non-target species retained in the traps will be released unharmed.

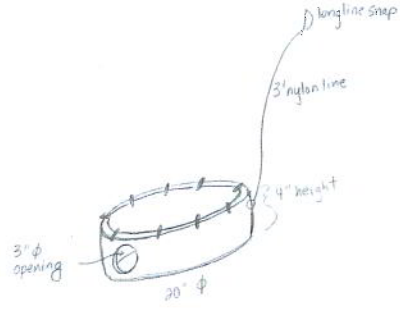

Figure 4. Habitat trap

c) Octopus Traps (Figure 5). These traps as described by Whittaker et al. (1991) are made of 18" (46 cm) lengths of 4" (10.2 cm) diameter black HDPE corrugated drainage pipe. One end is filled with cement to a depth of 2-3" (5-7.5 cm) to block egress and provide weight. The other end will remain open so that the animals may come and go at will. A 3' (1 m) length of ¼" nylon line is used to attach a longline snap to the open end. Up to 20 traps will be deployed unbaited on a longline of not more than 500 feet total length with an anchor and buoy at each end; or they may be hand placed by divers in the same areas. Set times are expected to be about 7 days but may vary slightly with weather conditions (set time will not exceed 14 days). Animals can easily crawl or swim out of the 4" opening of this habitat trap and octopi are the only animals that will be targeted with it. Incidental by-catch is expected to be none or very little and any non-target species retained in the traps will be released unharmed.

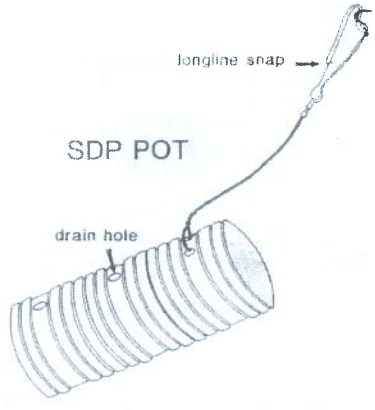

Figure 5. Octopus habitat trap (Whitaker et al. 1991)

Please feel free to contact me if you have any further questions regarding this EFP request. I would be happy to explain or provide further information to you in order to make this request easier to process.

Thank you in advance for your consideration,

Rachel Kalisperis
Curator
South Carolina Aquarium

Reference
Whitaker, J. David, L.B. DeLancey and J.E. Jenkins. 1991. Aspects of the biology and fishery potential for *Octopus vulgaris* off the coast of South Carolina. *Bull. Mar. Sci* 49(1-2):482-493.