

Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) Application

1. Date application submitted: November 13, 2020
Research period: January 15, 2021-August 31, 2022

2. Project coordinator's information:
Dr. David Portnoy
Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi
6300 Ocean Dr. Unit 5892
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:

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 18 months 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 9 of the 60 projected speckled hind samples have been obtained. Consequently, I have reached out to commercial fishermen who encounter speckled hind in the U.S. South Atlantic, but who are prohibited from retaining them, as speckled hind are closed to harvest and possession in federal waters in the U.S. South Atlantic. Mr. Jonathan Moran and Mr. Mike Freeman occasionally catch speckled hind, *Epinephelus drummondhayi*, when targeting species in the snapper/grouper complex with rod-and-reel, and currently release all speckled hind caught. Allowing them to retain speckled hind through the requested EFP 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 both catch speckled hind 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 Mr. Moran and Mr. Freeman 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 be shipped to Beverly Barnett at the NMFS Southeast Fisheries Science Center for otolith extraction.

Anticipated impacts: As Mr. Moran and Mr. Freeman 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):

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

Amount of gear to be used (number of rods): 3-4

Number of gear hauls: NA

Average soak time: 1-2 minutes

Sampling months of year: All 12 months

Sampling location (including depth): 3080; 100-600 feet

Anticipated effort (Mr. Freeman):

Type and size of gear to be used: Rod-and-reel (hook and line)

Amount of gear to be used (number of rods): 2-3

Number of gear hauls: NA

Average soak time: NA

Sampling months of year: March through December

Sampling location (including depth): Cape Canaveral, FL to Savannah, GA; 70-400 feet

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: In the process of being licensed.

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

Signature of Dr. David Portnoy: _____

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Portnoy", is written over a horizontal line.