

Dr. Roy Crabtree
National Marine Fisheries Service
Southeast Regional Office
263 13th Avenue South
St. Petersburg, Florida 33701

May 4, 2009

Dr. Crabtree:

We are requesting scientific research permits to facilitate our collection of fisheries data in the US South Atlantic for our project entitled "Characterization of Bycatch Associated with the South Atlantic Snapper Grouper Bandit Fishery with Electronic Video Monitoring, At-Sea Observers, and Biological Sampling." This 2 year project was awarded by NOAA Fisheries through the 2009 Cooperative Research Program. This project is expected to begin August 1 2009.

This is a proposal to work cooperatively with fishermen to evaluate electronic video monitoring as a tool to characterize fishing activities of the commercial Snapper Grouper vertical hook and line (bandit) fleet. One of the primary short term objectives of this project is to characterize the age-size structure of the frequently encountered discarded species.

For the purpose of this research project, we request permission to keep a maximum of 300 sub-legal fish of each of the following species: red snapper, vermilion snapper, gag grouper, red grouper, greater amberjack, black sea bass and red porgy. For each fish, we plan to collect information on lengths, weights, and sex as well as remove otoliths for age determination. Otoliths will be sent to Jennifer Potts at NOAA Fisheries in Beaufort to be aged and used in future stock assessments.

While at sea, undersize fish will be kept whole (ungutted) onboard the fishing vessels in a separate ice compartment from the rest of the legal catch. Six or seven fishing vessels, from North Carolina to Georgia, will be participating in this project. The vessels include:

<u>Name of vessel</u>	<u>Contact</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Doc#</u>
F/V Raw Bar	Kenneth Fex	910-620-5847	Southport, NC	654199
F/V Warrior III	Matt Ruby	843-902-4734	Little River, SC	621287
F/V Gladiator	Matt Ruby	843-902-4734	Little River, SC	635623
F/V CJR	Phil Conklin	843-251-1437	Murrells Inlet, SC	683938
F/V Canyon Runner	Charlie Phillips	912-832-4423	Townsend, GA	649713
F/V Denise Marie	Charlie Phillips	912-832-4423	Townsend, GA	950066
F/V Charles Headley	Lady Diane	912-832-4423	Townsend, GA	651872

As the geographic range of this study is quite large and fishermen will be collecting fish over the course of a 12-15 month period, we also seek permission to store these fish at participating Snapper Grouper dealer' shoreside facilities until sampling arrangements can be made. Similar to storage onboard the vessel, undersized fish will be kept whole and stored on ice or frozen in a clearly labeled compartment or container.

More detailed information regarding our study methodology can be found in the attached proposal. Please do not hesitate to contact me with further questions.

Sincerely,

M. Scott Baker, Jr.