**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

Quarterly Report to South Atlantic Fishery Management Council

June 12, 2015, Key West, Florida

1. USFWS Director Dan Ashe announced **increased hunting and fishing opportunities** on 21 additional National Wildlife Refuges. Two of them are in Florida, St. Marks NWR and Merritt Island NWR, both of which will provide additional hunting opportunities (for the entire list, see the News Release at <http://www.fws.gov/news/ShowNews.cfm?ID=D8F3D8B8-DD99-C4C6-AA34272C61978A4A>.
2. Planning is underway for the **2016 Cooperative Winter Tagging Cruise**. We are applying to NMFS for a Section 10 Incidental Take Permit which will authorize us to continue tagging Atlantic Sturgeon, and hope to have new partnerships with the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management and the U.S. Navy. We will also continue hook-and-line tagging operations for Atlantic migratory Striped Bass. The work is being funded by a North Carolina Coastal Recreational Fishing License grant, and matched by Saltonstall-Kennedy funding.
3. The Service continues to fund work on **American Eels** on the Roanoke River, in North Carolina. Current studies include looking at the age structure of eels using the eelways at Roanoke Rapids Dam, as well as eels resident in the river downstream. That work is being done by the U.S. Geological Survey, North Carolina Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit at North Carolina State University and funded by Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act funds.
4. On May 20, Christopher Hayes, President of a Florida auction house, was sentenced to three years in prison and two years’ supervised release for his role in an **illegal conspiracy to smuggle** rhinoceros horn, ivory and coral. See the News Release at: <http://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/president-florida-auction-house-sentenced-36-months-wildlife-smuggling-conspiracy>
5. This is **National Hunting and Fishing Week**, so get out there and go fishing!