



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**  
**NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE**  
Southeast Regional Office  
263 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue South  
St. Petersburg, Florida 33701-5505  
<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/region/southeast>

F/SER25: FH

Mel Bell, Chair  
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council  
4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201  
North Charleston, South Carolina 29405

Dear Mr. Bell:

NOAA Fisheries received a request from Dr. David Portnoy, Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi, to obtain an exempted fishing permit (EFP). If granted, the EFP would allow harvest of speckled hind in the federal waters of the South Atlantic. The samples would be used to assess speckled hind population structure, connectivity, and life history. The EFP would exempt select commercial fishermen from federal regulations prohibiting the harvest and possession of speckled hind in federal waters of the South Atlantic at 50 CFR 622.181(b)(3)(prohibited and limited harvest species). The EFP would be valid through August 31, 2022.

Dr. Portnoy was awarded a grant to assess the population structure, connectivity, and life history of speckled hind in the U.S. South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico. Dr. Portnoy has acquired some of the needed samples from fishery independent surveys conducted by NOAA Fisheries and the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources. Due to low encounter rates and reduced survey effort over the last year, additional samples will need to be collected through alternative methods. Dr. Portnoy proposes to collect speckled hind from select commercial fishermen who occasionally encounter speckled hind in the U.S. South Atlantic during routine fishing operations. Up to 40 speckled hind per year would be kept over the duration of the EFP. Speckled hind are expected to be harvested by rod and reel in depths of 70-600 ft. A fin clip would be taken from harvested speckled hind and shipped to the Marine Genomics Laboratory at Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi. Speckled hind carcasses would be shipped to the NOAA Fisheries Southeast Fisheries Science Center for otolith extraction. The results of the EFP would contribute to improved understanding of speckled hind population structure, connectivity, and life history in the U.S. South Atlantic. Because speckled hind would be harvested incidentally (during routine commercial fishing trips), no additional environmental impacts would occur through the issuance of the EFP.

For your review, please find enclosed the EFP application for this proposed activity. Please contact us should you have questions or concerns about issuance of this EFP. If you need additional information, please contact Frank Helies at (727) 824-5305.

Sincerely,

Andrew J. Strelcheck  
Acting Regional Administrator

cc: John Carmichael, Myra Brower

Enclosure

