



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Pacific Islands Regional Office
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April 30, 2009

Mr. Andrew Wright
Executive Director
Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission
P.O. Box 2356
Kolonia
Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia

Dear Mr. Wright:

Conservation and Management Measure 2008-05 calls for CCMs to nominate the maximum total catch of swordfish that it shall continue to be permitted to fish in the area south of 20°S in 2009. As indicated in our April 26, 2007 correspondence in regards to the precursor of conservation and management measure 2008-05 (or 2006-03), swordfish may be targeted or caught incidentally in the Convention area south of 20 degrees South Latitude by U.S. flagged longline vessels that operate out of the U.S. Territories of American Samoa and Guam or the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Swordfish and other associated pelagic species are important economic components of the overall catch landed by U.S. flagged longline vessel operating out of these islands in the Convention area.

Longline vessels operating out of American Samoa are required to have an American Samoa Limited Entry Permit or alternatively, a vessel may fish on the high seas under a Western Pacific General Longline Permit. Currently there are 60 limited entry permits available in the American Samoa longline fishery and there are 4 Western Pacific General Longline Permits encumbered at the present time.

We believe that the 64 permits available to operators in the U.S. territories and commonwealth allow fishers in these areas to continue to pursue a responsible level of longline fishery development of what may in the future entail direct targeting of swordfish, as called for in paragraph 6 of the measure.

We also note that despite assurances otherwise, that Annex 1 of the measure (2008-05) fails to document the eligible U.S. flagged longline vessel operating out of American Samoa and the Western Pacific General Longline Permit holders documented in our April 27, 2006 correspondence. These now 64 (combined) permit holders are eligible to catch and land swordfish under paragraph 6 of 2008-05. As a result, we request that the table be modified to reflect that, although these are U.S. flagged vessels, they operate out of the Territories of Guam and American



Samoa and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and, as such, are an integral part of these islands domestic fleets.

If you have any questions about this information please contact Raymond Clarke at +1 808-944-2205 or raymond.clarke@noaa.gov.

Sincerely,



William L. Robinson
Regional Administrator

Attachment

cc: William Gibbons-Fly, U.S. Department of State
Ufagafa Ray Tulafono, American Samoa Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources
Celestino O. Igisomar, CNMI Department of Lands and Resources
Carlotta A. Leon Guerrero, Guam Office of the Lieutenant Governor
Kitty Simonds, Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council