



MEMORANDUM FOR: FILE

FROM: Christy Fellas, DWH Environmental Compliance Coordinator
NOAA Restoration Center, Southeast Region

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christy Fellas".

May 24, 2022

SUBJECT: No Further MMPA Reviews Necessary for Monitoring Project in Open Ocean Trustee Implementation Group Juvenile Gulf Sturgeon - Gulf-wide Population Dynamics and Habitat Use

Based on my review of project materials including the Biological Evaluation form (May 2021) the NOAA Restoration Center (RC) determined that the Juvenile Gulf Sturgeon - Gulf-wide Population Dynamics and Habitat Use project will not require further evaluation for animals protected by the Marine Mammal Protection Act under the jurisdiction of National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).

This project is focused on collecting Gulf sturgeon in river systems and estuaries for telemetry and microchemistry samples. Gulf sturgeon collection activities will be conducted in Spring-early Summer and Fall in freshwater, riverine reaches of river systems where Gulf sturgeon are known to aggregate, and in estuarine waters, potentially year-round until Juvenile use of estuarine habitats is better defined.

Appropriate measures and best management practices were included in or attached to the BE forms for where appropriate and will be implemented to avoid and minimize effects marine mammals, thus authorizations under the MMPA are not required. If any project is modified in a way that could change these determinations it will be reevaluated as appropriate.