

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE****National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

[Docket No.; I.D.112197A]

**Draft Comprehensive Research and Monitoring Plan for Atlantic Highly Migratory Species**

**AGENCY:** National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

**ACTION:** Notice of availability of proposed plan.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS announces the availability of a proposed plan for research and monitoring to support the conservation and management of Atlantic highly migratory species as required by the Atlantic Tunas Convention Act (ATCA). NMFS has prepared this draft plan based on extensive consultation with relevant Federal and state agencies, scientific and technical experts, commercial and recreational fishermen, and other interested persons, public and private. Members of the public are encouraged to respond to this opportunity for further comment on research and monitoring priorities for Atlantic highly migratory species.

**DATES:** Comments on the proposed plan must be submitted on or before May 11, 1998.

**ADDRESSES:** Written comments on the proposed plan should be sent to: Rebecca Lent, Chief, Highly Migratory Species Management Division (F/SF1), National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910. This office will provide copies of the draft *Comprehensive Research and Monitoring Program for Atlantic Highly Migratory Species* upon request.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Rachel Husted, telephone (301) 713-2347; FAX (301) 713-1917.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** NMFS currently undertakes a broad range of actions to address research and monitoring priorities, including rulemaking, scientific activities within the agency, and external partnerships that extend research capabilities. The agency has developed its existing research and monitoring program for HMS through a process of consultative reviews and public meetings with relevant Federal and state agencies, scientific and technical experts, commercial and recreational fishermen, and other interested persons, public and private. NMFS proposes to continue

following this same public process, which has proven to be an effective means of consulting all interested parties.

The proposed plan is based upon the existing research and monitoring program at NMFS as well as suggestions for future initiatives based on domestic and international priorities. It has been prepared pursuant to Section 971i(b) of ATCA, which directs the Secretary of Commerce to develop and implement a comprehensive research and monitoring program to support the conservation and management of Atlantic bluefin tuna and other highly migratory species. Section 971i(b) requires that the comprehensive research and monitoring program for HMS shall provide for, but not be limited to, the following:

- (a) Statistically designed cooperative tagging studies;
- (b) Genetic and biochemical stock analyses;
- (c) Population censuses carried out through aerial surveys of fishing grounds and known migration areas;
- (d) Adequate observer coverage and port sampling of commercial and recreational fishing activity;
- (e) Collection of comparable real-time data on commercial and recreational catches and landings through the use of permits, logbooks, landings reports for charter operations and fishing tournaments, and programs to provide reliable reporting of the catch by private anglers;
- (f) Studies of the life history parameters of bluefin tuna and other highly migratory species;
- (g) Integration of data from all sources and the preparation of data bases to support management decisions; and
- (h) Other research as necessary.

Dated: March 19, 1998.

**Gary C. Matlock,**

*Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.*

[FR Doc. 98-7799 Filed 3-24-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-F

---

**COMMITTEE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF TEXTILE AGREEMENTS**
**Amendment of Visa Requirements for Certain Cotton, Wool and Man-Made Fiber Apparel Produced or Manufactured in the Republic of Maldives**

March 20, 1998.

**AGENCY:** Committee for the Implementation of Textile Agreements (CITA).

**ACTION:** Issuing a directive to the Commissioner of Customs amending visa requirements.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** April 15, 1998.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Ross Arnold, International Trade Specialist, Office of Textiles and Apparel, U.S. Department of Commerce, (202) 482-4212.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

**Authority:** Section 204 of the Agricultural Act of 1956, as amended (7 U.S.C. 1854); Executive Order 11651 of March 3, 1972, as amended.

In exchange of notes dated May 16, 1997 and February 19, 1998, the Governments of the United States and the Republic of Maldives agreed to amend the existing export visa arrangement to require that the quantity stated on the visa be listed in whole units. If the quantity exported exceeds one specific whole unit but is less than the next whole unit, visaed quantities will be rounded to the closest whole unit. Half units will be rounded up. Where the exported unit is less than one unit, the shipment will be rounded upwards to one unit.

Effective on April 15, 1998, apparel products, produced or manufactured in Maldives and exported on or after April 15, 1998 must be accompanied by a visa with the quantity stated in whole units, decimals and fractions will no longer be accepted. There will be a grace period from April 15, 1998 through May 14, 1998 during which products, produced or manufactured in Maldives, will not be denied entry if the quantity is stated in decimals and fractions. Shipments exported after May 14, 1998 will be denied entry unless the quantity is stated in whole numbers.

In the letter published below, the Chairman of CITA directs the Commissioner of Customs to amend the export visa requirements.

See 47 FR 36879, published on August 24, 1982.

**D. Michael Hutchinson,**

*Acting Chairman, Committee for the Implementation of Textile Agreements.*

**Committee for the Implementation of Textile Agreements**

March 20, 1998.

Commissioner of Customs,  
*Department of the Treasury, Washington, DC 20229.*

Dear Commissioner: This directive amends, but does not cancel, the directive issued to you on August 18, 1982, by the Chairman, Committee for the Implementation of Textile Agreements. That directive directed you to prohibit entry of certain cotton, wool and man-made fiber apparel, produced or manufactured in the Republic of