**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**
**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Southeast Regional Office
263 13th Avenue South
St. Petersburg, Florida 33701
(727) 824-5317; FAX 824-5300
http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov

May 4, 2009 F/SER46:MS/mt

Mr. David J. Wrona, Chief
U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Division of License Renewal, Projects Branch 2
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation
11555 Rockville Pike
Rockville, Maryland 20852-2738

Dear Mr. Wrona:

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), Southeast Region, Habitat Conservation Division, has received your agency's letter dated April 13, 2009, regarding the preparation of an supplemental environmental impact statement (SEIS) for the proposed renewal of the operating license for the Crystal River Unit 3 Nuclear Generating Plant (CR-3). CR-3 is located on the Gulf of Mexico near the City of Crystal River, in Citrus County, Florida. The proposed action is to renew the facility's operating license for an additional 20 years beyond the expiration of the CR-3's current operating license.

Your letter indicates your agency seeks to consult with NMFS regarding the presence of protected species and essential fish habitat (EFH) in the project area potentially affected by the proposed action. To assist your agency in determining impacts associated with operation of the existing CR-3 facility, we are providing a list identifying fish/invertebrate species, life stages, and EFH categories of the project area (see enclosure).

To fully address EFH and associated fisheries in the project area, we recommend the SEIS include sections titled "Essential Fish Habitat" and "Marine Fishery Resources" that describe the potential project impacts on each category of EFH (e.g., marine non-vegetated water bottoms, continental shelf features, water column, and estuarine submerged aquatic vegetation, mangrove wetlands, estuarine water column) and marine and estuarine fishery species within the project area. These sections should analyze the potential impacts of the CR-3 on EFH and dependent federally managed species and life stages and should fully evaluate alternative measures to avoid, minimize, and offset adverse impacts. Section 600.810(a) of the EFH regulations defines an adverse effect to EFH as any impact that reduces the quality and/or quantity of EFH, including the loss of, or injury to, benthic organisms, prey species and their habitat, and other ecosystem components. The SEIS should analyze impacts to benthic and prey species in the

discussion of impacts to EFH. This descriptive and analytical information, coupled with a statement of your agency's conclusions regarding the effects of the action on EFH and marine fishery species, would provide the basic details necessary for an EFH assessment pursuant to the requirements of 50 CFR 600.920(e). The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council should also be provided an opportunity for comment on EFH issues under provisions of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

Further, the project area is within the known distribution limits of a federally listed threatened species under purview of NMFS. In accordance with the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, it is your responsibility to review this proposal and identify actions that may affect endangered or threatened species. Determinations involving listed species should be reported to our Protected Resources Division at the letterhead address. If it is determined that the activities may adversely affect any species listed as endangered or threatened under Protected Resources Division purview, formal consultation must be initiated.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments on environmental issues concerning the proposed relicensing of the Crystal River Unit 3 Nuclear Generating Plant. If we may be of further assistance, please contact Mr. Mark Sramek at the letterhead address above, by telephone at (727) 824-5311, or e-mail at Mark.Sramek@noaa.gov.

Sincerely,

for Miles M. Croom
Assistant Regional Administrator
Habitat Conservation Division

Enclosure

cc:
F/SER4
F/SER3
F/SER46
SER - Keys
GMFMC – Rester
FWC - Gregg, Smith
NRC – Masnik

**EFH Requirements for Species Managed by the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council: Ecoregion 2, Tarpon Springs to Pensacola Bay, FL.**

| Species | Life Stage | System[1] | EFH |
|---|---|---|---|
| Pink shrimp[2] | eggs | M | <50 m; sand/shell bottom |
| | larvae | M | <50 m; planktonic, sand/shell bottom, SAV |
| | juvenile | E | <64 m; sand/shell substrate, SAV |
| | adults | M | <64 m; sand/shell substrate |
| White shrimp[2] | eggs | M | 9-34 m; sand/shell/soft bottoms |
| | larvae | E/M | <64 m; plankton, soft bottom, estuarine marsh |
| | juvenile | E | soft bottom, estuarine marsh |
| Stone crab | eggs | E/M | <62 m; sand/shell/hard bottoms, SAV, reefs |
| | larvae | E/M | <62 m; planktonic |
| | juvenile | E/M | <62 m; sand/shell/hard bottoms, SAV |
| Gulf stone crab | eggs | E/M | <18 m; sand/shell/soft bottom |
| | larvae/postlarvae | E/M | <18 m; planktonic, oyster reef, soft bottom |
| | juvenile | E | <18 m; sand/shell/soft bottom, oyster reef |
| Red drum | eggs | M | planktonic |
| | larvae/postlarvae | E | planktonic, SAV, sand/shell/soft bottom, emergent marsh |
| | juvenile | M/E | <5 m; SAV, sand/shell/soft/hard bottom, emergent marsh |
| | adults | M/E | 1-46 m (9-18 m S of Crystal River); SAV, pelagic, sand/shell/soft/hard bottom, emergent marsh |
| Red grouper | eggs | M | 20-100 m; planktonic |
| | larvae | M | 20-100 m; planktonic |
| | juvenile | M/E | <50 m; hard bottoms, SAV, reefs |
| | adults | M | 3-183 m; reefs, hard bottoms |
| Black grouper | eggs | M | 18-28 m; planktonic |
| | larvae | M | 10-150 m; planktonic |
| | juvenile | E/M | SAV, hard bottoms, reefs |
| | adults | M/E | 10-150 m; hard bottoms, mangrove, reefs |
| Gag grouper | eggs | M | 50-120 m; planktonic |
| | larvae | M | 50-120 m; planktonic |
| | juvenile | M/E | <50 m; SAV, reefs, hard bottom |
| | adults | M | 20-120 m; hard bottom, reefs |
| Nassau grouper | eggs | M | planktonic |
| | larvae | M | 2-50 m; planktonic |
| | juvenile | M | SAV, reefs |

[1] E=estuarine, M=marine

[2] Marine EFH S of Crystal River excludes 18-46 m. depth zone

## EFH Requirements Tarpon Springs to Pensacola Bay, FL -- Continued

| Species | Life Stage | System | EFH |
|---|---|---|---|
| Warsaw grouper | eggs | M | 40-183 m; planktonic |
| | larvae | M | 40-183 m; planktonic |
| | juvenile | M | 20-30 m; reefs |
| Yellowedge grouper | eggs | M | 35-183 m; planktonic |
| | larvae | M | 35-183 m; planktonic |
| | postlarvae/juvenile | M | 35-183 m; hard bottom |
| | adults | M | 35-183 m; reefs bottom |
| Red hind | eggs | M | 18-110 m; planktonic |
| | larvae | M | 18-110 m; planktonic |
| | juvenile | M | 2-110 m; reefs |
| Rock hind | eggs | M | 2-100 m; planktonic |
| | larvae | M | 2-100 m; planktonic |
| | juvenile | M | 2-110 m; reefs |
| Speckled hind | eggs | M | 146-183 m; planktonic |
| | larvae | M | 146-183 m; planktonic |
| Scamp | eggs | M | 60-189 m; planktonic |
| | larvae | M | 60-189 m; planktonic |
| | juvenile | M | 12-33 m; hard bottoms, reefs, mangrove |
| Schoolmaster | eggs | M | <90 m; planktonic |
| | larvae | M | <90 m; planktonic |
| | juvenile | E/M | <90 m; SAV, mangrove, emergent marsh, reefs, hard bottom |
| Red snapper | eggs | M | 18-37 m; planktonic |
| | larvae | M | 18-37 m; planktonic |
| | juvenile | M | 17-183 m; hard/soft/sand/shell bottom |
| | adults | M | 7-146 m; reefs, hard/sand/shell bottoms |
| Vermilion snapper | eggs | M | >180 m; planktonic |
| | juvenile | M | 1-25 m; reefs, hard bottom |
| | adult | M | >180 m; reefs, hard bottom |
| Gray snapper | eggs | M | <180 m; planktonic, reefs |
| | larvae | M/E | <180 m; planktonic, reefs |
| | postlarvae/juvenile | M/E | <180 m; SAV, mangrove, emergent marsh |
| | adults | E/M | <180 m; emergent marsh, reefs, sand/shell/soft/hard bottoms |
| Yellowtail snapper | eggs | M | 1-183 m; planktonic |
| | juvenile | M/E | 1-183 m; SAV, mangrove, soft bottom |
| | adults | M | 1-183 m; reefs, hard bottom, shoals/banks |
| Lane snapper | eggs | M | 4-132 m; planktonic |
| | larvae | E/M | 4-132 m; reefs, SAV |
| | juvenile | E/M | <20 m; SAV, mangrove, reefs, sand/shell/soft bottom |
| Blackfin snapper | eggs | M | 40-183 m; planktonic |
| | juvenile | M | 12-40 m; hard bottom |

## EFH Requirements Tarpon Springs to Pensacola Bay, FL -- Continued

| Species | Life Stage | System | EFH |
|---|---|---|---|
| Dog snapper | eggs | M | planktonic |
| | larvae | M | planktonic |
| | juvenile | E/M | SAV, mangrove, emergent marsh |
| Hogfish | juvenile | E/M | 3-30 m; SAV |
| Dwarf sand perch | juvenile | M | hard bottom |
| Greater amberjack | eggs | M | 1-183 m; planktonic |
| | larvae | M | 1-183 m; pelagic |
| | juvenile | M | 1-183 m; drift algae (Sargassum) |
| Lesser amberjack | eggs | M | planktonic |
| | larvae | M | pelagic |
| | juvenile | M | 55-130 m; drift algae (Sargassum) |
| Almaco jack | eggs | M | 15-160 m; planktonic |
| | juvenile | M | 15-160 m; drift algae (Sargassum) |
| Banded rudderfish | larvae | M | 10-130 m; planktonic |
| | juvenile | M | 10-130 m; drift algae (Sargassum) |
| Blueline tilefish | eggs | M | 60-183 m; planktonic |
| | larvae | M | 60-183 m; planktonic |
| Goldface tilefish | eggs | M | 60-183 m; planktonic |
| | larvae | M | 60-183 m; planktonic |
| Golden tilefish | eggs | M | 80-183 m; planktonic |
| | larvae | M | 80-183 m; planktonic |
| | juvenile | M | 80-183 m; hard/soft bottom, shelf edge/slope |
| Gray triggerfish | eggs | M | 10-100 m; reefs |
| | larvae | M | drift algae (Sargassum) |
| | postlarvae/juvenile | M | 10-100 m; drift algae (Sargassum), mangroves, reefs |
| Spanish mackerel | eggs | M | <50 m; plankton |
| | larvae | M | 9-84 m; plankton |
| | juvenile | M | <50 m; pelagic |
| | adults | E/M | <75 m; pelagic |
| Coral | all stages | M | planktonic, FL Middle Grounds, reefs |

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
HABITAT CONSERVATION DIVISION
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PANAMA CITY, FLORIDA 32407-7499

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

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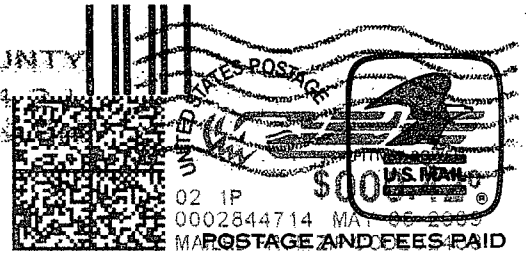


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