



LOUISIANA WILDLIFE FEDERATION

"... conserving our natural resources and your right to enjoy them."



SUBJECT: REGULATION OF LONGLINING IN THE GULF OF MEXICO

WHEREAS, last May, the National Marine Fisheries Service, in issuing its ruling to implement the Fishery Management Plan for Highly Migratory Species fell short of addressing longlining activity, and

WHEREAS, the study used by the National Marine Fisheries service in making its ruling indicates that 85% of all blue marlin, 95% of all white marlin, and 98% of all sailfish mortality reported is due to the effects of longlining activity (bycatch), and

WHEREAS, species of both families of billfish, *Istiophoridae* and *Xiphidae*, require many years to become sexually mature and their reproductive rates cannot sustain their populations under the aforementioned pressure of longline bycatch mortality, and

WHEREAS, longlining activity has also been shown to adversely effect sea turtles, marine mammals, and sea birds due to the indiscriminate nature of this fishing method, and

WHEREAS, the National Marine Fisheries Service is seeking to close longlining in the western half of the Gulf of Mexico, from 90 degrees longitude westward from March 1<sup>st</sup> to September 30<sup>th</sup> of each year.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Louisiana Wildlife Federation, in the interest of conservation, urges all recreational anglers to practice "catch and release" for all billfish species and supports restrictions on longlining activity necessary to protect populations of billfish, sea turtles, marine mammals, sea birds and other species that are adversely affected by longlining activity in the Gulf of Mexico.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the LWF supports the development of an effective Gulfwide strategy for regulating longline activities that is science-based with minimal impact on user groups.

*Adopted by the Louisiana Wildlife Federation in convention assembled March 12, 2000 in Alexandria, Louisiana.*