Limited Cooperative Agreement Between the

United States Department of Commerce

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

National Marine Fisheries Service

and the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries for the

Conservation of Threatened and Endangered Species

This limited cooperative agreement is entered into pursuant to section 6(c)(1) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (hereinafter referred to as "the Act"), and 12 M.R.S.A. Chapter 631 (Endangered or Threatened Marine Species) between the United States Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service, and the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. Hereinafter, the parties shall be referred to as NMFS and VDGIF, respectively. All terms contained herein shall be given the same meaning as defined at 50 C.F.R. Section 222.102.

Whereas, the Act authorizes the Secretary of Commerce (hereinafter referred to as "the Secretary") to enter into cooperative agreements in accordance with section 6 with states that establish and maintain adequate and active programs for the conservation of endangered and threatened species;

Whereas, the VDGIF is authorized pursuant to the Code of Virginia Section 29.1-109(B)(5) to enter into agreements with federal agencies for the conservation of marine endangered and threatened species;

Whereas the Commonwealth of Virginia has the authority to establish conservation programs consistent with the purposes and policies of the Act for the following species of fish and wildlife occurring in the state which have been deemed by the Secretary to be endangered, threatened, or candidate species and under the jurisdiction of NMFS:

Endangered Species

North Atlantic right whale (*Eubalaena glacialis*)

Humpback whale (*Megaptera novaeangliae*)

Fin whale (*Balaenoptera physalus*)

Sei whale (*Balaenoptera borealis*)

Sperm whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*)

Blue whale (*Balaeonoptera musculus*)

Leatherback sea turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*)

Kemp's ridley sea turtle (*Lepidochelys kempii*)

Hawksbill sea turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*)

Shortnose sturgeon (*Acipenser brevirostrum*)

Atlantic sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrinchus oxyrinchus*) (New York Bight, Chesapeake Bay, Carolina, and South Atlantic Distinct Population Segments)

Threatened Species

Loggerhead sea turtle (*Caretta caretta*) (Northwest Atlantic Ocean Distinct Population Segment)

Green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) [Green turtles are listed as threatened, except for breeding populations of green turtles in Florida and on the Pacific Coast of Mexico, which are listed as endangered.]

Atlantic sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrinchus oxyrinchus*) (Gulf of Maine Distinct Population Segment)

Whereas, the purposes of the Act are to provide a means whereby the ecosystems upon which endangered and threatened species depend may be conserved, to provide a program for the conservation of such endangered and threatened species, and to take such steps as may be appropriate to achieve the purposes of the treaties and conventions set forth in subsection 2(a) of the Act;

Whereas, the Secretary has delegated to the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries of NMFS the authority to enter into cooperative agreements with states for the purpose of supporting programs for endangered and threatened species conservation;

Whereas, the Act requires the Secretary to determine that: (1) the state agency is authorized to establish conservation programs, including the acquisition of land or aquatic habitat, or interests therein, for all resident species of fish and wildlife listed in this agreement; (2) the state agency is authorized to conduct investigations to determine the status and requirements for survival of resident species of fish and wildlife; (3) the state agency has made provision for public participation in designating resident species of fish and wildlife as endangered or threatened; and (4) the species listed in this agreement will be given immediate attention, as NMFS and VDGIF agree that those species are most urgently in need of conservation programs;

Whereas, NMFS hereby determines that VDGIF satisfies the Act's legal requirements for such cooperative agreements as specified in the immediately preceding paragraph;

Whereas, the parties to this agreement are in accord that the programs administered in Virginia are designed to conserve resident endangered and threatened species, and that it is the mutual desire of VDGIF and NMFS to cooperate for the common purpose of planning, developing, and conducting programs to protect, manage, and enhance populations of all resident endangered and threatened species covered by this agreement within the Commonwealth of Virginia;

Whereas, the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries of NMFS has the administrative authority to establish programs for the conservation of endangered and threatened species; to provide periodic review of the state program at no greater than annual intervals; to provide funding for the development of endangered and threatened species conservation programs or to assist in monitoring candidate and recovered species as such funding is available and in accordance with the terms of the Act; to provide coordination among the programs of various states; and to exchange with states such biological data or other information that may result in the continued conservation of endangered or threatened species;

Whereas, the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries of NMFS authorizes the Northeast Regional Administrator of NMFS to monitor the implementation of this cooperative agreement;

Therefore the parties agree as follows:

1. Consistent with section 6(d)of the Act, NMFS may provide financial assistance to VDGIF for the development of endangered and threatened species conservation programs or to assist in monitoring

candidate and recovered species. Such projects shall be approved by NMFS in accordance with the Act.

2. NMFS and VDGIF will carry out the cooperative program for the conservation of endangered and threatened species, which may involve law enforcement, research, management, and public information and education activities conducted for the benefit of resident endangered and threatened species in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

3. Pursuant to section 6(c)(1)(E)(ii) of the Act, entry into this agreement shall in no way effect the applicability of the prohibitions set forth in or authorized pursuant to section 4(d) and section 9 of the Act with respect to the taking of any resident endangered, threatened, or candidate species of fish or wildlife listed in this agreement.

4. Effective Date and Renewal

(a) This agreement shall become effective when signed by the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries of NMFS and the Executive Director of VDGIF, and may be renewed in the following manner: Not later than June 30 each year, VDGIF shall submit to the Northeast Regional Administrator of NMFS the following: (1) the current list of the state listed resident endangered and threatened fish and wildlife within the jurisdiction of NMFS and a description of all changes to such list since the date of the previous submission of the list to NMFS; (2) a certification of any amendments in VDGIF's legal authority or regulatory programs for endangered, threatened, and candidate species of fish and wildlife listed in this agreement that were made since the date of the previous submission of the program to NMFS; (3) a

list of all changes in the endangered and threatened species conservation programs since the date of the previous submission of the program to NMFS; (4) a report on the status of all projects funded pursuant to paragraph one of this agreement; and (5) any additional information requested by the Northeast Regional Administrator of NMFS that pertains to VDGIF's program for the conservation of endangered, threatened, and candidate species of fish and wildlife listed in this agreement;

(b) The Northeast Regional Administrator of NMFS will, on or before October 1 of each year, notify VDGIF in writing whether the cooperative agreement is renewed effective October 1 of that year, or that the state's program or authorities are no longer in compliance with the criteria of section 6(c) of the Act, and unless appropriate changes are made by June 30 of the following year, this agreement shall be terminated. If VDGIF, after satisfying the renewal provisions of the immediately preceding paragraph, has not been notified concerning the renewal of this agreement by October 1 of each year the agreement shall continue in force and effect as if it had been renewed.

5. Amendment

This agreement may be amended at any time with the written concurrence of the signatories.

6. Termination

This agreement may be terminated: (a) by mutual agreement; (b) by VDGIF upon 60 days written notice to the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries of NMFS; or (c) notwithstanding the renewal provisions in section 4(b) of this cooperative agreement, by NMFS upon 60 days notice to VDGIF from the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries of NMFS,

stating reasons why the state's conservation program for endangered and threatened species is no longer in compliance with the criteria in section 6(c) of the Act, or that the state has otherwise violated provisions of this agreement. VDGIF may submit a written request for review to the Secretary within 30 days of the receipt of the termination notice. The Secretary shall consider all evidence submitted by VDGIF in its request for review and either reaffirm the termination of this agreement at the end of the 60 day notification period, or reverse the determination of the Assistant Administrator of NMFS and revoke the notice of termination. Any Federal funds that have been awarded pursuant to this agreement to VDGIF, but not expended by VDGIF, as of the date termination of this agreement or final reaffirmation thereof shall be returned to NMFS for reallocation pursuant to section 6(d).

Assistant Administrator for Fisheries
National Marine Fisheries Service

10/11/12
Date

Executive Director
Virginia Department of Game
and Inland Fisheries

12/10/12
Date