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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
May 27, 2011

**NOAA finds endangered species listing for Atlantic bluefin tuna not warranted**  
*Agency remains concerned; will revisit decision with new science*

After an extensive scientific review, NOAA announced today that Atlantic bluefin tuna currently do not warrant species protection under the Endangered Species Act.

NOAA has committed to revisit this decision by early 2013, when more information will be available about the effects of the Deepwater Horizon BP oil spill, as well as a new stock assessment from the scientific arm of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas, the international body charged with the fish's management and conservation.

NOAA is formally designating both the western Atlantic and eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean stocks of bluefin tuna as "species of concern" under the Endangered Species Act. This places the species on a watchlist for concerns about its status and threats to the species.

"NOAA is concerned about the status of bluefin tuna, including the potential effects of the Deepwater Horizon BP oil spill on the western stock of Atlantic bluefin, which spawns in the Gulf of Mexico," said Jane Lubchenco, Ph.D., under secretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and NOAA administrator. "We will revisit the status of the species in early 2013 when we will have a new stock assessment and information from the Natural Resource Damage Assessment of the oil spill. We will also take action in the interim if new information indicates the need for greater protection."

NOAA's status review, released with today's decision and peer-reviewed by The Center for Independent Experts, indicates that based on the best available information and assuming countries comply with the bluefin tuna fishing quotas established by ICCAT, both the western and eastern Atlantic stocks are not likely to become extinct.

The status review team also looked at the best available information on the potential effects of the 2010 Deepwater Horizon BP oil spill on the future abundance of the western stock of bluefin tuna and found that it did not substantially alter the results of the extinction risk analysis. While the NOAA team found that the presently available information did not favor listing, it also recognized the need to continue to monitor the potential long-term effects of the spill on bluefin tuna and the overall ecosystem. New scientific information is expected in a 2012 bluefin tuna stock assessment and as part of the Natural Resources Damage Assessment of the Deepwater Horizon BP oil spill.

"Based on careful scientific review, we have decided the best way to ensure the long-term sustainability of bluefin tuna is through international cooperation and strong domestic fishery management," said Eric Schwaab, assistant NOAA administrator for NOAA's Fisheries Service. "The United States will continue to be a leader in advocating science-based quotas at ICCAT, full compliance with these quotas and other management measures to ensure the long-term viability of this and other important fish stocks."

NOAA conducted the status review of Atlantic bluefin after determining on Sept. 21, 2010, that a petition for listing under the ESA from a national environmental organization warranted a scientific status review.

To read the status review report on Atlantic bluefin tuna, the federal register notice and other information on bluefin tuna, please go to:

[http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/stories/2011/05/bluefin\\_tuna.html](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/stories/2011/05/bluefin_tuna.html)

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