



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Southwest Region
Western Pacific Program Office
P. O. Box 3830
Honolulu, Hawaii 96812

October 4, 1978

FSW1/JJN

TO: Wilvan G. Van Campen, Executive Director, Western Pacific
Regional Fishery Management Council

FROM: Doyle E. Gates, Administrator, WPPPO, NMFS

SUBJECT: Endangered species consultation concerning the fishery management
plan for precious corals in the Western Pacific

This is in reference to your memorandum of September 12, 1978 concerning formal consultation between the Council and NMFS during development of FMP's. If a Federal Agency (in this case the Council) determines that an action may affect endangered or threatened marine species, it should request consultation with NMFS providing the species in question fall under the responsibility of NMFS. Upon receipt of a request for consultation, NMFS will conduct a threshold examination which usually results in a biological opinion as to whether the proposed action is likely to jeopardize the species or destroy or adversely modify its critical habitat.

We realize that you are in the process of finalizing the FMP for precious corals in the Western Pacific. Therefore, utilizing your memorandum of September 12, 1978 as a request for consultation, we offer the following biological opinion on the implication of the precious coral fishery on endangered and threatened marine species.

Endangered marine mammals (humpback whale, sperm whale, and the Hawaiian monk seal) and endangered and threatened sea turtles (leatherback and green turtle) are known for, or suspected of, inhabiting waters overlaying precious coral beds in the central and western Pacific. However, considering the methods utilized for harvesting precious corals, it is our opinion that this fishery does not constitute a threat to these endangered and threatened species or will it destroy or adversely modify their critical habitat.

cc: G. V. Howard