



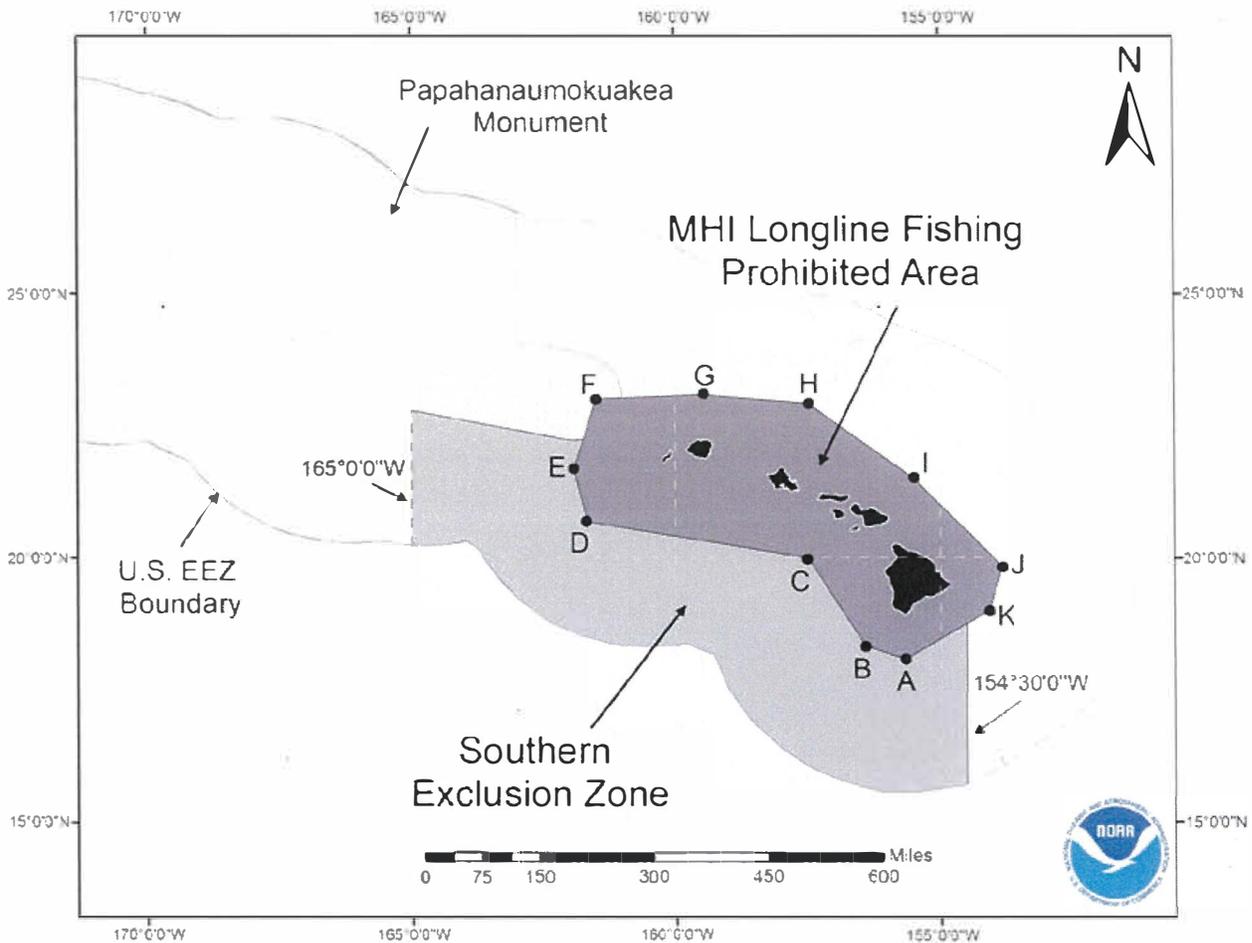
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Pacific Islands Regional Office
1845 Wasp Blvd., Bldg 176
Honolulu, Hawaii 96818
(808) 725-5000 • Fax (808) 725-5215

July 17, 2018

Dear Hawaii Longline Permit Holder:

I have enclosed a *Federal Register* notice, filed today. NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is closing the Southern Exclusion Zone (SEZ) to deep-set longline fishing from July 24, 2018, through December 31, 2018. The SEZ will be reopened to deep-set longline fishing on January 1, 2019. This closure does not apply to vessels that have declared a shallow-set longline trip per 50 CFR 665.803.

The SEZ is the portion of the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) around Hawaii bounded by 165° 00' W on the west, 154° 30' W on the east, the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument and the Main Hawaiian Islands Longline Fishing Prohibited Area on the north, and the EEZ boundary on the south.



NMFS observers have documented that the Hawaii longline fishery has hooked and released injured four Hawaii pelagic false killer whales in the EEZ. NMFS determined that all four interactions resulted in "serious injury." Accordingly, NMFS must close the SEZ for the rest of 2018.

For more information, please contact Kevin Brindock at (808) 725-5146.

Sincerely,



Ann Garrett
Assistant Regional Administrator
Protected Resources

Enclosure