

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

[I.D. 031505A]

National Marine Fisheries Service, Pacific Fishery Management Council; April 3–8, 2005, Council Meeting

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of public meetings.

SUMMARY: The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) and its advisory entities will hold public meetings. There will also be a Tuesday evening meeting between NMFS, states, and industry on the 2005 whiting exempted fishing permit and a Monday evening meeting sponsored by NMFS and the states to provide an update on the Pacific Groundfish Essential Fish Habitat EIS.

DATES: The Council and its advisory entities will meet April 3–8, 2005. The Council meeting will begin on Monday, April 4, at 3:30 p.m., reconvening each day through Friday. All meetings are open to the public, except a closed session will be held from 3:30 p.m. until 4:30 p.m. on Monday, April 4 to address litigation and personnel matters. The Council will meet as late as necessary each day to complete its scheduled business.

ADDRESSES: The meetings will be held at the Sheraton Tacoma Hotel, 1320 Broadway Plaza, Tacoma, Washington 98402; telephone: 253–572–3200.

Council address: Pacific Fishery Management Council, 7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 200, Portland, OR 97220.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Donald O. McIsaac, Executive Director; telephone: 503–820–2280.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The following items are on the Council agenda, but not necessarily in this order:

- A. Call to Order
 1. Opening Remarks and Introductions
 2. Roll Call
 3. Executive Director's Report
 4. Approve Agenda
- C. Salmon Management
 1. Identify Stocks Not Meeting Conservation Objectives
 2. Methodology Review Process for 2005
 3. Update on Essential Fish Habitat Review Process
 4. Final Action on 2005 Salmon Management Measures

- D. Pacific Halibut Management
 1. Adopt Final 2005 Incidental Halibut Catch Regulations for Salmon Troll and Fixed Gear Sablefish Fisheries
- E. Habitat
 1. Current Habitat Issues
- B. Groundfish Management
 1. Vermillion Rockfish Assessment
 2. Inseason Management Response Policy Final Adoption
 3. NMFS Report
 4. Terms of Reference for Groundfish Rebuilding Plan Review
 5. Implementation of an Expanded Vessel Monitoring System
 6. Status of 2005 Groundfish Fisheries and Inseason Adjustments
 7. Longline Dogfish Fishery Control Date
- F. Coastal Pelagic Species Management
 1. NMFS Report
 2. Fishery Management Plan Amendment 11–Sardine Allocation
- G. Marine Protected Areas
 1. Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary (NMS), Cordell Bank NMS, Gulf of Farallones NMS, and Monterey Bay NMS Designation Document Comments and Proposed NMS Regulations
- H. Enforcement Issues
 1. U.S. Coast Guard Fishery Enforcement Report
- I. Highly Migratory Species Management
 1. NMFS Report
 2. Fishery Management Plan Implementation
- J. Administrative Matters
 1. Report on “Managing Our Fisheries II” Conference
 2. Legislative Matters
 3. Appointments to Advisory Bodies, Standing Committees, and Other Forums
 4. Work Load Priorities and Draft June 2005 Council Meeting Agenda

SCHEDULE OF ANCILLARY MEETINGS

- SUNDAY, April 3, 2005*
Klamath Fishery Management Council 3 p.m.
- MONDAY, April 4, 2005*
Council Secretariat 8 a.m.
Groundfish Advisory Subpanel 8 a.m.
Groundfish Management Team 8 a.m.
Salmon Advisory Subpanel 8 a.m.
Salmon Technical Team 8 a.m.
Scientific and Statistical Committee 8 a.m.
Habitat Committee 10 a.m.
Legislative Committee 10:30 a.m.
Special Session: Salmon Ocean Ecology 1 p.m.
Enforcement Consultants 4:30 p.m.
Special Session: Essential Fish Habitat

- Environmental Impact Statement Review 7 p.m.
Klamath Fishery Management Council As necessary
Tribal Policy Group As necessary
Tribal and Washington Technical Group As necessary
TUESDAY, April 5, 2005
Council Secretariat 7 a.m.
California State Delegation 7 a.m.
Oregon State Delegation 7 a.m.
Washington State Delegation 7 a.m.
Groundfish Advisory Subpanel 8 a.m.
Groundfish Management Team 8 a.m.
Salmon Advisory Subpanel 8 a.m.
Salmon Technical Team 8 a.m.
Scientific and Statistical Committee 8 a.m.
Coastal Pelagic Species Management Team 1 p.m.
Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel 1 p.m.
Special Sessions: Whiting EFP and Video
Monitoring Briefing 7 p.m.
Enforcement Consultants As necessary
Klamath Fishery Management Council As necessary
Tribal Policy Group As necessary
Tribal and Washington Technical Group As necessary
WEDNESDAY, April 6, 2005
Council Secretariat 7 a.m.
California State Delegation 7 a.m.
Oregon State Delegation 7 a.m.
Washington State Delegation 7 a.m.
Coastal Pelagic Species Management Team 8 a.m.
Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel 8 a.m.
Groundfish Advisory Subpanel 8 a.m.
Groundfish Management Team 8 a.m.
Salmon Advisory Subpanel 8 a.m.
Salmon Technical Team 8 a.m.
Enforcement Consultants As necessary
Klamath Fishery Management Council As necessary
Tribal Policy Group As necessary
Tribal and Washington Technical Group As necessary
THURSDAY, April 7, 2005
Council Secretariat 7 a.m.
California State Delegation 7 a.m.
Oregon State Delegation 7 a.m.
Washington State Delegation 7 a.m.
Groundfish Advisory Subpanel 8 a.m.
Groundfish Management Team 8 a.m.
Salmon Advisory Subpanel 8 a.m.
Salmon Technical Team 8 a.m.
Enforcement Consultants As necessary
Klamath Fishery Management Council As necessary
Tribal Policy Group As necessary
Tribal and Washington Technical Group As necessary
FRIDAY, April 8, 2005
Council Secretariat 7 a.m.
California State Delegation 7 a.m.

Oregon State Delegation 7 a.m.
 Washington State Delegation 7 a.m.
 Enforcement Consultants As
 necessary
 Salmon Advisory Subpanel As
 necessary
 Salmon Technical Team As necessary
 Tribal Policy Group As necessary
 Tribal and Washington Technical
 Group As necessary
 Although nonemergency issues not
 contained in this agenda may come
 before this Council for discussion, those
 issues may not be the subject of formal
 Council action during this meeting.
 Council action will be restricted to those
 issues specifically listed in this notice
 and any issues arising after publication
 of this notice that require emergency
 action under Section 305(c) of the
 Magnuson-Stevens Fishery
 Conservation and Management Act,
 provided the public has been notified of
 the Council's intent to take final action
 to address the emergency.

Special Accommodations

These meetings are physically
 accessible to people with disabilities.
 Requests for sign language
 interpretation or other auxiliary aids
 should be directed to Ms. Carolyn Porter
 at 503-820-2280 at least five days prior
 to the meeting date.

Dated: March 15, 2005.

Emily Menashes,

*Acting Director, Office of Sustainable
 Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.*
 [FR Doc. E5-1182 Filed 3-17-05; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 031505D]

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Application for an Exempted Fishing Permit

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries
 Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and
 Atmospheric Administration (NOAA),
 Commerce.

ACTION: Notice; receipt of exempted
 fishing permit application.

SUMMARY: This notice announces receipt
 of an application for an exempted
 fishing permit (EFP) from John Gauvin
 and John Gruver. If granted, this permit
 would be used to continue the
 development and testing of a salmon
 excluder device in the Bering Sea
 pollock trawl fishery. It is intended to
 promote the objectives of the Fishery
 Management Plan for Groundfish of the

Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands
 Management Area (FMP) by developing
 a method for reducing salmon bycatch
 in the Bering Sea pollock trawl fishery.

ADDRESSES: Copies of the EFP
 application are available by writing to
 Sue Salvesson, Assistant Regional
 Administrator for Sustainable Fisheries,
 Alaska Region, NMFS, P.O. Box 21668,
 Juneau, AK 99802, Attn: Lori Durall.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:
 Melanie Brown, 907-586-7228 or
melanie.brown@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NMFS
 manages the domestic groundfish
 fisheries in the Bering Sea and Aleutian
 Islands Management Area (BSAI) under
 the FMP. The North Pacific Fishery
 Management Council (Council)
 prepared the FMP under the Magnuson-
 Stevens Fishery Conservation and
 Management Act. Regulations governing
 the groundfish fisheries of the BSAI
 appear at 50 CFR parts 600 and 679. The
 FMP and the implementing regulations
 at §§ 679.6 and 600.745(b) authorize
 issuance of EFPs to allow fishing that
 would otherwise be prohibited.
 Procedures for issuing EFPs are
 contained in the implementing
 regulations.

NMFS received an application for an
 EFP from John Gauvin, Principal
 Investigator and John Gruver of the
 United Catcher Boats Association. The
 purpose of the project is to improve the
 performance of the salmon excluder
 device developed under an EFP in 2004
 and 2005, and to validate the
 performance of this device for pollock
 trawls. The goal is to develop a device
 for pollock trawls that reduces salmon
 bycatch without significantly lowering
 catch rates of pollock.

The EFP would allow for two types of
 testing of the salmon excluder device in
 fall 2005 and spring 2006. In the first
 experiment, a catcher vessel would be
 used to test minor adjustments to the
 current excluder device design to
 improve performance. The second
 experiment would be conducted using a
 catcher/processor for the paired-tow
 experiment to validate the performance
 of the excluder device. Depending on
 the results from the work in 2005 and
 2006, the EFP may need to be modified
 to allow for an additional year of testing.

Exemptions from regulations for
 salmon bycatch limits, observer
 requirements, salmon savings area
 closure, the Catcher Vessel Operating
 Area (CVOA), and total allowable catch
 amounts (TACs) for groundfish would
 be necessary to conduct the work. The
 taking of salmon during the experiment
 is crucial for determining the
 effectiveness of the device. Salmon

taken during the experiment would not
 be counted toward the chinook and
 chum salmon bycatch limits under
 §§ 679.21(e)(1)(vii) and (e)(1)(viii).
 Potentially, the amount of salmon
 bycatch by the pollock trawl industry
 during the EFP period could approach
 or exceed the salmon bycatch limits.
 The additional salmon taken during the
 experiment would create an additional
 burden on the pollock trawl industry
 and may lead to closures of the salmon
 savings areas, if the EFP salmon were
 counted toward the salmon bycatch
 limits. Approximately 2,500 chum
 salmon and 1,500 chinook salmon
 would be required to support the
 project.

The applicants also have requested an
 exemption from closures of the Chinook
 Salmon Savings Areas and the Chum
 Salmon Savings Area
 (§§ 679.21(e)(7)(vii) and (e)(7)(viii)). The
 experiment must be conducted in areas
 of salmon concentration to ensure a
 sufficient sample size. The salmon
 savings areas are areas of known
 concentration of salmon and provide an
 ideal location for conducting the
 experiment and ensuring that the
 vessels encounter concentrations of
 salmon.

Groundfish taken under the EFP
 would be exempt from the TACs
 specified in the annual harvest
 specifications (§ 679.20). A total of 2,500
 metric tons (mt) of groundfish
 (primarily pollock) would be taken
 during the EFP work and would not be
 included in the harvest applied against
 the Bering Sea groundfish TACs,
 including the pollock TAC of
 approximately 1.5 million mt. The 2005
 Bering Sea pollock acceptable biological
 catch is 1.960 million mt, well above the
 combined TAC and the additional
 harvest anticipated from the project.
 Because of the nature of groundfish
 bycatch in the pollock fishery, the
 harvest of other groundfish species
 during the project is expected to be very
 minor.

The experiment using the catcher/
 processor would require exemption
 from the CVOA restriction
 (§ 679.22(a)(5)) because of the location
 of the Chinook Salmon Savings Area in
 the CVOA. Catcher/processors are
 prohibited from operating in the CVOA
 during the B season. It would be
 necessary for the catcher/processor to
 conduct tows in this area to ensure
 encountering sufficient pollock and
 salmon.

The EFP would include an exemption
 from the observer requirements at
 § 679.50. The applicants would use "sea
 samplers" who are NMFS-trained
 observers. They would not be deployed