

Dated: April 12, 2006.

Stephen J. Claeys,

Acting Assistant Secretary for Impo Administration.

[FR Doc. E6-5948 Filed 4-19-06; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-DS-S

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 041306F]

Magnuson-Stevens Act Provisions; General Provisions for Domestic Fisheries; Application for Exempted Fishing Permits

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

ACTION: Notice; request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Assistant Regional Administrator for Sustainable Fisheries, Northeast Region, NMFS (Assistant Regional Administrator), has made a preliminary determination that an Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) application submitted by the University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES), contains all of the required information and warrants further consideration. The Assistant Regional Administrator has made a preliminary determination that the activities authorized under this EFP would be consistent with the goals and objectives of the Northeast (NE) Multispecies and Monkfish Fishery Management Plans (FMPs). However, further review and consultation may be necessary before a final determination is made to issue an EFP. Therefore, NMFS announces that the Assistant Regional Administrator proposes to recommend that an EFP be issued that would allow one commercial fishing vessel to conduct fishing operations that are otherwise restricted by the regulations governing the fisheries of the Northeastern United States. The EFP, which would enable researchers to study the biology of large monkfish, would grant exemptions from the NE Multispecies FMP as follows: Western Gulf of Maine (GOM) Closure Area; GOM Rolling Closure Areas I and II; and monkfish effort control measures.

Regulations under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act require publication of this notification to provide interested parties the opportunity to comment on applications for proposed EFPs.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before May 5, 2006.

ADDRESSES: Written comments should be sent to Patricia A. Kurkul, Regional Administrator, NMFS, NE Regional Office, 1 Blackburn Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930. Mark the outside of the envelope "Comments on UMES monkfish EFP, DA6-096." Comments may also be sent via fax to 978-281-9135. Comments may also be submitted via e-mail to the following address: *DA6-096@noaa.gov*. Include in the subject line of the e-mail "Comments on UMES monkfish EFP."

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Douglas Potts, Fishery Management Specialist, 978-281-9341.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: An application for an EFP was submitted on March 22, 2006, by Andrea K. Johnson, Research Assistant Professor at UMES, for a project funded under the New England and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Councils' Monkfish Research Set-Aside (RSA) Program. The primary goal of this study is to provide information on the biology of large monkfish that can be used to enhance the management of this species.

The project is scheduled to be conducted for one year (May 2006-April 2007) and would collect large monkfish from three industry collaborators fishing using 57.5 Monkfish Days-At-Sea (DAS) awarded to the project through the RSA Program. Monkfish gillnet vessels fishing off of Maryland, Delaware, New York, and Rhode Island would collect large monkfish as part of otherwise normal fishing activities and do not require an EFP. One vessel would fish inside the eastern edge of the Western GOM Closure Area from August 2006 through April 2007. The approximate location where fishing would take place is 42°30' N latitude, 70°00' W longitude. This is east of the Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary and would require exemption from the gear restrictions of the Western GOM Closure Area at 50 CFR 648.81(e) as well as from the restrictions of Rolling Closure Areas I and II at § 648.81(f) that will be in effect during March and April 2007. It is expected that this location would provide access to large monkfish and would avoid gear interactions between these gillnets and trawls. The applicant is also requesting exemption from the Monkfish effort control measures at § 648.92(b)(2) in order to create sufficient incentive for a commercial vessel to participate in this experiment. This would exempt the vessel from the need to use a NE Multispecies DAS concurrent with a Monkfish DAS for these trips.

The vessel would make 28 trips using gillnets that are 13-inch stretch mesh

with 24 gauge web and are 12 meshes deep. Each net is 300 feet long by 3 feet high and 150 nets will be used with an average soak time of 72 hours. Ten fish per week (360 monkfish total) will be donated to the research project during the months of August 2006-April 2007. This project is specifically interested in large monkfish, so donated fish will be the largest from each trip of at least 90 cm total length. Additional catch, within applicable size and possession limits, will be sold to help offset the costs of the research. As a consequence of the exemption from the need to use a NE Multispecies DAS, the vessel will not keep any regulated groundfish. Since these trips will use very large mesh nets, the bycatch of regulated groundfish is expected to be minimal.

The applicant may request minor modifications and extensions to the EFP throughout the year. EFP modifications and extensions may be granted without further notice if they are deemed essential to facilitate completion of the proposed research and have minimal impacts that do not change the scope or impact of the initially approved EFP request. Any fishing activity conducted outside the scope of the exempted fishing activity would be prohibited.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: April 13, 2006.

James P. Burgess,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. E6-5902 Filed 4-19-06; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 041306B]

New England Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

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

ACTION: Notice of a public meeting.

SUMMARY: The New England Fishery Management Council (Council) is scheduling a public meeting of its Sea Scallop Survey Advisory Panel in May, 2006, to consider actions affecting New England fisheries in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ).

Recommendations from this group will be brought to the full Council for formal consideration and action, if appropriate.

DATES: This meeting will be held on Thursday, May 4, 2006 at 9 a.m.

ADDRESSES: This meeting will be held at the Narragansett Town Hall, 25 Fifth Avenue, Narragansett, RI 02882; telephone: (401) 789-1044; fax: (401) 783-9637.

Council address: New England Fishery Management Council, 50 Water Street, Mill 2, Newburyport, MA 01950.
FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Paul J. Howard, Executive Director, New England Fishery Management Council; telephone: (978) 465-0492.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The panel will review the strength and weaknesses of current and future scallop surveys, as well as hear plans for the new NMFS survey vessel, the RV Bigelow. The panel also will review the terms of reference to set short and long-term goals and objectives. Other issues related to the sea scallop surveys and their use in the management process may be discussed.

Although non-emergency issues not contained in this agenda may come before this group for discussion, those issues may not be the subject of formal action during this meeting. 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 Act, provided the public has been notified of the Council's intent to take final action to address the emergency.

Special Accommodations

This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Paul J. Howard, Executive Director, at (978) 465-0492, at least 5 days prior to the meeting date.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: April 14, 2006.

James P. Burgess,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. E6-5903 Filed 4-19-06; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[Docket Number: 06041100-6100-01]

Science Advisory Board; The Preliminary Report of the External Review of NOAA's Ecosystem Research and Science Enterprise Panel

AGENCY: Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR), National

Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce (DOC).

ACTION: Notice of availability and request for public comment.

SUMMARY: NOAA Research (OAR) publishes this notice on behalf of the NOAA Science Advisory Board (SAB) to announce the availability of the preliminary report of the External Review of NOAA's Ecosystem Research and Science Enterprise panel (here called the External Ecosystem Task Team) for public comment. The preliminary report of the External Ecosystem Task Team is compiled pursuant to the request from the Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere to the SAB to conduct an external review of NOAA's ecosystem research and science enterprise.

DATES: Comments on this draft must be submitted by the close of business May 22, 2006.

ADDRESSES: The Preliminary Report of the External Ecosystem Task Team will be available on the NOAA Science Advisory Board Web site at http://www.sab.noaa.gov/reports/prelim_eett0306.pdf.

The public is encouraged to submit comments electronically to noaa.sab.comments@noaa.gov. For commenters who do not have access to a computer, comments may be submitted in writing to: NOAA Science Advisory Board (SAB) c/o Dr. Cynthia Decker, Silver Spring Metro Center Bldg. 3, Room 11117, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Cynthia Decker, Executive Director, Science Advisory Board, NOAA, Rm. 11117, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910. (Phone: 301-713-9121, Fax: 301-713-3515, E-mail: Cynthia.Decker@noaa.gov) during normal business hours of 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday, or visit the NOAA SAB Web site at <http://www.sab.noaa.gov>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The preliminary report will be posted on the SAB Web site. The SAB is seeking public comment from all interested parties. This preliminary report is being issued for comment only and is not intended for interim use. Suggested changes will be incorporated where appropriate.

The preliminary report of the External Ecosystem Task Team is compiled pursuant to the request from the Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere to the SAB to conduct an external review of NOAA's ecosystem

research and science enterprise. This review addresses questions and drafts recommendations regarding the appropriateness of the mix of scientific activities conducted and/or sponsored by NOAA to its mission and on the organization of NOAA ecosystem research and science enterprise. The SAB is chartered under the Federal Advisory Committee Act and is the only Federal Advisory Committee with the responsibility to advise the Under Secretary on long- and short-term strategies for research, education, and application of science to resource management and environmental assessment and prediction.

NOAA welcomes all comments on the content of the report. We also request comments on any inconsistencies perceived within the report, and possible omissions of important topics or issues. For any shortcoming noted within the draft report, please propose specific remedies.

Please follow these instructions for preparing and submitting a review. Using the format guidance described below will facilitate the processing of reviewer comments and assure that all comments are appropriately considered. Please provide background information about yourself on the first page of your comments: your name(s), organization(s), area(s) of expertise, mailing address(es), telephone and fax numbers, email address(es). Overview comments on the section should follow your background information and should be numbered. Comments that are specific to particular pages, paragraphs or lines of the section should follow any overview comments and should identify the page numbers to which they apply. Please number all pages and place your name at the top of each page.

Dated: April 13, 2006.

Stephen B. Brandt,

Acting Deputy Assistant Administrator, Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

[FR Doc. E6-5904 Filed 4-19-06; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-P

PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Customer Panel Quality Survey

ACTION: Proposed collection; comment request.

SUMMARY: The United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO), as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, invites the general public and other Federal agencies to take this opportunity to