

same level. A closure should not significantly affect their operations as they are capable of fishing in other areas that would remain open, outside the boundaries of the Convention Area. In 2005, 500 mt of bigeye tuna were caught by the U.S. longline fishery in the Convention Area. In 2007, if the U.S. longline fishery reaches the 500 metric ton limit, this fishery is capable of fishing in other areas that would remain open.

NMFS is not aware of any relevant Federal rules that duplicate, overlap, or conflict with this proposed rule. This rule does not impose reporting or recordkeeping requirements, and the compliance requirements for the closure areas are as described at the outset of this summary.

NMFS considered three alternatives for this proposed rule: The 2006 IATTC Tuna Conservation Resolution allows nations to opt for a 6-week summer closure of the purse seine fishery from August 1 through September 20 of 2007 or a closure from November 20 through December 31, 2007. The August 1 September 20 closure alternative may have a greater economic impact on small entities than the November 20 December 31 closure. In particular, the U.S. purse seine fleet may prefer a closure later in the fishing year because the winter weather is not conducive to fishing. Also, throughout the history of this fishery shipyards have been prepared to accept vessels for scheduled repairs during the winter months. The fishery closure later in the year allows the industry to plan for and mitigate economic impacts of a closure while still providing the conservation benefits to the tuna resources in the ETP.

NMFS also considered the alternative of not implementing the 2006 IATTC Tuna Conservation Resolution. This alternative would have imposed no economic costs on small entities. However, failure to implement measures that have been agreed on pursuant to the Convention would violate the United States' obligations under the Convention, and would violate the Tuna Conventions Act.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 951–961 and 971 *et seq.*

Dated: February 21, 2007.

Samuel D. Rauch III,

Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. E7–3251 Filed 2–23–07; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–22–S

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 622

[I.D. 021607G]

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council; Public Meetings

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

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) will convene the Law Enforcement Advisory Panel (LEAP) to review a revised Draft Joint Amendment 27 to the Reef Fish Fishery Management Plan (FMP)/ Amendment 14 to the Shrimp FMP. This amendment contains alternatives to regulate the harvest and bycatch of red snapper by both the directed commercial and recreational fisheries and the shrimp fishery in the Gulf of Mexico. The need for this amendment arose from the Southeast Data, Assessment and Review (SEDAR) process through which a recent stock assessment showed that the red snapper stock in the Gulf was overfished and overfishing was continuing.

DATES: The meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 13, 2007 from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Beau Rivage Resort and Casino, 875 Beach Boulevard, Biloxi, Mississippi, 888–383–7037.

Council address: Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, 2203 North Lois Avenue, Suite 1100, Tampa, Florida 33607.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Richard Leard, Deputy Executive Director, Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council; telephone: 813–348–1630.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The LEAP will review a scoping document for a potential amendment to address the need for additional management measures for gray triggerfish, greater amberjack, gag, and red grouper. The LEAP will discuss enforcement implications of the potential implementation of a fish-tagging program for stocks managed under individual fishing quotas (IFQs) such as red snapper and the potential use of a Federal fish stamp to identify recreational fishermen fishing in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ). Finally, the LEAP will discuss any enforcement

problems and successes of the recently implemented IFQ program for red snapper and review the status of various FMP amendments and other regulatory actions previously approved by the Council.

The LEAP consists of principal law enforcement officers in each of the Gulf States, as well as the NMFS, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), the U.S. Coast Guard, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) General Counsel. A copy of the agenda and related materials can be obtained by calling the Council office at 813–348–1630.

Although other non-emergency issues not on the agendas may come before the LEAP for discussion, in accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (M-SFCMA), those issues may not be the subject of formal action during this meeting. Actions of the LEAP will be restricted to those issues specifically identified in the agendas and any issues arising after publication of this notice that require emergency action under Section 305(c) of the M-SFCMA, provided the public has been notified of the Council's intent to take action to address the emergency.

These meetings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Tina Trezza at the Council (see **ADDRESSES**) five working days prior to the meeting.

Dated: February 20, 2007.

James P. Burgess,

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

[FR Doc. E7–3244 Filed 2–23–07; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–22–S

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 660

[I.D. 012607A]

RIN 0648–AU26

Fisheries Off West Coast States; Coastal Pelagic Species Fishery; Amendment 12 to the Coastal Pelagic Species Fishery Management Plan

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

ACTION: Availability of an amendment to a fishery management plan; request for comments.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces that the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) has submitted Amendment 12 to the Coastal Pelagic Species (CPS) Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Secretary of Commerce review. The intent of Amendment 12 to the CPS FMP is to protect all species of krill off the West Coast (i.e., California, Oregon and Washington). This action would prohibit the harvest of all species of krill by any fishing vessel operating in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) off the West Coast and would deny the use of exempted fishing permits to allow krill fishing.

DATES: Comments on Amendment 12 must be received by April 27, 2007.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments on this NOA identified by "I.D. 012607-NOA" by any of the following methods:

- E-mail: 0648-AU26.SWR@noaa.gov. Include the I.D. number in the subject line of the message.

- Federal e-Rulemaking portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.

- Mail: Rodney R. McInnis, Regional Administrator, Southwest Region, NMFS, 501 West Ocean Blvd., Suite 4200, Long Beach, CA 90802.

- Fax: (562) 980-4047.

Copies of Amendment 12, which includes an Environmental Assessment/Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis/Regulatory Impact Review, are available from Donald O. McIssac, Executive Director, Pacific Fishery Management Council, 7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 200, Portland, OR 97220-1384.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Joshua B. Lindsay, Sustainable Fisheries Division, NMFS, at 562-980-4034 or Mike Burner, Pacific Fishery Management Council, at 503-820-2280.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The CPS fishery in the EEZ off the West Coast is managed under the CPS FMP, which was developed by the Council pursuant to the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act). The CPS FMP was approved by the Secretary of Commerce and was implemented by regulations that can be found at 50 CFR part 660, subpart I.

The Magnuson-Stevens Act requires each Regional Fishery Management Council to submit any amendment to an FMP to NMFS for review and approval, disapproval, or partial approval. The Magnuson-Stevens Act also requires that NMFS, upon receiving an amendment to an FMP, publish notification in the **Federal Register** that the amendment is available for public review and comment. NMFS will consider the public comments received during the comment period described above in determining whether to approve, disapprove, or partially approve Amendment 12.

As the principal food source for many fish and non-fish species, krill are a critical component of the marine ecosystem. Off the West Coast krill are important prey for a variety of fish species, including many Council-managed stocks. Krill are also a principal food source for many species of marine mammals and seabirds; some of which are listed as threatened or endangered and warrant special efforts for protection and recovery. Protecting krill will likely minimize adverse impacts on these fish stocks and living marine resources and in turn, help to maintain ecological relationships and ensure the long-term health and productivity of the West Coast ecosystem. Amendment 12 is an attempt to incorporate ecosystem conservation principles into fishery management programs by protecting, to the extent practicable, krill resources, which are an integral part of that ecosystem.

At this time, while a krill fishery off the U.S. West Coast does not exist, there also are no Federal regulations that limit fishing for krill in the EEZ. The states of Washington, Oregon, and California prohibit their vessels from fishing for krill and prohibit landings of krill into their respective ports. However, these prohibitions would not prevent a fishery from developing in the West Coast EEZ by vessels from outside of the region, as long as landings were not made into a West Coast port.

If adopted, Amendment 12 would add all species of krill as a management unit species under the CPS FMP and would place krill under a newly established "prohibited harvest species" category. This new category would differ from the existing "prohibited species" definition

in the FMP because "prohibited harvest species" may not be taken by any fishery or gear type in the U.S. EEZ. Optimum yield (OY) for krill would be zero and the harvest of krill would be prohibited. In contrast, "prohibited species" may not be taken and retained incidentally by CPS fishery participants, but are legally harvested under provisions in other Council FMPs and Federal regulations. Amendment 12 also proposes that no exempted fishing permits (EFPs) be issued under the EFP procedures of the CPS FMP to allow individuals to harvest krill as an exception to the prohibition of harvest. These actions would fully achieve the objectives of the amendment to the extent practicable, recognizing that environmental conditions and the responses of krill and other resources to changes in environmental conditions are beyond the control of the Council.

NMFS and the Council have considered the potential for development of a krill fishery and the potentially drastic effects a fishery could have on krill resources and on the fish and other species, such as birds and mammals, that are dependent on, or that are sensitive to, the abundance and availability of krill. The Council has agreed it is critical to take preventive action at this time to ensure that a krill fishery will not develop that could potentially harm krill stocks, and in turn harm other fish and non-fish stocks. Therefore, NMFS proposes to prohibit krill fishing in the EEZ off the West Coast.

Public comments on Amendment 12 must be received by April 27, 2007, to be considered by NMFS in the decision whether to approve, disapprove, or partially approve Amendment 12. A proposed rule to implement Amendment 12 has been submitted for Secretarial review and approval. NMFS expects to publish and request public comment on the proposed regulation to implement Amendment 12 in the near future.

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

Dated: February 20, 2007.

James P. Burgess,
Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.
[FR Doc. E7-3247 Filed 2-23-07; 8:45 am]

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