

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration****Proposed Information Collection; Comment Request; Application to Shuck Surf Clams/Ocean Quahogs at Sea**

AGENCY: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Commerce, 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 comment on proposed and/or continuing information collections, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995.

DATES: Written comments must be submitted on or before December 19, 2011.

ADDRESSES: Direct all written comments to Diana Hynek, Departmental Paperwork Clearance Officer, Department of Commerce, Room 6616, 14th and Constitution Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20230 (or via the Internet at dHynek@doc.gov).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Requests for additional information or copies of the information collection instrument and instructions should be directed to Douglas Potts, (978) 281-9341 or Douglas.Potts@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**I. Abstract**

National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Northeast Region manages the Atlantic surfclam and ocean quahog fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of the Northeastern United States through the Atlantic Surfclam and Ocean Quahog Fishery Management Plan (FMP). The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council prepared the FMP pursuant to the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act). The regulations implementing the FMP are specified at 50 CFR 648.70.

The recordkeeping and reporting requirements at § 648.74 and § 648.75 form the basis for this collection of information. NMFS Northeast Region requests information from Atlantic surfclam and ocean quahog individual transferable quota (ITQ) allocation holders in order to process and track requests from the allocation holders to transfer quota allocation to another entity. NMFS Northeast Region also requests information from Atlantic

surfclam and ocean quahog permit holders in order to track and properly account for Atlantic surfclam and ocean quahog harvest that is shucked at sea. Because there is not a standard conversion factor for estimating unshucked product from shucked product, NMFS requires vessels that choose to shuck product at sea to carry on board the vessel a NMFS-approved observer to certify the amount of Atlantic surfclam and ocean quahog harvested. This information, upon receipt, results in an increasingly more efficient and accurate database for management and monitoring of fisheries of the Northeastern U.S. EEZ.

II. Method of Collection

Requests from allocation holders to transfer quota use paper applications or an online form. Paper applications are used to process requests to shuck at sea.

III. Data

OMB Control Number: 0648-0240.

Form Number: None.

Type of Review: Regular submission (extension of a currently approved information collection).

Affected Public: Business or other for-profit organizations.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 205.

Estimated Time per Response: 5 minutes for the application to transfer quota, and 30 minutes for the application to shuck surfclams and ocean quahogs at sea.

Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours: 45.

Estimated Total Annual Cost to Public: \$109,421.

IV. Request for Comments

Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden (including hours and cost) of the proposed collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized and/or included in the request for OMB approval of this information collection; they also will become a matter of public record.

Dated: October 14, 2011.

Gwellnar Banks,

Management Analyst, Office of the Chief Information Officer.

[FR Doc. 2011-27130 Filed 10-19-11; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration****Proposed Information Collection; Comment Request; Deep Seabed Mining Exploration Licenses**

AGENCY: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Commerce, 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 comment on proposed and/or continuing information collections, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995.

DATES: Written comments must be submitted on or before December 19, 2011.

ADDRESSES: Direct all written comments to Diana Hynek, Departmental Paperwork Clearance Officer, Department of Commerce, Room 6616, 14th and Constitution Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20230 (or via the Internet at dHynek@doc.gov).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Requests for additional information or copies of the information collection instrument and instructions should be directed to Kerry Kehoe (301) 713-3155 extension 151, or Kerry.Kehoe@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**I. Abstract**

This request is for extension of a currently approved information collection.

NOAA's regulations at 15 CFR 970 govern the issuing and monitoring of exploration licenses under the Deep Seabed Hard Mineral Resources Act. Any persons seeking a license must submit certain information that allows NOAA to ensure the applicant meets the standards of the Act. The persons with licenses are required to conduct monitoring and make reports, and they may request revisions, transfers, or extensions of licenses.

II. Method of Collection

Paper submissions are used; however, applicants are encouraged to submit supporting documentation electronically when feasible.

III. Data

OMB Control Number: 0648-0145.

Form Number: None.

Type of Review: Regular submission (extension of a currently approved information collection).

Affected Public: Business or other for-profit organizations.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 2.

Estimated Time per Response: Applications, 2,000-4,000 hours (no applications are expected); license renewals, 250 hours; reports, 20 hours.

Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours: 290.

Estimated Total Annual Cost to Public: \$200 in recordkeeping/reporting costs.

IV. Request for Comments

Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden (including hours and cost) of the proposed collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized and/or included in the request for OMB approval of this information collection; they also will become a matter of public record.

Dated: October 14, 2011.

Gwellnar Banks,

Management Analyst, Office of the Chief Information Officer.

[FR Doc. 2011-27131 Filed 10-19-11; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-08-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XA703

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 application contains all of the required information and warrants further consideration. This permit would allow two commercial fishing vessels to test the economic viability of using electric rod and reel gear to target pollock in the Western Gulf of Maine Closure Area and to temporarily retain undersized catch for measurement and data collection. The study would be conducted by the School for Marine Science and Technology at the University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth.

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 exempted fishing permits.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before November 4, 2011.

ADDRESSES: You may submit written comments by any of the following methods:

- *E-mail:* nero.efp@noaa.gov. Include in the subject line "Comments on Rod and Reel Fishing in WGOM Closed Area EFP."

- *Mail:* Patricia A. Kurkul, Regional Administrator, NMFS, NE Regional Office, 55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930. Mark the outside of the envelope "Comments on SMAST EFP."

- *Fax:* (978) 281-9135.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Brett Alger, Fisheries Management Specialist, 978-675-2153, brett.alger@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The School for Marine Science and Technology at the University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth (SMAST) submitted a complete application for an

exempted fishing permit (EFP) on August 31, 2011, to conduct commercial fishing activities that the regulations would otherwise restrict. The EFP would authorize two vessels to use electric rod and reel gear in the Western Gulf of Maine (GOM) Closure Area and to temporarily retain undersized catch for measurement and data collection.

The project, titled "Utilization of Electric Rod and Reel to Target Pollock in WGOM Closed Area," is funded by NOAA's Northeast Cooperative Research Program through the network project GEARNET. In addition to testing the economic viability of using electric rod and reel gear to target pollock, and allow the vessels to temporarily retain undersized fish for data collection purposes, the project may also investigate if the gear could be used as an effective stock assessment tool within closed areas. The study would take place in the Western GOM Closure Area, during November and December 2011, with two vessels planning to fish 10 days each, for a total of 20 research days. The exemptions are necessary because groundfish vessels on commercial groundfish trips are prohibited from fishing in the Western GOM Closure Area and from retaining undersized fish. Each vessel would use four electric rod and reels each day and fish for approximately 8 hours, with an additional 4 hours of steaming, for a total trip of 12 hours. Fishing would primarily occur within the Western GOM Closure Area, with some effort being conducted outside the area. SMAST is requesting access to the Western GOM Closure Area based on its belief that pollock is concentrated in this area.

A technician would be on board the vessel to measure fish caught (retained and discarded), document fishing gear, bait, location, and fishing conditions to evaluate gear performance. Undersized fish would be discarded. All Northeast multispecies of legal size would be landed, with all catch being attributed to the sector vessel's annual catch entitlement. Proceeds from the sales would be retained by the vessels.

In order to ensure that catch does not exceed the amount of targeted and bycatch species estimated by SMAST, a trigger clause would be placed on the EFP. Based on reported landings and discards, the EFP would be rescinded should catch (landings and discards) exceed any of the following amounts (per vessel): Pollock: 6,000 lb (2,722 kg); cod: 1,000 lb (454 kg); haddock: 1,000 lb (454 kg); American plaice: 100 lb (45.4 kg); yellowtail flounder: 100 lb (45.4 kg); witch flounder: 100 lb (45.4 kg); winter flounder: 100 lb (45.4 kg);