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Council Address: Pacific Fishery Management Council, 7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101, Portland, OR 97220-1384.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Kit Dahl, Staff Officer, Pacific Council; telephone: (503) 820-2422.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The EWG has been tasked with updating the Pacific Council's Fishery Ecosystem Plan. The Pacific Council directed the EWG to complete a draft of Chapter 3, prepare a preliminary draft of Chapter 4, and an outline of Chapter 5 for review at its March 2021 meeting. The primary focus of this work session will be reviewing work completed to date and planning the tasks necessary to complete this assignment. The EWG may also discuss other matters on the Pacific Council's March 2021 meeting agenda, particularly other ecosystem or administrative items.

Although non-emergency issues not contained in the meeting agenda may be discussed, those issues may not be the subject of formal action during this meeting. Action will be restricted to those issues specifically listed in this document and any issues arising after publication of this document 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 intent to take final action to address the emergency.

Special Accommodations

Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Mr. Kris Kleinschmidt (*kris.kleinschmidt@noaa.gov*; (503) 820-2412) at least 10 days prior to the meeting date.

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

Dated: December 15, 2020.

Rey Israel Marquez,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0649-XA703]

Gulf of Mexico 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 Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) will hold a 3-day meeting via webinar of its Standing, Reef Fish, Mackerel, Socioeconomic and Ecosystem Scientific and Statistical Committees (SSC)

DATES: The meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 5, 2021 to Thursday, January 7, 2021. See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** for specific times.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will take place via webinar; you may register by visiting www.gulfcouncil.org and clicking on the SSC meeting on the calendar.

Council address: Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, 4107 W Spruce Street, Suite 200, Tampa, FL 33607; telephone: (813) 348-1630.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ryan Rindone, Lead Fishery Biologist, Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council; ryan.rindone@gulfcouncil.org; telephone: (813) 348-1630.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Tuesday, January 5, 2021; 9 a.m.–5 p.m., EST

The meeting will begin with Introductions and Adoption of Agenda, Approval of Verbatim Minutes and Meeting Summary from September 14–15, 2020 webinar meeting and October 30, 2020 joint webinar meeting with the South Atlantic SSC, review Scope of Work, selection of SSC Representative for the January 25–28, 2021 Gulf Council Meeting.

The Committees will review SEDAR 70: Gulf of Mexico Greater Amberjack Stock Assessment; SEDAR 70 Stock Assessment Report, Presentation and Projections, Something's Fishy and Stock Assessment Executive Summary. The Committees will then discuss the Sea Grant/NMFS Greater Amberjack Research Program, and adjourn for the day.

Wednesday, January 6, 2021; 9 a.m.–5 p.m., EST

The Committees will review and hold discussions on Red Grouper

Recreational Landings Data, followed by a Review of Council Proposed Interim Analysis Schedule. The Committees will then review Red Snapper Supply Chains and Markets, followed by the Great Red Snapper Count (GRSC), including a presentation, the project report, and a discussion on SEFSC integration of GRSC data into the interim analysis process. The Committees will then review *Testing assumptions about sex change and spatial management in the protogynous gag grouper, Mycteroperca microlepis*, and then adjourn for the day.

Thursday, January 7, 2021; 9 a.m.–3 p.m., EST

The Committees will review a presentation and background materials on Gulf of Mexico Habitat Research, and will then discuss. The Committees will then review a Request for Participants: SEDAR 79: Southeastern U.S. Mutton Snapper.

The Committees will consider carryover of uncaught commercial quota for Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) managed species; and, will review a presentation on 2020 Commercial landings for IFQ species, consider updated ABC recommendations for IFQ species in 2021 and receive a summary presentation on Carryover Provisions and Framework Modifications.

Lastly, the Committee will discuss Other Business items and receive public comment.

—Meeting Adjourns

The meeting will be broadcast via webinar. You may register for the webinar by visiting www.gulfcouncil.org and clicking on the SSC meeting on the calendar.

The Agenda is subject to change, and the latest version along with other meeting materials will be posted on www.gulfcouncil.org as they become available.

Although other non-emergency issues not on the agenda may come before the Scientific and Statistical Committees for discussion, in accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, those issues may not be the subject of formal action during this meeting. Actions of the Scientific and Statistical Committee will be restricted to those issues specifically identified in the agenda 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 action to address the emergency.

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

Dated: December 15, 2020.

Key Israel Marquez,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648-XA593]

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone off Alaska; North Pacific Observer Program Standard Ex-Vessel Prices

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

ACTION: Notification of standard ex-vessel prices.

SUMMARY: NMFS publishes standard ex-vessel prices for groundfish and halibut for the calculation of the observer fee under the North Pacific Observer Program (Observer Program). This notice is intended to provide information to vessel owners, processors, registered buyers, and other Observer Program participants about the standard ex-vessel prices that will be used to calculate the observer fee for landings of groundfish and halibut made in 2021. NMFS will send invoices to processors and registered buyers subject to the fee by January 15, 2022. Fees are due to NMFS on or before February 15, 2022.

DATES: The standard prices are valid on January 1, 2021.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For general questions about the observer fee and standard ex-vessel prices, contact Abby Jahn at (907)586-7445. For questions about the fee billing process, contact Charmaine Weeks at (907)586-7231. Additional information about the Observer Program is available on NMFS Alaska Region's website at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/alaska/fisheries-observers/north-pacific-observer-program>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Regulations at 50 CFR part 679, subpart E, governing the Observer Program, require the deployment of NMFS-certified observers (observers) and electronic monitoring (EM) systems to collect information necessary for the conservation and management of the

Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (BSAI) and Gulf of Alaska (GOA) groundfish and halibut fisheries. Fishery managers use information collected by observers to monitor quotas, manage groundfish and prohibited species catch, and document and reduce fishery interactions with protected resources. Scientists use observer-collected information for stock assessments and marine ecosystem research.

The Observer Program includes two observer coverage categories: the partial coverage category and the full coverage category. All groundfish and halibut vessels and processors subject to observer coverage are included in one of these two categories. Defined at 50 CFR 679.51, the partial coverage category includes vessels and processors that are not required to have an observer or EM at all times, and the full coverage category includes vessels and processors required to have all of their fishing and processing activity observed. Vessels and processors in the full coverage category arrange and pay for observer services from a permitted observer provider. Observer coverage and EM for the partial coverage category is funded through a system of fees based on the ex-vessel value of groundfish and halibut. Throughout this notice, the term "processor" refers to shoreside processors, stationary floating processors, and catcher/processors in the partial coverage category.

Landings Subject to Observer Coverage Fee

Pursuant to section 313 of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, NMFS is authorized to assess a fee on all landings accruing against a Federal total allowable catch (TAC) for groundfish or a commercial halibut quota made by vessels that are subject to Federal regulations and not included in the full coverage category. A fee is only assessed on landings of groundfish from vessels designated on a Federal Fisheries Permit or from vessels landing individual fishing quota (IFQ) or community development quota (CDQ) halibut or IFQ sablefish. Within the subset of vessels subject to the observer fee, only landings accruing against an IFQ allocation or a Federal TAC for groundfish are included in the fee assessment. A table with additional information about which landings are subject to the observer fee is at § 679.55(c) and on page 2 of an informational bulletin titled "Observer Fee Collection" that can be downloaded from the NMFS Alaska Region website at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/observer-fee->

[collection-north-pacific-groundfish-and-halibut-fisheries-observer](#).

Fee Determination

A fee equal to 1.65 percent of the ex-vessel value will be assessed on the landings of groundfish and halibut subject to the fee beginning on January 1, 2021. The fee is increased from 1.25 percent to 1.65 percent to support observer and electronic monitoring deployment at rates more likely to meet the Council's and NMFS' monitoring objectives (85 FR 41424, July 10, 2020). Ex-vessel value is determined by multiplying the standard price for groundfish by the round weight equivalent for each species, gear, and port combination, and the standard price for halibut by the headed and gutted weight equivalent. Standard prices are determined by aggregating prices by species, gear, and area grouping to arrive at an average price per pound for each grouping. NMFS reviews each vessel landing report and determines whether the reported landing is subject to the observer fee and, if so, which groundfish species in the landing are subject to the observer fee. All IFQ or CDQ halibut in a landing subject to the observer fee will be included in the observer fee calculation. For any landed groundfish or halibut subject to the observer fee, NMFS will apply the appropriate standard ex-vessel prices for the species, gear type, and port, and calculate the observer fee associated with the landing.

Processors and registered buyers can access the landing-specific, observer fee information through NMFS Web Application (<https://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/webapps/efish/login>) or eLandings (<https://elandings.alaska.gov/>). Observer fee information is either available immediately or within 24 hours after a landing report is submitted electronically. A time lag occurs for some landings because NMFS must process each landing report through the catch accounting system to determine which groundfish in a landing accrues against a Federal TAC and are subject to the observer fee.

Under the fee system, catcher vessel owners split the fee with the registered buyers or owners of shoreside or stationary floating processors. While the owners of catcher vessels and processors in the partial coverage category are each responsible for paying their portion of the fee, the owners of shoreside or stationary floating processors and registered buyers are responsible for collecting the fees from catcher vessels, and remitting the full fee to NMFS. Owners of catcher/