

to 200 wenchman snapper) would be retained under the EFP. Additionally, each year, a maximum of 350 of the incidental species (up to 100 vermilion snapper; up to 100 red hind; up to 100 black, red, tiger, and yellowfin grouper, combined; and up to 50 misty and yellowedge grouper, combined) would be retained. If the incidental deep-water reef fish species are caught during the applicable seasonal and area closures, they would be possessed onboard the vessel only for the purpose of taking length measurements and tissue samples (fin clips or muscle plugs) prior to being returned to the water.

Length measurements would be recorded for all species caught except for any species for which harvest is prohibited under Federal law (*i.e.*, goliath and Nassau groupers, and midnight, rainbow, and blue parrotfishes). These prohibited species would be returned immediately to the water with a minimum of harm. For the targeted species, the gonads, eyes, fin or muscle tissues, and otoliths would be removed for histological and ageing analyses conducted by NMFS and the contracted observers, Puerto Rico's Department of Natural and Environmental Resources, and the University of South Carolina.

In order to minimize the negative biological effects of bringing these deep-water species to the surface, the commercial fishing vessel would have venting tools onboard to properly vent fish being released back in the water to facilitate their return to depth.

Under the EFP, the applicant would be allowed to fish for and possess deep-water reef fish species in or from the Bajo de Sico closed area during the October 1 through March 31 closure period (50 CFR 622.435(a)(2)(iv)). A maximum of 25 fishing trips would occur per year in the Bajo de Sico area, 50 total during the project. Of those 50 trips, it is estimated that 25 trips would occur during the seasonal closure in the Bajo de Sico area. In addition, the applicant would be allowed to fish for and possess the deep-water reef fish species during species-specific seasonal closures: Black, red, tiger, yellowfin, and yellowedge grouper during the February 1 through April 30 seasonal closure (50 CFR 622.435(a)(1)(i)); red hind during the December 1 through the last day of February seasonal closure from the EEZ west of 67°10' W longitude (50 CFR 622.435(a)(1)(ii)); and black, blackfin, silk, and vermilion snappers during the October 1 through December 31 seasonal closure (50 CFR 622.435(a)(1)(iii)). The applicant would also be exempt from certain recreational bag limit regulations at 50 CFR

622.437(b)(1), though the EFP would specify retention limits. Specifically, the applicant would be limited to 30 groupers and snappers, combined, per person per day or, if 2 or more persons are aboard, 60 groupers and snappers, combined, per vessel per day. The parrotfish recreational bag limit of 2 parrotfish per person per day or, if 3 or more persons are aboard, 6 parrotfish per vessel per day would still apply.

The applicant intends to retain samples of the targeted species caught during the seasonal or area closures. After samples are taken from the targeted species, the remainder of the fish caught during a seasonal or area closure would be given to the contracted commercial fishermen for personal use and consumption. For incidental species, the EFP would allow the applicant to possess the species during the applicable seasonal and area closures for sufficient time to record length measurements and to collect tissue samples. If the targeted or incidental species are caught outside the closed seasons and closed areas, the commercial fishermen may retain them, consistent with applicable law.

NMFS finds this application warrants further consideration based on a preliminary review. Possible conditions the agency may impose on this permit, if it is granted, include but are not limited to, a prohibition on conducting sampling activities within marine protected areas, marine sanctuaries, or special management zones, without additional authorization, and requiring compliance with best practices in the event of interactions with any protected species. NMFS may also require annual reports summarizing the amount of reef fish species harvested during the seasonal and area closures, as well as during the period of effectiveness of any issued EFP. Additionally, NMFS would require any sea turtles taken incidentally during the course of the activities to be handled with due care to prevent injury to live specimens, observed for activity, and returned to the water.

A final decision on issuance of the EFP will depend on NMFS' review of public comments received on the application, consultations with the affected state(s), the Caribbean Fishery Management Council, and the U.S. Coast Guard, and a determination that it is consistent with all applicable law.

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

Dated: June 24, 2021.

Jennifer M. Wallace,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648-XB116]

Taking and Importing of Marine Mammals

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

ACTION: Notice; affirmative finding annual renewals for Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru, and Spain.

SUMMARY: The NMFS Assistant Administrator (Assistant Administrator) has completed an affirmative finding annual renewal for the Governments of Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru, and Spain. (referred to hereafter as "The Nations") under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA). These affirmative findings will continue to allow the importation into the United States of yellowfin tuna and yellowfin tuna products harvested in the eastern tropical Pacific Ocean (ETP) for 1 year in compliance with the Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program (AIDCP) by purse seine vessels operating under The Nations' jurisdiction or exported from The Nations. NMFS bases the affirmative finding annual renewals on reviews of documentary evidence submitted by the Governments of The Nations and of information obtained from the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC).

DATES: These affirmative finding annual renewals are effective for the 1-year period of April 1, 2021, through March 31, 2022.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Justin Greenman, West Coast Region, National Marine Fisheries Service, 501 W Ocean Blvd., Suite 4200, Long Beach, CA 90802, (562) 980-3264, justin.greenman@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The MMPA, 16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*, allows for importation into the United States of yellowfin tuna harvested by purse seine vessels in the ETP from a nation with jurisdiction over purse seine vessels with carrying capacity greater than 400

short tons that harvest tuna in the ETP only if the nation has an “affirmative finding” issued by the NMFS Assistant Administrator. See Section 101(a)(2)(B) of the MMPA, 16 U.S.C. 1371(a)(2)(B); see also 50 CFR 216.24(f)(6)(i). If requested by the government of such a nation, the Assistant Administrator will determine whether to make an affirmative finding based upon documentary evidence provided by the government, the IATTC, or the Department of State.

The affirmative finding process requires that the harvesting nation is meeting its obligations under the AIDCP and its obligations of membership in the IATTC. Every 5 years, the government of the harvesting nation must request a new affirmative finding and submit the required documentary evidence directly to the Assistant Administrator. On an annual basis, NMFS must determine whether the harvesting nation continues to meet the requirements of their 5-year affirmative finding. NMFS does this by reviewing the documentary evidence from the last year. A nation may provide information related to compliance with AIDCP and IATTC measures directly to NMFS on an annual basis or may authorize the IATTC to release the information to NMFS to annually renew an affirmative finding determination without an application from the harvesting nation.

An affirmative finding will be terminated, in consultation with the Secretary of State, if the Assistant Administrator determines that the requirements of 50 CFR 216.24(f) are no longer being met or that a nation is consistently failing to take enforcement actions on violations, thereby diminishing the effectiveness of the AIDCP.

As a part of the affirmative finding process set forth in 50 CFR 216.24(f)(8), for this annual renewal, the Assistant Administrator considered documentary evidence submitted by the Governments of The Nations and obtained from the IATTC and has determined that The Nations have met the MMPA’s requirements to receive affirmative finding annual renewals.

After consultation with the Department of State, the Assistant Administrator issued affirmative finding annual renewals to The Nations, allowing the continued importation into the United States of yellowfin tuna and products derived from yellowfin tuna harvested in the ETP by purse seine vessels operating under The Nations’ jurisdiction or exported from The Nations. Issuance of affirmative finding annual renewals for The Nations does not affect implementation of an

intermediary nation embargo under 50 CFR 216.24(f)(9), which applies to exports from a nation that exports to the United States yellowfin tuna or yellowfin tuna products that was subject to a ban on importation into the United States under section 101(a)(2)(B) of the MMPA, 16 U.S.C. 1371(a)(2)(B).

These affirmative finding annual renewals for The Nations are for the 1-year period of April 1, 2021, through March 31, 2022. The Nations’ individual 5-year affirmative findings, which have varying start and end dates, remain valid. Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, and Spain’s 5-year affirmative findings will remain valid through March 31, 2025. Colombia’s 5-year affirmative finding will remain valid through March 31, 2024, El Salvador’s 5-year affirmative finding will remain valid through March 31, 2023, and Peru’s 5-year affirmative finding will remain valid through March 31, 2022, subject to subsequent annual reviews by NMFS.

Dated: June 24, 2021.

Paul N. Doremus,

Deputy Assistant Administrator for Operations, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648–XB192]

Fisheries of the Gulf of Mexico; Southeast Data, Assessment, and Review (SEDAR); Public Meeting

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

ACTION: Notice of SEDAR 74 Stock Identification (ID) Webinar III for Gulf of Mexico Red Snapper.

SUMMARY: The SEDAR 74 assessment of Gulf of Mexico red snapper will consist of a Data workshop, a series of assessment webinars, and a Review workshop. See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**.

DATES: The SEDAR 74 Stock ID Webinar III will be held from 11 a.m. until 1 p.m. Eastern, on July 22, 2021.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held via webinar. The webinar is open to members of the public. Those interested in participating should contact Julie A. Neer at SEDAR (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**) to request an invitation providing webinar access

information. Please request webinar invitations at least 24 hours in advance of each webinar.

SEDAR address: 4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201, North Charleston, SC 29405.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Julie A. Neer, SEDAR Coordinator; (843) 571–4366; email: *Julie.neer@safmc.net*.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Gulf of Mexico, South Atlantic, and Caribbean Fishery Management Councils, in conjunction with NOAA Fisheries and the Atlantic and Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commissions have implemented the Southeast Data, Assessment and Review (SEDAR) process, a multi-step method for determining the status of fish stocks in the Southeast Region. SEDAR is a multi-step process including: (1) Data Workshop; (2) Assessment Process utilizing webinars; and (3) Review Workshop. The product of the Data Workshop is a data report that compiles and evaluates potential datasets and recommends which datasets are appropriate for assessment analyses. The product of the Assessment Process is a stock assessment report that describes the fisheries, evaluates the status of the stock, estimates biological benchmarks, projects future population conditions, and recommends research and monitoring needs. The assessment is independently peer reviewed at the Review Workshop. The product of the Review Workshop is a Summary documenting panel opinions regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the stock assessment and input data. Participants for SEDAR Workshops are appointed by the Gulf of Mexico, South Atlantic, and Caribbean Fishery Management Councils and NOAA Fisheries Southeast Regional Office, HMS Management Division, and Southeast Fisheries Science Center. Participants include data collectors and database managers; stock assessment scientists, biologists, and researchers; constituency representatives including fishermen, environmentalists, and NGO’s; International experts; and staff of Councils, Commissions, and state and federal agencies.

The items of discussion in the Stock ID Webinars are as follows:

- Participants will use review genetic studies, growth patterns, existing stock definitions, prior SEDAR stock ID recommendations, and any other relevant information on red snapper stock structure.
- Participants will make recommendations on biological stock structure and define the unit stock or