(i) Whether the availability of data on which the recommended management measures are based allows for adequate time to publish a proposed rule and whether regulations have to be in place for an entire harvest/fishing season;

(ii) Whether there has been adequate notice and opportunity for participation by the public and members of the affected industry in the development of the Councils’ recommended management measures;

(iii) Whether there is an immediate need to protect the resource; and

(iv) Whether there will be a continuing evaluation of management measures adopted following their implementation as a final rule;

(3) NMFS action. If the Councils’ recommendation includes adjustments or additions to management measures, then:

(i) If NMFS concurs with the Councils’ recommended management measures and determines that the recommended management measures should be issued as a final rule based on the factors specified in paragraph (b)(2) of this section, then the measures will be issued as a final rule in the FEDERAL REGISTER.

(ii) If NMFS concurs with the Councils’ recommendation and determines that the recommended management measures should be published first as a proposed rule, then the measures will be published as a proposed rule in the FEDERAL REGISTER. After additional public comment, if NMFS concurs with the Councils’ recommendation, then the measures will be issued as a final rule in the FEDERAL REGISTER.

(iii) If NMFS does not concur, the Councils will be notified in writing of the reasons for the non-concurrence.

(iv) Framework actions can be taken only in the case where both Councils approve the proposed measure.

(b) Emergency action. Nothing in this section is meant to derogate from the authority of the Secretary to take emergency action under section 305(e) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

[76 FR 60643, Sept. 29, 2011]

EFFECTIVE DATE NOTE: At 76 FR 60643, Sept. 29, 2011, §648.239 was added, effective October 31, 2011.
(3) Based on the annual review, described above, and/or the SAFE Report described in paragraph (b) of this section, recommendations for acceptable biological catch (ABC) from the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC), and any other relevant information, the Red Crab PDT shall recommend to the Red Crab Committee and Council the following specifications for harvest of red crab: an annual catch limit (ACL) set less than or equal to ABC; and total allowable landings (TAL) necessary to meet the objectives of the FMP in each red crab fishing year, specified for a period of up to 3 fishing years.

(4) The PDT, after its review of the available information on the status of the stock and the fishery, may recommend to the Council any measures necessary to assure that the specifications will not be exceeded, as well as changes to the appropriate specifications.

(5) Taking into account the annual review and/or SAFE Report described in paragraph (b) of this section, the advice of the SSC, and any other relevant information, the Red Crab PDT may also recommend to the Red Crab Committee and Council changes to stock status determination criteria and associated thresholds based on the best scientific information available, including information from peer-reviewed stock assessments of red crab. These adjustments may be included in the Council’s specifications for the red crab fishery.

(6) Council recommendation—(1) The Council shall review the recommendations of the Red Crab PDT, Red Crab Committee, and SSC, any public comment received thereon, and any other relevant information, and make a recommendation to the Regional Administrator on appropriate specifications and any measures necessary to assure that the specifications will not be exceeded.

(ii) The Council’s recommendation must include supporting documentation, as appropriate, concerning the environmental, economic, and social impacts of the recommendations. The Regional Administrator shall consider the recommendations and publish a rule in the Federal Register proposing specifications and associated measures, consistent with the Administrative Procedure Act.

(iii) The Regional Administrator may propose specifications different than those recommended by the Council. If the specifications published in the Federal Register differ from those recommended by the Council, the reasons for any differences must be clearly stated and the revised specifications must satisfy the criteria set forth in this section, the FMP, and other applicable laws.

(iv) If the final specifications are not published in the Federal Register for the start of the fishing year, the previous year’s specifications shall remain in effect until superseded by the final rule implementing the current year’s specifications, to ensure that there is no lapse in regulations while new specifications are completed.

(b) SAFE Report. (1) The Red Crab PDT shall prepare a SAFE Report at least every 3 yr. Based on the SAFE Report, the Red Crab PDT shall develop and present to the Council recommended specifications as defined in paragraph (a) of this section for up to 3 fishing years. The SAFE Report shall be the primary vehicle for the presentation of all updated biological and socio-economic information regarding the red crab fishery. The SAFE Report shall provide source data for any adjustments to the management measures that may be needed to continue to meet the goals and objectives of the FMP.

(2) In any year in which a SAFE Report is not completed by the Red Crab PDT, the annual review process described in paragraph (a) of this section shall be used to recommend any necessary adjustments to specifications and/or management measures in the FMP.

[76 FR 60383, Sept. 29, 2011]