

For information regarding proper filing procedures for comments, see 47 CFR 1.415 and 1.420.

List of Subjects in 47 CFR Part 73

Radio broadcasting.

Federal Communications Commission.

John A. Karousos,

Chief, Allocations Branch, Policy and Rules Division, Mass Media Bureau.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 659

[I.D. 050595A]

Shrimp and Calico Scallop Fisheries Off the Southern Atlantic States; Public Hearings and Scoping Meetings

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

ACTION: Notice of public hearings and scoping meetings.

SUMMARY: The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) is holding public hearings to solicit comments on management options for Amendment 1 to the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for the Shrimp Fishery of the South Atlantic Region (Shrimp FMP) that would add rock shrimp to the management unit. Immediately after the hearings, the Council will hold public scoping meetings to solicit comments on the development of an FMP for the calico scallop fishery and on Amendment 2 to the Shrimp FMP dealing with fishery bycatch issues. See the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section for additional information on the hearings and scoping meetings.

DATES: The hearings are scheduled as followed:

1. Monday, May 22, 1995, 7 p.m., Wilmington, NC
2. Tuesday, May 23, 1995, 7 p.m., Charleston, SC
3. Wednesday, May 24, 1995, 7 p.m., Cocoa Beach, FL
4. Thursday, May 25, 1995, 7 p.m., Mobile, AL

The public scoping meetings on an FMP for calico scallops and on Amendment 2 to the Shrimp FMP will be held immediately after the public hearings on May 22 and 23. Also, a public scoping meeting on calico

scallops will be held immediately after the public hearing on May 24.

ADDRESSES: The hearings will be held at the following locations:

1. Wilmington—Ramada Conference Center, 5001 Market Street, Wilmington, NC 28405; public hearing and scoping meeting.

2. Charleston—Department of Natural Resources, Fort Johnson Auditorium, 217 Fort Johnson Road, Charleston, SC 29412; public hearing and scoping meeting.

3. Cocoa Beach—Holiday Inn, 300 N. Atlantic Avenue, Cocoa Beach, FL 32931; public hearing and scoping meeting.

4. Mobile—Holiday Inn Downtown, 301 Government Street, Mobile, AL 36602; public hearing.

Written comments regarding the issues being discussed at the hearings and scoping meetings must be received on or before June 2, 1995. Requests for copies of the public hearing documents should be sent to the Council at the following address: South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, One Southpark Circle, Suite 306, Charleston, SC 29407-4699.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Sharon Coste (Council staff); telephone: 803-571-4366; fax: 803-769-4520.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Public hearings will be held to solicit comments on management options for Amendment 1 to the Shrimp FMP that proposes to add rock shrimp to the management unit, prohibit trawling for rock shrimp in designated areas, and implement mandatory permitting and reporting requirements for vessels fishing for and dealers handling rock shrimp in the South Atlantic region. In addition, a mandatory vessel operator license and other management measures to enhance law enforcement are under consideration.

Public scoping meetings will be held to solicit comments on the development of an FMP for the calico scallop fishery. The Council may consider the following measures as possible management options for this fishery: (1) No action; (2) prohibit calico scallop trawling (trawling) south of 28°30' N. lat.; (3) prohibit trawling south of 28° N. lat.; (4) allow trawling south of Cape Canaveral only with transponders; (5) prohibit trawling west of Oculina Bank; (6) prohibit trawling south of Bethal Shoals; (7) prohibit trawling in depths less than 120 ft. (8) allow trawling with transponders only from Duval through St. Lucie Counties; (9) limit trawling to Duval through St. Lucie Counties; and (10) prohibit trawling south of Cape

Canaveral, Florida (i.e., south of 28°35.1' N. lat.).

The Council will also hold public scoping meetings to solicit comments on Amendment 2 to the Shrimp FMP to address the issue of finfish bycatch in the shrimp trawl fishery. The Shrimp FMP was prepared by the Council in 1992 and approved and implemented by NMFS in 1993. At the time of FMP implementation, the Council was concerned about finfish bycatch in the shrimp trawl fishery and intended, at that time, to begin developing management measures through an FMP amendment that would reduce bycatch. The Council's goal for bycatch reduction was affected by the 1990 Amendments to the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act that mandated a 3-year research program to assess the impacts of shrimp trawl bycatch on fishery resources under management of the Council before management action is taken. The results of this research program have been recently summarized in a NMFS report to Congress titled "A Report to Congress—Cooperative Research Program Addressing Finfish Bycatch in the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Shrimp Fisheries—April 1995."

These research results will be considered by the Council as an important basis for any specific management actions. Recent advances in gear development through cooperative efforts of Federal and state governments and the shrimp industry have produced Bycatch Reduction Devices (BRDs) that successfully exclude juvenile fish from shrimp trawls with a minimum of shrimp loss. At its October 1994 meeting in Wrightsville Beach, North Carolina, the Council recommended that NMFS emphasize the development of efficient and effective BRDs in its bycatch reduction research efforts in the South Atlantic; this would provide the Council and the South Atlantic states with expanded options to reduce finfish bycatch in the shrimp trawl fishery. Both the Council and the South Atlantic states have requested that NMFS proceed as rapidly as possible to obtain the research information needed to identify and assess options for requiring the use of BRDs under the Shrimp FMP and under coastal fishery management plans (CFMPs) developed by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (Commission) under provisions of the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act of 1993 (Atlantic Coastal Act).

The Council has asked NMFS to conduct a bycatch characterization of the rock shrimp fishery off Cape

Canaveral, Florida. Concerns still exist relative to the impacts of shrimp bycatch on the Spanish and king mackerel resources. In addition, under the current Amendment 2 to the CFMP for Weakfish, prepared by the Commission under the Atlantic Coastal Act, all South Atlantic states must implement management measures to reduce the bycatch of weakfish by 50 percent in the shrimp trawl fisheries for the 1996 fishing season. Bycatch reduction plans must be submitted to the Commission's Weakfish Technical Committee by October 1, 1995.

The Council is closely coordinating their efforts with the marine resource agencies of the South Atlantic states and has also initiated action on the shrimp trawl bycatch issue by beginning the scoping process on the development of Amendment 2 to the Shrimp FMP.

Among several management alternatives under consideration by the Council are the use of BRDs by season and/or area as well as areal or seasonal closures.

These meetings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids

should be directed to the Council office by May 19, 1995. For special accommodations regarding the hearings and meetings, contact the Council (see ADDRESSES).

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

Dated: May 11, 1995.

Richard W. Surdi,

Acting Director, Office of Fisheries Conservation and Management, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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