

significantly. Abundance estimates from the more recent years are variable, and a significant statistical trend, either increasing or decreasing, could not be detected.

Current Management Measures

NMFS recently implemented regulations to reduce commercial quotas and recreational bag limits to address the overfished status of large coastal sharks and to prevent overfishing of the fully fished pelagic and small coastal sharks (62 FR 16648). NMFS is currently considering a limited access program to address overcapacity in the shark fishery fleet (61 FR 68202).

Management Measures Under Consideration

NMFS will consider additional measures for 1998 and beyond for managing the Atlantic shark fishery. These measures may include minimum size restrictions, time/area closures to protect nursery areas, regional quotas, consistency between state and federal regulations, species-specific management, authorized gear restrictions, and a long-term rebuilding program. Consistent with the recent amendments to the Magnuson-Stevens Act, NMFS is establishing an advisory panel to assist in the development of the amendment to the FMP.

NMFS has determined that an SEIS is appropriate, due to the potentially significant impact of upcoming regulations on the human environment and because changes have occurred in the fishery since the last EIS was prepared in 1993. Participants in the fishery, including processors, may be required to operate under alternative management measures that will redistribute fishing effort and/or mortality in order to facilitate recovery of shark resources.

Timing of the Analysis and Tentative Decisionmaking Schedule

Written comments on the intent to prepare the EIS will be accepted until July 21, 1997. Comments will be considered in the preparation of a draft SEIS (DSEIS) as part of a FMP amendment addressing a long-term rebuilding program and other measures.

Dated: March 21, 1997.

Bruce Morehead,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service. [FR Doc. 97-13159 Filed 5-19-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-F

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 051297D]

North Pacific Fishery Management Council; Public Meetings

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

ACTION: Notice of committee meetings.

SUMMARY: Two committees of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) will meet June 4-6, 1997.

ADDRESSES: The meetings will be held at the Alaska Fisheries Science Center (AFSC), 7600 Sand Point Way, NE, in the Observer Training Room, Building 4, Seattle, WA 98115.

Council address: North Pacific Fishery Management Council, 605 W. 4th Ave., Suite 306, Anchorage, AK 99501-2252.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Chris Oliver, telephone: 907-271-2809.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Council's Insurance Technical Committee (relative to observer insurance coverage) will meet on June 4, 1997, 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., to discuss a recent Federal Employees Compensation Act designation for observers contained within the Magnuson-Stevens Act, and other related insurance considerations.

The Observer Oversight Committee will meet on June 5, 1997, beginning at 8:30 a.m. and will continue through June 6, 1997, as necessary. Agenda subjects for the meeting include:

1. An update on the current interim observer program, including a rollover of that program for at least another year, with minor revisions.
2. Discussions of potential alternatives to the existing program.

Special Accommodations

These meetings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Helen Allen, 907-271-2809, at least 5 working days prior to the meeting date.

Dated: May 14, 1997.

Bruce C. Morehead,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service. [FR Doc. 97-13164 Filed 5-19-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-F

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 051297C]

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

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

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) will hold a meeting of its Habitat and Environmental Protection Advisory Panel (Habitat AP).

DATES: The meeting will be held from May 28-29, 1997. See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** for specific dates and times.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Town and Country Inn, 2008 Savannah Highway, Charleston, SC 29407; telephone: 803-571-1000.

Council address: South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, One Southpark Circle, Suite 306; Charleston, SC 29407-4699.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Susan Buchanan, Public Information Officer; telephone: (803) 571-4366; fax: (803) 769-4520; email: susan_buchanan@safmc.nmfs.gov

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Meeting Dates

May 28, 1997, 1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

The Habitat AP will meet to discuss previous advisory panel recommendations; to review the Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) mandate in the Magnuson-Stevens Act and formulate AP recommendations for how the Council can meet these mandates; to review and make AP recommendations on the major provisions in the EFH Proposed Rule and the Technical Assistance Manual; to discuss marine biodiversity and how the Council may address it.

May 29, 1997, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

The Habitat AP will meet to discuss and specify major habitat types for the Council Habitat Plan and Policy Statement development, including coral, coral reefs and live/hard bottom habitat; mangrove, seagrass, and wetland habitats; oyster/shell habitat; and sargassum habitat. The AP will discuss other business before adjourning.

Special Accommodations

These meetings are physically accessible to people with disabilities.