

Written comments may now be submitted until July 17, 1997 to the Service office in the **ADDRESSES** section.

Authority

The authority for this action is the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*).

Dated: June 9, 1997.

Thomas J. Dwyer,

Acting Regional Director, Region 1.

[FR Doc. 97-15807 Filed 6-16-97; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 600

[I.D. 120996A]

Magnuson Act Provisions; Essential Fish Habitat (EFH); Public Meetings

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

ACTION: Public meeting.

SUMMARY: The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) will hold a public meeting in San Francisco, CA, to provide an additional opportunity on the west coast for public input on the proposed rule to implement the essential fish habitat (EFH) provisions of the Magnuson Act.

DATES: The meeting is scheduled to be held on July 2, 1997, from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Holiday Inn North, 275 South Airport Boulevard, South San Francisco, CA. Requests for special accommodations should be addressed to Office of Habitat Conservation, Attention: EFH, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910-3282; telephone: 301/713-2325.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Lee Crockett, NMFS, 301/713-2325.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

NMFS issued proposed regulations containing guidelines for the description and identification of EFH in fishery management plans, adverse impacts on EFH, and actions to conserve and enhance EFH on April 23, 1997 (62 FR 19723). Notices to extend the comment period were published in the **Federal Register** on May 19, 1997, (62 FR 27214) and again on June 12, 1997 (62 FR 32071). The regulations would

also provide a process for NMFS to coordinate and consult with Federal and state agencies on activities that may adversely affect EFH. The guidelines are required by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act). The purpose of the rule is to assist fishery management councils in fulfilling the requirements set forth by the Magnuson-Stevens Act to amend their FMPs to describe and identify EFH, minimize adverse effects on EFH, and identify other actions to conserve and enhance EFH. The purpose of the coordination and consultation provisions is to specify procedures for adequate consultation with NMFS on activities that may adversely affect EFH.

Special Accommodations

Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Lee Crockett (see **ADDRESSES**) at least 5 days prior to the meeting date.

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

Dated: June 12, 1997.

James P. Burgess,

Director, Office of Habitat Conservation, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 97-15873 Filed 6-16-97; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 970520118-7118-01; I.D. 050197A]

RIN 0648-AJ00

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Individual Fishing Quota Program; Standard Allowances for Ice and Slime

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

ACTION: Proposed rule; request for comments.

SUMMARY: NMFS issues a proposed rule that would establish standard allowances for ice and slime found on unwashed Pacific halibut and sablefish landed in the Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) fisheries for these species and incorporate them into the conversion factors for halibut and product recovery rates for sablefish used by NMFS to debit IFQ accounts. This action is necessary to correct inaccuracies in the

accounting process for landed IFQ product that are currently occurring because up to 15 percent of the industry participants have been adjusting the "initial accurate weight of . . . product obtained at the time of landing" by up to 9 percent to account for ice and slime. Such adjustments are not allowed under the existing regulations. The proposed rule would maintain the requirement that all processors must report the actual scale weight at the time of landing with no adjustments, but would revise the conversion factors and recovery rates used by NMFS for debiting IFQ accounts to include a standard allowance for ice and slime found on landed IFQ product.

DATES: Comments must be received by July 17, 1997.

ADDRESSES: Comments must be sent to Ronald J. Berg, Chief, Fisheries Management Division, Alaska Region, NMFS, 709 West 9th Street, Room 453, Juneau, AK 99801, or P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802, Attn: Lori J. Gravel. Copies of the Environmental Assessment/Regulatory Impact Review for this action may be obtained from the above address.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: John Lepore, 907-586-7228.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The U.S. groundfish fisheries of the Gulf of Alaska and the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands in the exclusive economic zone are managed by NMFS pursuant to the fishery management plans (FMPs) for groundfish in the respective management areas. The FMPs were prepared by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) pursuant to the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act), 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*, and are implemented by regulations for the U.S. fisheries at 50 CFR part 679. The Northern Pacific Halibut Act of 1982 (Halibut Act), 16 U.S.C. 773 *et seq.*, authorizes the Council to develop, and NMFS to implement, regulations applicable in Convention waters to allocate halibut fishing privileges among U.S. fishermen.

Under these authorities, the Council developed the IFQ program, a limited access management system for the fixed gear Pacific halibut and sablefish fisheries. NMFS approved the IFQ program in November 1993 and fully implemented the program beginning in March 1995. The Magnuson-Stevens Act and the Halibut Act authorize the Council and NMFS to make regulatory changes to the IFQ program that are consistent with the FMPs and that are