

Caribbean, Gulf, Mid-Atlantic, and New England Fishery Management Councils to support and participate in the management of these species.

Specifically, the South Atlantic Council would establish a dolphin and wahoo management committee comprised of members of all the Councils concerned as well as an advisory panel comprised of fishery representatives from the various Councils' jurisdictions. The South Atlantic Council indicates the FMP would preferably provide for consistent measures throughout the full range of dolphin and wahoo, but, where possible, the management program would be tailored to each Council's jurisdiction.

Inclusion of dolphin in the proposed FMP would require its removal from the Coastal Pelagics FMP by amendment to this fishery management plan. The Gulf and South Atlantic Councils jointly developed and amend the Coastal Pelagics FMP (managed species include king mackerel, Spanish mackerel, cero, cobia, dolphin, little tunny, and in the Gulf only, bluefish). The Coastal Pelagics FMP is implemented under authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Act by regulations at 50 CFR part 622. Presently, those regulations specify authorized and unauthorized fishing gears for dolphin in the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico EEZ, and corresponding dolphin possession limits for those gears.

The South Atlantic Council indicates, based on available information, that increased harvesting of dolphin and wahoo off the southern Atlantic states has contributed to localized depletion and user group conflicts. These problems are attributed to recent increases in fishing effort and market demand spurred by the popularity of dolphin among restaurant patrons. Available landings information indicates that the pelagic longlining fleet is directing increased effort toward dolphin, perhaps to offset declining swordfish catches. Considering that this fleet operates throughout the Atlantic EEZ, there is increasing opportunity for occurrences of localized overfishing of dolphin elsewhere in the EEZ, possibly leading to an overfished condition of the stock.

The South Atlantic Council believes that the present situation requires timely remedial action to prevent overfishing and serious user group conflicts before they occur off the southern Atlantic states or elsewhere in the Atlantic EEZ. In considering the increasing fishing pressure on dolphin and wahoo, and the sparse information available on stock structure and status, the South Atlantic Council perceives a

need to provide management throughout their range. Consequently, the South Atlantic Council requests authorization to develop an FMP that would provide comprehensive management and protection of dolphin and wahoo in the EEZ of the Atlantic Ocean.

NMFS requests public comments on the South Atlantic Council's proposal to be designated as the Council to prepare a new FMP to manage dolphin and wahoo throughout the Atlantic Ocean. Written comments will be reviewed and considered prior to NMFS' decision on this request.

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

Dated: March 2, 1998.

**Gary C. Matlock,**

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

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 030398D]

#### Gulf of Mexico 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 Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) will convene a public meeting of the Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) Technical Review Panel (TRP).

**DATES:** The meeting is scheduled to begin at 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday, April 1, 1998, and adjourn at 3:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 2, 1998.

**ADDRESSES:** The meeting will be held at the at the Wyndham Riverfront Hotel, 701 Convention Center Boulevard, New Orleans, LA 70130; telephone: 504-524-8200.

**Council address:** Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, 3018 U.S. Highway 301 North, Suite 1000, Tampa, FL 33619.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Wayne Swingle, Executive Director; telephone: 813-228-2815.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** At this meeting, the TRP will review the technical accuracy and adequacy of a revised preliminary draft of the Generic Amendment Addressing EFH Requirements in the Fishery

Management Plans of the Gulf of Mexico. EFH amendments are mandated by the recent passage of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

The TRP will review each section and provide comments. Based on the review, the TRP will develop recommendations for consideration by drafters of the document.

A copy of the agenda can be obtained by calling 813-228-2815.

Although other issues not on the agenda may come before the TRP for discussion, in accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, those issues may not be the subject of formal action during this meeting. Action will be restricted to those issues specifically identified in the agenda listed as available by this notice.

#### Special Accommodations

This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Anne Alford at the Council (see ADDRESSES) by March 25, 1998.

Dated: March 3, 1998.

**Bruce C. Morehead,**

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

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 030398E]

#### Marine Mammals

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

**ACTION:** Receipt of application for amendment.

**SUMMARY:** Notice is hereby given that Mr. Michael deGruy, The Film Crew, 629 State Street, Suite 222, Santa Barbara, CA 93101, has requested an amendment to Photography Permit No. 860-1374.

**DATES:** Written or telefaxed comments must be received on or before April 8, 1998.

**ADDRESSES:** The amendment request and related documents are available for review upon written request or by appointment in the following office(s):

Permits and Documentation Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS,