

Magnuson-Stevens Act (16 U.S.C. 1853(a)) lists the required provisions of FMPs, including EFH provisions that describe and identify EFH, minimize, to the extent practicable, adverse effects on such habitat caused by fishing, and identify other actions to encourage the conservation and enhancement of such habitat. NMFS issued interim final regulations (62 FR 66531, December 19, 1997) to assist the Councils in meeting these requirements. Information on the required EFH provisions is included in those regulations. The Councils' schedules for amending FMPs with EFH provisions will inform the public of opportunities for involvement, input, and comment during the preparation of EFH provisions. These schedules are subject to change and will be updated as appropriate.

The statutory deadline for FMP amendments to include EFH provisions, as established by the Sustainable Fisheries Act, is October 11, 1998, and all FMP amendments must be submitted to the Secretary for approval by that date. Within 5 days of submittal, the Secretary will publish a notice of availability for each amendment with a 60-day comment period. Within 30 days of the closure of the comment period, the Secretary will approve or disapprove the amendment. If the amendment contains regulations, the Secretary will also publish the draft regulations as a proposed rule with a 45-day comment period. The Secretary is required to publish a final rule within 30 days of the closure of the comment period.

For further information and copies of the schedule contact the following offices:

NMFS Regional Offices

Northeast Regional Office, Attention: Habitat Conservation Division, One Blackburn Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930-2298; 978/281-9102.

Southeast Regional Office, Attention: Habitat Conservation Division, 9721 Executive Center Drive North, St. Petersburg, FL 33702-2432; 813/570-5317.

Southwest Regional Office, Attention: Habitat Conservation Division, 501 West Ocean Blvd., Suite 4200, Long Beach, CA 90802-4213; 562/980-4041.

Northwest Regional Office, Attention: Habitat Conservation Division, 525 NE Oregon St., Suite 500, Portland, OR 97232-2737; 503/230-5421.

Alaska Regional Office, Attention: Habitat Conservation Division, 709 West 9th Street, Federal Bldg., Room 461, P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802-1668; 907/586-7235.

Regional Fishery Management Council Offices

New England Fishery Management Council; Suntaug Office Park, 5 Broadway (Rte. 1); Saugus, MA 01906; Phone:(781)231-0422; FAX: (781)565-8937.

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council; Federal Bldg., Rm. 2115; 300 S. New St.; Dover, DE 19901; Phone: (302)674-2331; FAX: (302)674-5399.

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council; Southpark Building, Ste. 306; 1 Southpark Circle; Charleston, SC 29407; Phone: (803)571-4366; FAX: (803)769-4520.

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council; Lincoln Center, Ste. 331; 5401 W. Kennedy Blvd.; Tampa, FL 33609; Phone: (813)228-2815; FAX: (813)225-7015.

Caribbean Fishery Management Council; 268 Ave. Munoz Rivera, Ste. 1108; San Juan, PR 00918; Phone: (787)766-5926; FAX: (787)766-6239.

Pacific Fishery Management Council; 2130 SW. 5th Ave., Ste. 224; Portland, OR 97201; Phone: (503)326-6352; FAX: (503)326-6831.

North Pacific Fishery Management Council; 605 W. 4th Ave., Rm. 306; Anchorage, AK 99501; Phone:(907)271-2809; FAX: (907)271-2817.

Western Pacific Fishery Management Council; 1164 Bishop St., Rm. 1405; Honolulu, HI 96813; Phone:(808)522-8220; FAX: (808)522-8226.

Highly Migratory Species Division, NMFS; 1315 East-West Highway; SSMC#3, 14th Floor, F/SF; Silver Spring, MD 20910; Phone:(301)713-2347; FAX: (301)713-1917.

Dated: March 24, 1998.

James P. Burgess,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

[I.D. 032398B]

RIN 0648-AJ51

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Scallop Fishery off Alaska; Amendment 3

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

ACTION: Notice of availability of an amendment to a fishery management plan; request for comments.

SUMMARY: The North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) has submitted Amendment 3 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Scallop Fishery off Alaska for Secretarial review. Amendment 3 would delegate to the State of Alaska (State) the authority to manage all aspects of the scallop fishery, except limited access, and would repeal all Federal regulations governing the scallop fishery off Alaska, except for the scallop vessel moratorium program. This action is necessary to eliminate duplicate regulations and management programs for the scallop fishery at the State and Federal levels. Comments from the public are requested.

DATES: Comments on Amendment 3 must be submitted on or before June 1, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Comments on Amendment 3 should be submitted to Sue Salvesson, Assistant Regional Administrator for Sustainable Fisheries, Alaska Region, NMFS, P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802-1668, Attn: Lori Gravel, or delivered to the Federal Building, 709 West 9th Street, Juneau, AK. Copies of Amendment 3 and the Environmental Assessment/Regulatory Impact Review prepared for the amendment are available from NMFS at the above address, or by calling the Alaska Region, NMFS, at 907-586-7228.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Kent Lind, 907-586-7228 or kent.lind@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act) requires that each Regional Fishery Management Council submit any fishery management plan (FMP) or plan amendment it prepares to NMFS for review and approval, disapproval, or partial approval. The Magnuson-Stevens Act also requires that NMFS, upon receiving an FMP or amendment, immediately publish a document announcing that the FMP or amendment is available for public review and comment. NMFS will consider the public comments received during the comment period in determining whether to approve the FMP or amendment. Public comments on the proposed rule must be received by the end of the comment period on the FMP/amendment to be considered in the approval/disapproval decision on the FMP/amendment.

NMFS will consider the public comments received during the comment

period in determining whether to approve Amendment 3. A proposed rule to implement Amendment 3 is scheduled to be published within 15 days of this document.

Dated: March 25, 1998.

Bruce C. Morehead,

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

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