

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Robert Blohm, Acting Chief, Office of Migratory Bird Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, (703) 358-1714.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Mid-continent lesser snow goose and Ross' goose population has nearly quadrupled in the last 30 years. The Western Central Flyway lesser snow and Ross' goose population also has quadrupled in the last 23 years. Collectively, these central and eastern arctic and subarctic-nesting light goose populations are referred to as Mid-continent light geese (MCLG). Due to high population growth rates, a decline in adult mortality, and an increase in winter survival, MCLG are now seriously injurious to their habitat and habitat important to other migratory birds which poses a serious threat to the short and long-term health and status of migratory bird populations. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service or "we") believes that MCLG populations exceed long-term sustainable levels for their arctic and subarctic breeding habitats and the populations must be reduced.

In a **Federal Register** notice dated November 9, 1998, we proposed to amend 50 CFR Part 21 to authorize the use of additional hunting methods (electronic callers and unplugged shotguns) during a normal open light-goose hunting season when all other migratory bird hunting seasons are closed. We are concurrently proposing an additional but separate population reduction strategy. In addition to this proposed rule to amend 50 CFR Part 20, we are also proposing to amend 50 CFR Part 21 to authorize the use of a conservation order to increase take of MCLG. This proposal is also in the nature of a proposed rule and the extension of the comment period on the rule is published in this issue of the **Federal Register**. The combination of these two proposals is designed to increase MCLG harvest and to provide a biologically sound and cost effective and efficient method for the reduction and management of overabundant MCLG populations.

We have received a request to extend the comment period on this rule. The Service invites careful consideration by all parties, and welcomes serious scrutiny from those committed to the long-term conservation of migratory birds. Therefore, to facilitate substantive public review, we are extending the comment period to January 15, 1999.

Dated: December 30, 1998.

**Thomas O. Melius,**

*Acting Director.*

[FR Doc. 99-145 Filed 1-5-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-P

**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR****Fish and Wildlife Service****50 CFR Parts 20 and 21**

RIN 1018-AF05

**Extension of Comment Period:  
Migratory Bird Permits; Establishment  
of a Conservation Order for the  
Reduction of Mid-Continent Light  
Goose Populations**

**AGENCY:** Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

**ACTION:** Proposed rule; extension of comment period.

**SUMMARY:** The Service is extending the comment period on the **Federal Register** rule dated November 9, 1998 (63 FR 60278) that invites public comments on proposed changes to the migratory bird hunting regulations regarding implementation of a conservation order for the reduction of mid-continent light goose populations.

**DATES:** The deadline for receipt of comments is extended from January 8, 1999 to January 15, 1999.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments regarding this proposed rulemaking should be addressed to Chief, Office of Migratory Bird Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of Interior, Ms 634—ARLSQ, 1849 C Street NW., Washington, D.C. 20240. The public may inspect comments during normal business hours in room 634—Arlington Square Building, 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Arlington, Virginia. Comments and suggestions on the information collection requirements should be sent directly to the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs; Office of Management and Budget; Attention: Interior Desk Officer, Washington, DC 20503; and to the Information Collection Clearance Officer, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ms 222—ARLSQ, 4401 N. Fairfax Dr., Arlington, VA 22203.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Robert Blohm, Acting Chief, Office of Migratory Bird Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, (703) 358-1714.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Mid-continent lesser snow goose and Ross' goose population has nearly quadrupled in the last 30 years. The Western Central Flyway lesser snow and Ross' goose population also has quadrupled in the last 23 years. Collectively, these central and eastern arctic and subarctic-nesting light goose populations are referred to as Mid-continent light geese (MCLG). Due to high population growth rates, a decline in adult mortality, and an increase in winter survival, MCLG are

now seriously injurious to their habitat and habitat important to other migratory birds which poses a serious threat to the short and long-term health and status of migratory bird populations.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service or "we") believes that MCLG populations exceed long-term sustainable levels for their arctic and subarctic breeding habitats and the populations must be reduced.

In a **Federal Register** notice dated November 9, 1998, we propose to establish a new subpart in 50 CFR Part 21 for the management of overabundant MCLG populations. In cooperation with State wildlife agencies, we propose to implement a population control program by establishing a conservation order for MCLG under the authority of the proposed subpart. This proposed rule will increase the use and availability of additional hunting methods and will authorize take of MCLG outside of the normal open light goose hunting season. In order to minimize or avoid take of non-target species, States may implement this proposed action only when all migratory bird hunting seasons are closed. Although the desired goal is to significantly reduce overabundant MCLG populations, we believe that this proposed rule will not threaten the long-term status of MCLG populations or threaten the status of other species that could be impacted through the implementation of this proposed rule.

We are concurrently proposing an additional but separate population reduction strategy. In addition to this proposed rule to amend 50 CFR Part 21, we are also proposing to amend 50 CFR Part 20 to authorize the use of new hunting methods to harvest MCLG. That proposed rule would authorize States to allow the use of new hunting methods (electronic callers and unplugged shotguns) to harvest MCLG during a light-goose only season, when all other migratory bird hunting seasons are closed. The proposal is also in the nature of a proposed rule and the extension of the comment period on the rule is published in this issue of the **Federal Register**. The combination of these two proposals is designed to increase MCLG harvest and to provide a biologically sound and cost effective and efficient method for the reduction and management of overabundant MCLG populations.

We have received a request to extend the comment period on this rule. The Service invites careful consideration by all parties, and welcomes serious scrutiny from those committed to the long-term conservation of migratory birds. Therefore, to facilitate substantive

public review, we are extending the comment period to January 15, 1999.

Dated: December 30, 1998.

**Thomas O. Melius,**

*Acting Director.*

[FR Doc. 99-144 Filed 1-5-99; 8:45 am]

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

#### 50 CFR Part 648

[I.D. 111998B]

RIN 0648-AM13

#### Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Northeast Multispecies Fishery, Atlantic Sea Scallop Fishery, and Atlantic Salmon Fishery; Fishery Management Plan (FMP) Amendments

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

**ACTION:** Amendment to a notice of availability (NOA) of an omnibus amendment to FMPs; request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** On December 1 and again on December 7, 1998, NMFS published NOAs of an omnibus amendment that included Amendment 11 to the Northeast Multispecies FMP, Amendment 9 to the Atlantic Sea Scallop FMP, and Amendment 1 to the Atlantic Salmon FMP. The NOAs described the Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) measures contained in the omnibus amendment and initiated the Atlantic salmon overfishing definition and a framework provision for aquaculture contained in Amendment 1 to the Atlantic Salmon FMP. This notification informs the public of the regulations that may be implemented to allow for the framework adjustment process for Atlantic salmon. NMFS announces that this new management measure is currently under review by the Secretary of Commerce (Secretary) and invites public comment.

**DATES:** Comments must be received on or before February 1, 1999.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments on the amendment should be sent to Jon C. Rittgers, Acting Regional Administrator, 1 Blackburn Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930. Please mark the outside of the envelope: "Comments on Amendment 1 to the Atlantic Salmon FMP."

Copies of the Amendment, its regulatory impact review and

environmental assessment are available from Paul J. Howard, Executive Director, New England Fishery Management Council, 5 Broadway, Saugus, MA 01906-1036.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Bonnie L. VanPelt, Fishery Management Specialist, 978-281-9244.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** On December 1, 1998, NMFS published a notification in the **Federal Register** (63 FR 66110) announcing that the New England Fishery Management Council submitted for review and approval by the Secretary an omnibus amendment containing EFH provisions that would implement the requirements of section 303(a)(7) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. On December 7, 1998, NMFS published an amended notification in the **Federal Register** (63 FR 67450) announcing that in addition to the EFH measures, Amendment 1 to the Atlantic Salmon FMP would include a discussion of the Atlantic salmon overfishing definition and an aquaculture framework adjustment process for Atlantic salmon. The omnibus amendment describes and identifies EFH for specified fisheries, discusses measures to address the effects of fishing on EFH, and identifies other actions for the conservation and enhancement of EFH.

A proposed rule that would implement the regulations implementing a framework process to allow for Atlantic salmon aquaculture may be published in the **Federal Register** for public comment, following NMFS' evaluation of the proposed rule under the procedures of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Because the December 7, 1998, notification did not specifically indicate that there would be any new regulations proposed, this notice informs the public that this additional management measure is under Secretarial review for approval, disapproval, or partial approval, and invites public comment. Public comments on the proposed rule must be received by the end of the comment period for the NOA on February 1, 1999, to be considered in the approval/disapproval decision on the FMP amendment. All comments received by February 1, 1999, whether specifically directed to the FMP amendment or the proposed rule, will be considered in the approval/disapproval decision. Comments received after that date will not be considered in the approval/disapproval decision on the FMP amendment.

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

Dated: December 31, 1998.

**Gary C. Matlock,**

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

[FR Doc. 99-220 Filed 1-5-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-F

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

#### 50 CFR Part 660

[Docket No. 981204297-8297-01; I.D. 110698B]

RIN 0648-AK21

#### Fisheries off West Coast States and in the Western Pacific; Bottomfish and Seamount Groundfish Fisheries; Amendment 5

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

**ACTION:** Proposed rule; request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS issues this proposed rule to implement Amendment 5 to the Fishery Management Plan for Bottomfish and Seamount Groundfish of the Western Pacific Region (FMP). Amendment 5 would establish a permanent limited access program for the Mau Zone Bottomfish fishery in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI). The intent of this action is to conserve and to support the long-term productivity of the bottomfish stocks by preventing the potential for excessive harvest capacity and to improve the low economic returns in the fishery.

**DATES:** Comments on this proposed rule must be received on or before February 22, 1999.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments on this proposed rule or Amendment 5 should be sent to Alvin Katekaru, Fishery Management Specialist, Pacific Islands Area Office (PIAO), NMFS, 2570 Dole Street, Room 106, Honolulu, HI 96822-2396. Copies of these documents are available from, Kitty Simonds, Executive Director, Western Pacific Fishery Management Council, 1164 Bishop St., Suite 1400, Honolulu, HI 96813. Send comments on the modifications to approved collection-of-information requirements to PIAO, NMFS, 2570 Dole Street, Honolulu, HI, 96822 and to the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget (OMB), Washington, D.C. 20503 (ATTN: NOAA Desk Officer).