

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE****National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration****DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR****Fish and Wildlife Service**

[I.D. 101599H-1]

**Extension of Public Comment Period for Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Application for an Incidental Take Permit for the Crown Pacific, L.P., Hamilton Tree Farm, Whatcom and Skagit Counties, Washington**

**AGENCIES:** National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Commerce; Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), Interior.

**ACTION:** Extension of public comment period.

**SUMMARY:** This notice announces an extension of the public comment period for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and application for an Incidental Take Permit (Permit) for the Crown Pacific, L.P., Hamilton Tree Farm, in Whatcom and Skagit Counties, Washington. The Permit application includes: (1) the proposed Habitat Conservation Plan; and, (2) the proposed Implementing Agreement. **DATES:** Written comments on the permit application, Environmental Impact Statement, Plan, and Implementing Agreement must be received from interested parties no later than January 10, 2000.

**ADDRESSES:** Requests for documents on CD ROM should be made by calling the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at (360)534-9330. Hard bound copies are also available for viewing, or partial or complete duplication, at the following libraries: Sedro-Woolley Public Library, 802 Ball Street, Sedro Woolley, WA, (360)855-1166; Bellingham Public Library, Reference Desk, 210 Central Avenue, Bellingham, WA, (360)676-6860; Seattle Public Library, Government Publications Desk, 1000 4th Avenue, Seattle, WA, (206)386-4636; and, Olympia Timberland Library, Reference Desk, 313 8th Avenue SE, Olympia, WA, (360)352-0595. The documents are also available electronically on the World Wide Web at <http://www.r1.fws.gov/>.

Comments and requests for information should be directed to Brian Bogaczyk, Project Biologist, Fish and Wildlife Service, 510 Desmond Drive, SE., Suite 102, Lacey, Washington, 98503-1273, (telephone: 360/753-5824; facsimile: 360/534-9331), and Matt

Longenbaugh, Project Biologist, National Marine Fisheries Service, 510 Desmond Drive, SE., Suite 103, Lacey, Washington, 98503-1273 (telephone: 360/753-7761; facsimile: 360/753-9517). Comments and materials received will also be available for public inspection, by appointment, during normal business hours by calling (360)534-9330.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The original Federal Register publication announcing the public comment period for this project was announced on October 26, 1999 (64 FR 57630). That notice stated that comments would be accepted through December 27, 1999. The purpose of this extension is to provide additional review and comment time, recognizing that the traditional holiday season during the latter part of December may affect interested parties' ability to perform a thorough and comprehensive review of the documents.

Dated: November 26, 1999.

**Anne Badgley,**

*Regional Director, Region 1, Fish and Wildlife Service, Portland, Oregon.*

Dated: December 6, 1999.

**Wanda L. Cain,**

*Chief, Endangered Species Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.*

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**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE****National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

[I.D. 112699E]

**American Lobster; Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement**

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

**ACTION:** Notice of intent (NOI) to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS); request for written comments.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS announces its intent to prepare an EIS to assess the impact on the human environment of possible management measures for the American lobster fishery in the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). This NOI requests public input in the form of written comments on issues that NMFS should consider in preparing the EIS. The document will evaluate recommendations made by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (Commission) for lobster management actions in Federal waters that

complement management measures being taken by the states under the provisions of the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act (ACFCMA). These recommendations include the evaluation of historical participation as a basis for restricting trap harvest of lobsters in the offshore EEZ, as well as in nearshore EEZ areas between New York and North Carolina. Additional action recommended by the Commission includes the implementation of vessel upgrade restrictions in the offshore EEZ fishery and a ban on lobster possession in certain Federal waters off the coast of New York. The purpose of these measures, in combination with other management actions already taken under the ACFCMA, is to end overfishing and to rebuild stocks of American lobster throughout their range. Public hearings for the EIS will be announced in the **Federal Register** at a later date.

**DATES:** Written comments on the intent to prepare the EIS must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on or before January 10, 2000.

**ADDRESSES:** Written comments should be sent to: Harold C. Mears, Director, State, Federal, and Constituent Programs Office, Northeast Region, NMFS, One Blackburn Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930. Comments may also be sent via fax to (978) 281-9117. Comments submitted via e-mail or Internet will not be accepted.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Robert Ross, (978) 281-9234, fax (978) 281-9117.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:****Background**

The New England Fishery Management Council's Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for American Lobster was implemented in Federal waters for vessels with Federal fishing permits in 1983. Since approximately 80 percent of the fishery for American lobster occurs in state waters, the FMP objectives of maintaining a sustainable fishery and preventing overfishing of the resource could not effectively be achieved by Federal action alone. NMFS could no longer ensure that the FMP, which covered only Federal waters, was consistent with national standard 1 of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act), which requires implementation of conservation and management measures to prevent overfishing. Therefore, a proposed rule was published in 1996 (61 FR 13478) to withdraw the Council FMP upon