

**ADDRESSES:** Meetings will be held in Warwick, RI, Portland, ME, Danvers, MA and Peabody, MA. See

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** for specific locations.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Paul J. Howard, Executive Director, New England Fishery Management Council; (978) 465-0492. Requests for special accommodations should be addressed to the New England Fishery Management Council, 50 Water Street, Mill 2, Newburyport, MA 01950-2866; telephone: (978) 465-0492.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

**Meeting Dates and Agendas**

*Wednesday, January 5, 2000, 10:00 a.m.*—Gear Conflict

**Committee Meeting**

Location: Radisson Airport Hotel, 2081 Post Road, Warwick, RI 02886; telephone: (401) 739-3000.

Discussion and development of recommendations on whether fishing vessels should be required to use a Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) to reduce the incidence of gear conflicts between fixed and mobile gear fishermen; discussion of methods to implement a VMS requirement in fisheries that are not managed by the Council; and discussion of various management measures that can be used to mitigate gear conflicts, such as additional marking requirements.

*Thursday, January 6, 2000, 9:30 a.m.*—Whiting Committee Meeting

Location: Radisson Airport Hotel, 2081 Post Road, Warwick, RI 02886; telephone: (401) 739-3000.

Committee development of a scoping document for a proposed Small Mesh Species Fishery Management Plan (FMP), which would establish a separate plan for whiting, red hake, offshore hake, and possibly ocean pout. These species are currently managed under the Multispecies FMP. The scoping document may include options for limiting access and applying a Total Allowable Catch (TAC) to small mesh species fisheries, and any other issues that the committee identifies.

*Monday, January 10, 2000, 10:00 a.m.*

*and Tuesday, January 11, 2000, 8:30 a.m.*—Scallop Oversight Committee Meeting

Location: Radisson Airport Hotel, 2081 Post Road, Warwick, RI 02886; telephone: (401) 739-3000.

Committee approval of Total Allowable Catch research set-aside mechanism and groundfish management issues relating to Framework Adjustment 13 to the Scallop FMP (scallop vessel access to groundfish closed areas); development of recommendations concerning the

extension of the Seastead Site research project closed area (proposed Framework Adjustment 14 to the FMP); and approval of Amendment 10 objectives (comprehensive management strategy, including rotational area management), schedules and a draft scoping document.

*Wednesday, January 12, 2000, 9:30 a.m.*—Experimental Fisheries and Research Steering Committee

Location: Sheraton Ferncroft Hotel, 50 Ferncroft Road, Danvers, MA 01923; telephone: (978) 777-2500.

Development of research priorities for the New England groundfish fishery and other fisheries that impact the groundfish resource.

*Thursday, January 13, 2000, 9:30 a.m.*—Joint Herring Committee and Atlantic States Fisheries Commission Herring Section Meeting

Location: Holiday Inn by the Bay, 8 Spring Street, Portland, ME 04101; telephone: (207) 775-2311.

Committee and Section review and approval of a draft scoping document that identifies issues to be considered during the development of a controlled access system in the Atlantic herring fishery; Committee and Section consideration of the impact of the partial approval of the Atlantic Herring FMP and discussion of the need for additional management measures such as, but not limited to, spawning closures, effort controls, gear restrictions, or other measures for the fishery; Committee and Section discussion of gear use issues in the eastern Gulf of Maine, and possible development of additional management measures to address concerns raised by purse seine and mid-water trawl vessels that fish in this area.

*Tuesday, January 18, 2000, 8:30 a.m.*—Red Crab Committee Meeting

Location: Sheraton Ferncroft, 50 Ferncroft Road, Danvers, MA 01923; telephone: (978) 777-2500.

Discussion of issues to address in the scoping process for this new FMP, review of the draft scoping document and review of the draft control date letter to NMFS. There will be a closed session at the end of the meeting to review applications for the Red Crab Advisory Panel.

*Friday, January 28, 2000, 9:30 a.m.*—Social Sciences Advisory Committee Meeting

Location: Holiday Inn, One Newbury Street (Rt. 1 North), Peabody, MA 01960; telephone: (978) 535-4600.

Committee discussion of how it can implement recommendations on improving social and economic impact analyses in fishery management plans; discussion of committee involvement in the development of Amendment 10 to

the Atlantic Scallop FMP (to establish a rotational area management system).

Although non-emergency issues not contained in this agenda may come before this Council for discussion, those issues may not be the subject of formal Council action during this meeting. Council action will be restricted to those issues specifically listed in this notice and any issues arising after publication of this notice that require emergency action under section 305(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, provided the public has been notified of the Council's intent to take final action to address the emergency.

**Special Accommodations**

These meetings are accessible to people with physical disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Paul J. Howard (see **ADDRESSES**) at least 5 days prior to the meeting dates.

Dated: December 16, 1999.

**Bruce C. Morehead,**

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

[FR Doc. 99-33067 Filed 12-20-99; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3510-22-F**

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

[I.D. 121499C]

**Pacific 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 Pacific Fishery Management Council's (Council) Highly Migratory Species Plan Development Team (HMSPDT) will hold a work session which is open to the public.

**DATES:** The work session will be held on Monday, January 31, 2000 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.; on Tuesday, February 1, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and on Wednesday, February 2, from 8 a.m. until business for the day is completed.

**ADDRESSES:** The work session will be held at NMFS Pacific Fisheries Environmental Laboratory, 1352 Lighthouse Avenue, Pacific Grove, CA; (831) 648-8515.

*Council address:* Pacific Fishery Management Council, 2130 SW Fifth Avenue, Suite 224, Portland, OR 97201.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Dan Waldeck, Pacific Fishery Management Council; (503) 326-6352.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The primary purpose of the work session is to draft sections of the fishery management plan and related documents for highly migratory species fisheries off the West Coast.

Although non-emergency issues not contained in the HMS PDT meeting agenda may come before the HMS PDT for discussion, those issues may not be the subject of formal HMS PDT action during these meetings. HMS PDT action will be restricted to those issues specifically listed in this notice and any issues arising after publication of this notice that require emergency action under section 305(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, provided the public has been notified of the HMS PDT's intent to take final action to address the emergency.

#### Special Accommodations

The meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Mr. John Rhoton at (503) 326-6352 at least 5 days prior to the meeting date.

Dated: December 16, 1999.

**Bruce C. Morehead,**

*Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.*  
[FR Doc. 99-33066 Filed 12-20-99; 8:45 am]

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### Patent and Trademark Office

[Docket No. 991027288-9288-01]

RIN 0651-AB10

#### Revised Interim Guidelines for Examination of Patent Applications Under the 35 U.S.C. § 112, ¶ 1 "Written Description" Requirement; Request for Comments

**AGENCY:** Patent and Trademark Office, Commerce.

**ACTION:** Notice and request for public comments.

**SUMMARY:** The Patent and Trademark Office (PTO) requests comments from any interested member of the public on the following Revised Interim Guidelines for Examination of Patent Applications Under the 35 U.S.C. 112, ¶ 1 "Written Description" Requirement (Revised Interim Guidelines). These Revised Interim Guidelines will be used by PTO personnel in their review of

patent applications for compliance with the "written description" requirement of 35 U.S.C. § 112, ¶ 1. This revision supersedes the Interim Written Description Guidelines which were published contemporaneously in both the **Federal Register** and Official Gazette at 63 FR 32,639 (June 15, 1998) and 1212 O.G. 15 (July 7, 1998), respectively. This revision reflects the current understanding of the PTO regarding the written description requirement of 35 U.S.C. 112, ¶ 1 and is applicable to all technologies.

**DATES:** Written comments on the Revised Interim Guidelines will be accepted by the PTO until March 22, 2000.

**ADDRESSES:** Written comments should be addressed to Box 8, Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks, Washington, DC 20231, marked to the attention of Stephen Walsh, or to Box Comments, Assistant Commissioner for Patents, Washington, DC 20231, marked to the attention of Linda S. Therkorn. Alternatively, comments may be submitted to Stephen Walsh via facsimile at (703) 305-9373 or by electronic mail addressed to "stephen.walsh@uspto.gov" or to Linda Therkorn via facsimile at (703) 305-8825 or by electronic mail addressed to "linda.therkorn@uspto.gov."

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Stephen Walsh by telephone at (703) 305-9035, by facsimile at (703) 305-9373, by mail to his attention addressed to Box 8, Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks, Washington, DC 20231, or by electronic mail at "stephen.walsh@uspto.gov"; or Linda Therkorn by telephone at (703) 305-8800, by facsimile at (703) 305-8825, by mail addressed to Box Comments, Assistant Commissioner for Patents, Washington, DC 20231, or by electronic mail at "linda.therkorn@uspto.gov."

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The PTO requests comments from any interested member of the public on the following Revised Interim Guidelines. As of the publication date of this notice, this revision will be used by PTO personnel in their review of patent applications for compliance with the "written description" requirement of 35 U.S.C. 112, ¶ 1. Because this revision governs internal practices, it is exempt from notice and comment rulemaking under 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(A).

Written comments should include the following information: (1) Name and affiliation of the individual responding, and (2) an indication of whether the comments offered represent views of the respondent's organization or are respondent's personal views. If you

believe the PTO should further amend these revised interim guidelines before they are made final, you should include the following information in your comments: (1) The rationale supporting the proposal, including the identification of applicable legal authority; and (2) a description of the potential benefits and drawbacks of adopting the proposal. The PTO is particularly interested in comments relating to the following topics: (1) The accuracy of the methodology, (2) the legal analysis in the guidelines, and (3) relevant factors to consider in determining whether the written description requirement is satisfied.

Parties presenting written comments are requested, where possible, to provide their comments in machine-readable format in addition to a paper copy. Such submissions may be provided by electronic mail messages sent over the Internet, or on a 3.5" floppy disk formatted for use in a Macintosh, Windows, Windows for Workgroups, Windows 95, Windows 98, Windows NT, or MS-DOS based computer.

Written comments will be available for public inspection on or about April 19, 2000, in Suite 918, Crystal Park 2, 2121 Crystal Drive, Arlington, Virginia. In addition, comments provided in machine readable format will be available through the PTO's Website at <http://www.uspto.gov>.

#### Discussion of Public Comments

Comments were received from 13 individuals and 16 organizations in response to the Request for Comments on the Interim Guidelines for the Examination of Patent Applications Under the 35 U.S.C. 112, ¶ 1 "Written Description" Requirement published contemporaneously in the **Federal Register** and Official Gazette at 63 FR 32,639 (June 15, 1998) and 1212 O.G. 15 (July 7, 1998), respectively; and the Extension of Comment Period and Notice of Hearing published at 63 FR 50887 (September 23, 1998) and 1214 O.G. 180 (September 29, 1998). The written comments and the testimony at the public hearing have been carefully considered.

#### Overview of Comments

The majority of comments favored issuance of written description guidelines, with revisions. Several major issues arose in the oral testimony and written comments submitted in response to the Interim Guidelines on the Written Description Requirement with respect to the scope of the Guidelines, the method of analysis, and the content of the examples. In view of