

hours. It is estimated that in the fall of 1999, between 90 and 95 vessels participated in the large mesh and small mesh gillnet fisheries in the Pamlico Sound. Approximately one-half of these vessels are believed to have fished large mesh (i.e. greater than 5 inch (12.7 cm) stretch mesh) gillnets. NCDMF Trip Ticket Program information for 1999 indicates that 45 vessels greater than 25 feet (7.6 m) and 9 vessels less than 25 feet (7.6 m) in length landed more than 1,000 pounds (454 kg) of flounder per month from September through December.

Incidental mortalities of listed turtles associated with the commercial fall gillnet fishery for flounder in Pamlico Sound, NC, are requested by NCDMF at levels specified in the Permit application. NCDMF is proposing to limit the commercial fall gillnet fishery for flounder such that the incidental impacts on listed turtles will be minimized. NCDMF would use a variety of adaptive fishery management measures and restrictions through their state proclamation authority to reduce sea turtle mortality in the fall gillnet fishery by 50 percent, relative to mortality levels indicated by strandings in 1999. Implementation of the monitoring requirements of the Plan—an observer program with 5 percent coverage—is contingent upon NCDMF receiving a funding grant, for which a final funding decision is expected in early August. NCDMF considered and rejected one other alternative, not applying for a permit and closing the fishery, when developing their Plan.

Summary of NMFS Concerns and Recommendations

NMFS has reviewed the NCDMF's Plan and has identified several concerns with the adequacy of the minimization and mitigation measures, monitoring, and the associated level of incidental take of listed turtles. The NCDMF's draft Plan could be strengthened by providing information on the abundance and distribution of the five listed species of turtles in North Carolina waters (including the Pamlico Sound), information on current fishing levels within North Carolina waters (including the Pamlico Sound) and more detailed information on the effect of implementing the proposed minimization measures, mitigation measures, commitments to monitoring, and alternatives to the proposed Plan.

NMFS specifically invites the public to provide comments on the measures proposed in the Plan, including the description of management measures, the relationship of the management measures to the trigger conditions

identified in the application, the monitoring requirements (including observer provisions and funding), and the linkage of the Plan to current and future program management (This permit application and Plan are for 1 year only, so any future incidental take authorization in this fishery would require a new application and plan, incorporating any new information developed this year.). NMFS is also seeking comment on the incidental take level proposed in the Plan. The Plan could potentially reduce strandings within Pamlico Sound by up to 50 percent of the levels observed during the fall in 1999. NMFS solicits comment on the adequacy of this reduction to avoid appreciably reducing the numbers and distribution of listed turtles in the wild and the potential need for further reductions in the take level requested.

NMFS also invites comments on potential alternative options and practical measures that could reduce the adverse effects to turtles in Pamlico Sound. Variations on the alternatives provided in the Plan may also exist which could avoid and/or significantly reduce potential for conflict with ongoing fishing activities in North Carolina waters outside of Pamlico Sound, while minimizing and mitigating the incidental take of turtles. Specifically, NMFS wishes to receive comment on options that would minimize the use of gillnets in Pamlico Sound during times of turtle abundance, while still providing fishing opportunities to fishers. Additionally, we seek comments on the management of commercial and recreational fishing activities by the applicant in areas outside of Pamlico Sound that would provide the basis for the development of a multi-year Conservation Plan to minimize and mitigate strandings of listed turtles within all North Carolina waters. Comments on alternatives should include discussions of length of gillnets deployed, soak times, and seasonal closures to avoid, minimize, and mitigate incidental take. This information will assist NMFS and NCDMF in developing long-term Plans with appropriate adaptive management measures for future fishing activities.

This notice is provided pursuant to section 10(c) of the Act. NMFS will evaluate the permit application, Plan, and comments submitted thereon to determine whether the application meets the requirements of section 10(a) of the ESA. If it is determined that the requirements are met, a permit will be issued for the incidental take of loggerhead, leatherback, green, hawksbill, and Kemp's ridley turtles, for the 2000 fall season only. Management

of this fishery beyond 1 year of the issuance of the Permit, will require a new incidental take permit. The final permit decision will not be made prior to ensuring compliance with NEPA and not until after the end of the 30-day comment period in order to fully consider all public comments received during the comment period. NMFS will publish a record of its final action in the **Federal Register**.

The EA package includes a draft EA. A final determination of a Finding of No Significant Impact (which concludes that issuing the incidental take permit is not a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment, within the meaning of section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended) will be made after the public comment period and prior to issuance of a Permit. Two Federal action alternatives have been analyzed in the EA, including: (1) the no action alternative (deny the permit); and (2) issue a permit.

Dated: July 28, 2000.

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. 071200A]

ICCAT Advisory Committee; Public Meetings

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

ACTION: Notice of public meetings.

SUMMARY: The Advisory Committee to the U.S. Section to the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) in conjunction with the Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Management Division of NMFS announces the schedule of regional public meetings to be held this fall.

DATES: The meetings are scheduled in September and October 2000. See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** for specific dates and times of the meetings.

ADDRESSES: The meetings will be held in Texas, Florida, New Jersey, and Massachusetts. See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** for specific addresses of the meetings.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Patrick E. Moran (international issues) at 301-713-2276 or Rachel Husted (domestic issues) at 301-713-2347.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The meetings are scheduled as follows:

Thursday, September 7, 2000, 7 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.—Sandcastle Condominiums, 800 Sand Castle Drive, Port Aransas, Texas 78373;

Thursday, September 14, 2000, 7 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.—Sheraton Biscayne Bay Hotel, Brickell Point/Miami, 495

Brickell Avenue, Miami, Florida 33131;

Sunday, October 1, 2000, 7 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.—Four Points Hotels Sheraton, Route 132 and Bearse's Way, Hyannis, Massachusetts 02601;

Thursday, October 5, 2000, 7 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.—The Inn of Cape May, 7 Ocean Street, Cape May, New Jersey 08204.

The following topics may be presented to the public for discussion at the regional meetings:

International Issues

- (1) Background on ICCAT
- (2) Information on the Advisory Committee and Commissioners
- (3) Status of Highly Migratory Species Managed by ICCAT
- (4) Topics for the 2000 ICCAT Annual Meeting

Domestic Issues

- (1) Implementation of ICCAT Recommendations
 - (2) Other HMS management actions
- Representatives from the Advisory Committee to the U.S. Section to ICCAT and NMFS will be in attendance at the regional meetings. There will be an opportunity for public comment on each issue. The length of the meetings may be adjusted based on the progress of the discussions.

Additionally, the annual fall meeting of the Advisory Committee will be held on October 29-31, 2000, at the NOAA Silver Spring Metro Center complex, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910. There will be opportunity for public comment on international issues on the first day (October 29) of this meeting. This session is scheduled from 1 to 6 p.m. Domestic issues will not be discussed at this meeting. Additional information on the annual fall Committee meeting will be provided at a later date.

The public is reminded that NMFS expects members of the public to conduct themselves appropriately for the duration of Advisory Committee meetings. At the beginning of the meetings, an appropriate representative will explain the ground rules (e.g., alcohol in the meeting room is prohibited, attendees will be called to

give their comments in the order in which they registered to speak, each attendee will have an equal amount of time to speak, and attendees should not interrupt one another). The appropriate representative will attempt to structure the session so that all attending members of the public are able to comment, if they so choose, regardless of the degree of controversy of the subject(s). Attendees are expected to respect the ground rules, and if they do not, they will be asked to leave the meeting.

Special Accommodations

The meeting locations are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Patrick E. Moran at (301) 713-2276 at least 5 days prior to the meeting date.

Dated: July 28, 2000.

Bruce C. Morehead,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.
[FR Doc. 00-19651 Filed 8-2-00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-F

UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE**Deposit of Biological Materials**

ACTION: Proposed collection; comment request.

SUMMARY: The United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO), as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, invites the general public and other Federal agencies to take this opportunity to comment on proposed and/or continuing information collections, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Public Law 104-13 (44 U.S.C. 3506(c)(2)(A)).

DATES: Written comments must be submitted on or before October 2, 2000.

ADDRESSES: Direct all written comments to Thao P. Nguyen, Acting Records Officer, Office of Data Management, Data Administration Division, (703) 308-7397, USPTO, Suite 310, 2231 Crystal Drive, Washington, DC 20231.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Requests for additional information should be directed to Robert J. Spar, United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO), Washington, DC 20231, by telephone at (703)305-9285.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**I. Abstract**

This collection is required by 35 USC 2(b) and 37 CFR Ch. 1, Subpart G, 1.801-809. Every patent must contain a description of the invention sufficient to enable a person (knowledgeable in the relevant science) to make and use the invention as required by 35 USC 112, first paragraph. When the invention involves a biological material, sometimes words alone cannot sufficiently describe how to make and use the invention in a reproducible or repeatable manner. In such cases, the required biological material must either be known and readily (and continually) available, or be deposited in a suitable depository to meet the enablement and written description requirements of 35 USC 112, first paragraph. When a deposit is necessary, the USPTO collects information to determine whether the depositor is in compliance with the patent statute. This includes a statement proving notification to the interested public on where to obtain samples of the deposits. A viability statement showing that the biological material was tested by the depository, and is a viable or acceptable deposit, must also be submitted to the USPTO.

II. Method of Collection

By mail, facsimile, or hand carry when the applicant or agent files a patent application with the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) or submits subsequent papers during the prosecution of the application to the USPTO.

III. Data

OMB Number: 0651-0022.

Form Number: N/A.

Type of Review: Extension of a currently approved collection.

Affected Public: Individuals or Households, Business or Other Non-Profit, Not-For-Profit Institutions, and the Federal Government.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 3,300 per year for deposited materials and 0.25 per year for depository approval.

Estimated Time Per Response: One hour per application for deposited materials and five hours per application for depository approval.

Estimated Total Annual Respondent Burden Hours: 3,301 hours per year.

Estimated Total Annual Respondent Cost Burden: \$99,218.75 per year to submit the information to the USPTO. Additionally, depositories charge fees to depositors; all depositories charge about the same rates for their services. For example, the American Type Culture Collection (ATCC), one of the