

contact Patti Carroll at 503/231-2080 as soon as possible. In order to allow sufficient time to process requests, please call no later than one week before the hearing date.

Information regarding this proposal is available in alternate formats upon request.

We will accept public comments on the draft economic analysis until September 11, 2002.

Comments from the public regarding this proposed rule are sought, especially regarding:

(1) The reasons why critical habitat for any of these species is prudent or not prudent as provided by section 4 of the Act and 50 CFR 424.12(a)(1);

(2) The reasons why any particular area should or should not be designated as critical habitat for any of these species, as critical habitat is defined by section 3 of the Act;

(3) Specific information on the amount, distribution, and quality of habitat for the 46 species, and what habitat is essential to the conservation of the species and why;

(4) Land use practices and current or planned activities in the subject areas, and their possible impacts on proposed critical habitat;

(5) Any economic or other impacts resulting from the proposed designations of critical habitat, including any impacts on small entities, energy development, low income households, and local governments;

(6) Economic and other potential values associated with designating critical habitat for the above plant species such as those derived from non-consumptive uses (e.g., hiking, camping, birding, enhanced watershed protection, increased soil retention, "existence values", and reductions in administrative costs); and

(7) Information for use, under section 4(b)(2) of the Act, in determining if the benefits of excluding an area from critical habitat outweigh the benefits of specifying the area as critical habitat.

Reopening of the comment period will enable us to respond to the request for a public hearing on the proposed action. The comment period on this proposal now closes on September 30, 2002. Written comments should be submitted to the Service office listed in the **ADDRESSES** section.

#### Author

The primary author of this notice is Michelle Mansker (see **ADDRESSES** section).

**Authority:** The authority for this action is the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*).

Dated: August 14, 2002.

**David P. Smith,**

*Acting Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks.*

[FR Doc. 02-21626 Filed 8-22-02; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4310-55-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

#### 50 CFR Part 648

[I.D. 081302B]

#### Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council and New England Fishery Management Council; Public Hearings

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

**ACTION:** Notice of supplemental scoping meetings; request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** The Mid-Atlantic and New England Fishery Management Councils (Councils) are currently developing Amendment 2 to the Monkfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP), pursuant to the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976, as amended. Among management measures, the FMP implemented a limited access system which restricts participation in the monkfish fishery within Federal waters based on historical participation. The Councils are considering revising the monkfish limited access permit system in Amendment 2 to allow vessels that landed monkfish after the original control date in the southern end of the range of the fishery to qualify for permits.

In January 2002, at one of their regularly scheduled meetings, the Councils provided the public with an opportunity to comment on the monkfish limited access permit system in Amendment 2. Once again, the Councils intend to provide the public with an opportunity to comment on this particular issue. The intended effect of this action is to alert interested public of the commencement of this supplemental scoping process and to provide for public participation.

**DATES:** The Councils will discuss and take scoping comments on options to amend the monkfish limited access program in Amendment 2 at public meetings in September 2002. See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** for specific dates and times. Written scoping comments must be received on or before 5 p.m. EST, September 27, 2002.

**ADDRESSES:** Written comments should be directed to Daniel T. Furlong, Executive Director, Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Room 2115 Federal Building, 300 South New Street, Dover, DE 19904-6790. Comments may also be submitted by facsimile (fax) to (302) 674-5399.

Comments should be marked "Comments on Monkfish Amendment 2." The Council will not accept unsigned faxes or comments by e-mail.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Daniel T. Furlong, Executive Director, telephone (302) 674-2331, ext. 19.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### Background

A notice of intent to prepare a Monkfish Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) and notice of public scoping process was published in the **Federal Register** on December 10, 2001 (66 FR 63666). The purpose of this notice was to initiate the public scoping process to determine the scope of the issues to be included in the SEIS for Amendment 2. In particular, this notice sought public comment on the possibility of revising the monkfish limited access program qualification criteria to include Virginia and North Carolina vessels that were excluded from the qualification criteria due to mis-information regarding the extent of the monkfish fishery management unit in a public hearing document for the initial FMP. The public scoping comment period for Amendment 2 ended on February 11, 2002. This notice announces a supplemental scoping process to seek further public comment on options to address the exclusion of Virginia and North Carolina vessels, or other vessels that may meet the revised limited access criteria, from the monkfish limited access fishery.

##### Scoping Meetings

The public will have an opportunity to provide oral comments on the options that would potentially amend the monkfish limited access program at the September meeting of the New England Fishery Management Council, and three additional public meetings to be held in September, as described below. The dates, times, and locations of the hearings are scheduled as follows:

1. Wednesday, September 11, 2002, 7-9 p.m.—Roanoke Island Festival Park, One Festival Park, Manteo, NC 27954; telephone: 252-475-1500.

2. Wednesday, September 11, 2002, 6-8 p.m.—Providence Biltmore Hotel, Providence, RI 02903; telephone: 401-421-0700.

3. Thursday, September 12, 2002, 7-10 p.m.—Chincoteague Center, 6155

Community Drive, Chincoteague, VA 23336; telephone: 757-336-0614.

### Special Accommodations

These public meetings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Joanna Davis at the Mid-Atlantic Council at least 5 days prior to the meeting date.

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

Dated: August 19, 2002.

**Virginia M. Fay,**

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

[FR Doc. 02-21589 Filed 8-22-02; 8:45 am]

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

#### 50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 020724175-2175-01; I.D. 062602E]

RIN 0648-AP71

### Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Amendment 69 To Revise American Fisheries Act Inshore Cooperative Requirements

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

**ACTION:** Supplemental proposed rule; request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS proposes additional changes related to an earlier proposed rule to implement Amendment 69 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Groundfish Fishery of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Area (FMP). This proposed amendment would allow an American Fisheries Act (AFA) inshore cooperative to contract with a non-member vessel to harvest a portion of the cooperative's pollock allocation. The North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) developed Amendment 69 to provide greater flexibility to inshore catcher vessel cooperatives to arrange for the harvest of their pollock allocation, and to address potential emergency situations, such as vessel breakdowns, that would prevent a cooperative from harvesting its entire allocation. This action is designed to be consistent with the environmental and socioeconomic objectives of the AFA, the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Management and Conservation Act

(Magnuson-Stevens Act), the FMP, and other applicable laws.

**DATES:** Comments on the proposed rule must be received on or before October 7, 2002.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments must be sent to Sue Salvesson, Assistant Administrator, Sustainable Fisheries Division, NMFS, Alaska Region, P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802, Attn: Lori Gravel, or delivered to Federal Building, Fourth Floor, 709 West 9th Street, Juneau, AK, and marked Attn: Lori Gravel. Copies of the Regulatory Impact Review/ Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis (RIR/IRFA) prepared for Amendment 69 may be obtained from NMFS at the above address. Send comments on collection-of-information requirements to the NMFS, Alaska Region and to the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA), Office of Management and Budget (OMB), Washington, DC 20503 (Attn: NOAA Desk Officer). Additional information on the AFA, and the regulations to implement Amendments 61/61/13/8, may be found in the proposed rule to implement Amendments 61/61/13/8, and in the final Environmental Impact Statement prepared for Amendments 61/61/13/8, which is available from NMFS at the addresses noted above.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Kent Lind, 907-586-7650, or [kent.lind@noaa.gov](mailto:kent.lind@noaa.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** NMFS manages the groundfish fishery in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area (BSAI) under the FMP. The Council prepared, and NMFS approved, the FMP under the authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Act (16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*) and the AFA (Div. C, Title II, Pub. L. No. 105-277, 112 Stat. 2681 (1998)). Regulations implementing the FMP appear at 50 CFR part 679. General regulations governing U.S. fisheries also appear at 50 CFR part 600.

The Council has submitted Amendment 69 for Secretary of Commerce review and a Notice of Availability of the FMP amendment was published in the **Federal Register** on July 5, 2002 (67 FR 44794), with comments on the FMP amendment invited through September 3, 2002. Comments may address the FMP amendment, the proposed rule, or both, but must be received by September 3, 2002, to be considered in the approval/disapproval decision on the FMP amendment. All comments received by that time, whether specifically directed to the FMP amendment or the proposed rule, will be considered in the approval/

disapproval decision on the FMP amendment.

### Background Information on the AFA

The AFA established a limited access program for the inshore sector of the BSAI pollock fishery that is based on the formation of fishery cooperatives around each inshore pollock processor. Under the AFA, if at least 80 percent of the catcher vessels that delivered the majority of their BSAI pollock catch to a specific inshore processor during the previous year form a fishery cooperative, and agree to deliver at least 90 percent of its BSAI pollock catch to that same processor, then NMFS must grant the cooperative an exclusive allocation of BSAI pollock based on the member vessels' catch histories from 1995-1997. NMFS issues a single pollock allocation to each cooperative and the cooperative may make sub-allocations of pollock to each individual vessel owner in the cooperative.

All the inshore cooperative agreements implemented to date have provided each member of the cooperative an allocation of pollock that is proportionate to the member vessel's catch history in a manner determined by the cooperative (generally, the best 2 of 3 years from 1995-1997). In effect, the inshore cooperative program functions as a privately run individual fishing quota in which NMFS assigns overall cooperative allocations and each member vessel is granted by the cooperative the exclusive right to harvest its portion of the cooperative's annual pollock allocation. Each cooperative allows its members to harvest their individual allocations or to "lease" their individual allocations to other members of the cooperative.

NMFS first implemented this inshore cooperative allocation program in 2000 through emergency interim rule (65 FR 4520, January 28, 2000). The program was renewed for 2001 with modifications recommended by the Council that allowed inactive vessels to remain eligible to join fishery cooperatives even if they did not fish for pollock during the previous year (66 FR 7327, January 22, 2001) and again in 2002 (67 FR 956, January 8, 2002).

During the time period when the provisions of the AFA were implemented through interim regulations, the Council and NMFS also undertook the development of a comprehensive FMP amendment package to implement the provisions of the AFA on a permanent basis. These amendments to implement the AFA included: Amendment 61 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Groundfish Fishery of the Bering Sea and Aleutian