

Dated: August 7, 2003.

Arden L. Bement, Jr.,

Director.

[FR Doc. 03-20575 Filed 8-11-03; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 080503D]

Gulf of Mexico 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 Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council will convene a public meeting of the Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Advisory Panel (AP) and a joint meeting of the HMS AP and the Billfish AP.

DATES: The HMS AP meeting is scheduled to begin at 2 p.m. on Tuesday, August 26, 2003. The joint meeting of the HMS AP and the Billfish AP is scheduled to begin at 8:30 a.m. on Wednesday, August 27, 2003, and will conclude by 3 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The meetings will be held at the at the New Orleans Airport Hilton, 901 Airline Highway, Kenner, LA; telephone: 504-469-5000.

Council address: Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, 3018 U.S. Highway 301 North, Suite 1000, Tampa, FL 33619.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Steven Atran, Population Dynamics Statistician, Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council; telephone: 813-228-2815.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The HMS AP will convene to receive a presentation from NMFS on bycatch of sharks in the Gulf menhaden purse seine fishery, and will review Draft Amendment 1 to the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Atlantic Tuna, Swordfish, and Sharks (HMS Amendment 1), which is being developed by the HMS Division of NMFS.

The HMS AP and Billfish AP will jointly review possible alternatives to be included in an environmental impact statement (EIS) for proposed Amendment 2 to the FMP for Atlantic Tuna, Swordfish, and Sharks (HMS Amendment 2), and proposed Amendment 2 to the FMP for Atlantic Billfish (Billfish Amendment 2), which

are also being developed by the NMFS HMS Division.

The APs will also review several draft recommendations made to the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) concerning integrated monitoring and control measures in the ICCAT Convention Area. These draft recommendations, which were made by the ICCAT Working Group to Develop Integrated Monitoring and Control Measures, held in Madeira, Portugal May 26-28, 2003, include a recommendation to require that all vessels fishing in the ICCAT Convention Area be authorized by licenses or permits; a recommendation that a vessel monitoring system (VMS) be required on fishing vessels exceeding 20 meters (65 feet) in length; and a recommendation that would require the use of fishing logbooks for all fisheries. This would include commercial and recreational.

HMS Draft Amendment 1 includes alternatives to revise the large coastal shark rebuilding plan; outline a procedure to prevent overfishing of finetooth sharks; revise commercial quota levels; implement regional and trimester quotas; eliminate a commercial minimum size; revise recreational retention and size limits; establish handline and rod and reel as the only authorized gears in the recreational shark fishery; remove deepwater and other sharks from the management unit and continue data collection only; retain the existing regulations on the prohibited species group but establish criteria by which to add/remove species to/from the group; allow strikenet gear only in the shark gillnet fishery; implement a time/area closure for bottom longline fishing in the mid-Atlantic region from January through July to protect sandbar and dusky shark nursery and pupping areas; require vessel monitoring systems on shark bottom longline and gillnet vessels to enforce time/area closures; require the use of non-stainless steel hooks and the possession of line clippers, dipnets, and dehooking devices on vessels with shark bottom longline gear; require bottom longline vessels to move 1 nautical mile after an interaction with a protected species; update and revise essential fish habitat identifications for species whose stock status has changed; provide criteria to increase or decrease essential fish habitat for individual species based on special needs; and develop a separate display permitting system for sharks apart from research or exempted fishing permits.

The EIS for proposed HMS Amendment 2 and proposed Billfish Amendment 2 is intended to address issues regarding quota allocation of Atlantic bluefin tuna (BFT), swordfish, and sharks among and within domestic fishing categories, examine management alternatives to improve and streamline the current HMS limited access permit program, conduct a five year review of HMS essential fish habitat (EFH) identifications, and address exempted fishing and scientific research permitting issues consistent with rebuilding plans, the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act), Atlantic Tunas Convention Act (ATCA), and other relevant Federal laws. NMFS is requesting comments on the above measures including, but not limited to, HMS quota allocations, permitting, revisions to the limited access management program, and updates to EFH information.

The HMS and Billfish APs will provide their advice on the above actions to the Council. The Council will consider the advice from the APs and will develop its recommendations during the September 8-11, 2003, Council meeting in Baton Rouge, LA. The Council's recommendations and the recommendations of the APs will be submitted to the NMFS HMS Division and to ICCAT as appropriate during the public comment periods for the respective actions.

Although other non-emergency issues not on the agendas may come before the APs for discussion, in accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, those issues may not be the subject of formal action during these meetings. Actions of the APs will be restricted to those issues specifically identified in the agendas 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 action to address the emergency. Copies of the agenda can be obtained by calling 813-228-2815.

Special Accommodations

This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Anne Alford at the Council (see **ADDRESSES**) by August 19, 2003.

Dated: August 6, 2003.

Richard W. Surdi,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.
[FR Doc. 03-20511 Filed 8-11-03; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 080503C]

New England Fishery Management Council; Public Meetings

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

ACTION: Notice of a public meeting.

SUMMARY: The New England Fishery Management Council (Council) is scheduling a public meeting of its Herring Oversight Committee in September, 2003. Recommendations from the committee will be brought to the full Council for formal consideration and action, if appropriate.

DATES: The meeting will held on Wednesday, September 3, 2003 at 8 a.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Crowne Plaza, 801 Greenwich Ave., Warwick, RI 02886.

Council address: New England Fishery Management Council, 50 Water Street, Newburyport, MA 01950.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Paul J. Howard, Executive Director, New England Fishery Management Council; telephone: (978) 465-0492.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The committee will review progress to date on development of alternatives for analysis in Amendment 1 to the Herring Fishery Management Plan (FMP). They will review Herring Advisory Panel recommendations regarding the range of alternatives for Amendment 1. They will also receive and discuss Council staff report on information related to the role of herring in the ecosystem and the importance of herring as a forage species. Also on the agenda will be developing Committee recommendations for Council consideration regarding the range of alternatives for analysis in the Amendment 1 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS).

Although non-emergency issues not contained in this agenda may come before this group for discussion, those issues may not be the subject of formal action during this meeting. 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

This meeting is physically accessible to people with 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: August 6, 2003.

Richard W. Surdi,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.
[FR Doc. 03-20510 Filed 8-11-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-S

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 080603E]

North Pacific Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

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

ACTION: Notice of public meetings.

SUMMARY: The North Pacific Fishery Management Council's (Council) Crab Plan Team will meet on September 22-24, 2003 Kodiak, AK.

DATES: The meetings will be held on September 22, 2003, 1 - 5 p.m.; September 23, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.; and September 24, 8 a.m. - 3 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The meetings will be held at the Alaska Fisheries Research Center, Near Island, Kodiak, AK 99615.

Council address: North Pacific Fishery Management Council, 605 W. 4th Ave., Suite 306, Anchorage, AK 99501-2252.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Diana Stram, Council staff, telephone: 907-271-2809.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Agenda

Assemble the Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation; Review the Crab Plan Team 'Terms of Reference'; Guideline Harvest Levels; Pribilof blue king crab rebuilding plan and overfishing definitions; Develop recommendations for Council and Alaska Board of Fisheries.

Although non-emergency issues not contained in this agenda may come

before this group for discussion, those issues may not be the subject of formal action during this meeting. Action will be restricted to those issues specifically identified 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 Council's intent to take final action to address the emergency.

Special Accommodations

These meetings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Gail Bendixen at 907-271-2809 at least 7 working days prior to the meeting date.

Dated: August 6, 2003.

Richard W. Surdi,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.
[FR Doc. 03-20512 Filed 8-11-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-S

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 080603F]

North Pacific Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

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

ACTION: Notice of public meetings.

SUMMARY: The North Pacific Fishery Management Council's (Council) Steller Sea Lion (SSL) Mitigation Committee will meet in Seattle, WA.

DATES: The meetings will be held on August 27, 2003, through August 29, 2003, from 8:30 a.m. until 5 p.m. each day.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Alaska Fisheries Science Center, 7600 Sand Point Way NE., Building 4, Traynor Seminar Room 2079, Seattle, WA 98115.

Council address: North Pacific Fishery Management Council, 605 W. 4th Ave., Suite 306, Anchorage, AK 99501-2252.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: William Wilson, Council staff; telephone: 907-271-2809.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Committee is scheduled to review proposals to amend Steller sea lion protection measures in the Gulf of