

these changes if our proposal is adopted.

Neva R. Watson,
Attorney, Legislative.
 [FR Doc. 05-18260 Filed 9-14-05; 8:45 am]
BILLING CODE 7710-12-P

POSTAL SERVICE

39 CFR Part 20

International Mail: Republic of the Marshall Islands and Federated States of Micronesia

AGENCY: Postal Service.

ACTION: Proposed rule.

SUMMARY: Under an agreement negotiated by the United States government with the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia, mail destined to those two countries will now use the international rate schedules. This proposal would amend the *International Mail Manual (IMM)* to include the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia in all international products and services and add them to the individual country listings.

DATES: Submit comments on or before October 17, 2005.

ADDRESSES: Mail or deliver comments to the Manager, Mailing Standards, Attn: Obataiye Akinwole, U.S. Postal Service, 475 L'Enfant Plaza SW., RM 3436, Washington DC 20260-3436. You may also fax written comments to 202-268-4955. You may inspect and photocopy all written comments between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, at

USPS Headquarters Library, 11th Floor North, 475 L'Enfant Plaza SW., Washington DC.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Obataiye B. Akinwole at 202-268-7262, or Thomas P. Philson at 202-268-7355.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The United States government negotiated an agreement with two former United States Trust Territories, the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia. As a part of that agreement, mail destined to those two countries will now use the international rate schedules. As provided in the agreement, international rates will be phased in over a period of not less than five years, beginning no sooner than 2006.

For all international services with domestic equivalents, rates will be phased in using the difference between the domestic rates and the international rates. These services include Express Mail, Air Letters, Postcards, Publishers' Periodicals, Air Parcel Post, Economy Parcel Post, and Books and Sheet Music.

For international services without domestic equivalents, phased rates were derived by selecting a lower rate country group. After the phasing period, the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia will be in country group 5 for Economy Letter Post, Airmail M-Bags, and Economy M-Bags and country group 7 for International Priority Airmail (IPA). To phase in these rates over at least five years the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia have been assigned to country group 3 for those services during the first phase. Aerogramme service does not have a domestic

equivalent; however, there is only one worldwide rate available.

Initially, three international services will not be offered for mail destined to the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia: Global Express Guaranteed® (GXG™), Global Priority Mail® (GPM), and International Surface Air Lift (ISAL). These services require special transportation arrangements and may be offered in the future.

The rates, fees, and conditions of mailing proposed in this notice, if adopted, would become effective concurrent with any domestic rates adopted as a result of the current proceedings before the Postal Rate Commission (Docket No. R2005-1). All regulatory changes necessary to implement this proposal are given below.

Although exempt from the notice and comment requirements of the Administrative Procedure Act [5 U.S.C. 553 (b), (c)] regarding proposed rulemaking by 39 U.S.C. 410(a), the Postal Service invites public comment on the following proposed revisions to the *International Mail Manual (IMM)*, incorporated by reference in the Code of Federal Regulations. See 39 CFR 20.1.

List of Subjects in 39 CFR Part 20

Foreign relations, International postal services.

PART 20—[AMENDED]

1. The authority citation for 39 CFR part 20 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 5 U.S.C. 552(a); 39 U.S.C. 401, 404, 407, 408.

2. Amend the *International Mail Manual (IMM)* as follows.

COUNTRY RATE GROUP LIST

Country	EMS	Airmail parcel post	Economy parcel post rate	Letter-post rate	GXG rate	IPA ¹ ISAL
Marshall Islands	13	14	13	6	3
Micronesia, Federated States of	13	14	13	6	3

¹ ISAL service not available to all countries. See Individual Country Listings for availability.

* * * * *
2 Conditions for Mailing

210 *Global Express Guaranteed*
 * * * * *

213 *Service Areas*
 * * * * *
213.2 Destinating Countries and Rate Groups
 * * * * *

[Revise the Destinating Countries and Rate Groups table by adding "Marshall Islands, Republic of" and "Micronesia, Federated States of" as follows:]

Country	Document service rate group	Non-Doc-ument service rate group
Marshall Islands, Republic of	No Service ..	No Service.
Micronesia, Federated States of	No Service ..	No Service.

	Country	Document service rate group	Non-Doc-ument service rate group
280 Parcel Post * * * * *	Great Britain and Northern Ireland Japan Macao	292.44 Sortation Requirements for IPA * * * * *	
283 Weight and Size Limits * * * * *	Marshall Islands, Republic of Micronesia, Federated States of * * * * *	292.442 Presorted Mail * * * * *	
283.23 Exceptional Size Limits [Revise item b by adding the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia to read as follows:] * * * * *	290 Commercial Services * * * * *	Exhibit 292.442 Foreign Exchange Office and Country Rate Groups [Revise the Foreign Exchange Office and Country Rate Groups table by adding "Marshall Islands, Republic of" and "Micronesia, Federated States of" as follows:]	
b. Maximum length: 60 inches Maximum length and girth combined: 108 inches Azerbaijan	292 International Priority Airmail Service * * * * *		
	292.4 Preparation Requirements for Individual Items * * * * *		

Rate group	Country	3-letter exchange office code	Exchange office
3	Marshall Islands, Republic of	MAJ	MAJURO.
3	Micronesia, Federated States of	PNI	POHNPEI.
* * * * *	* * * * *	* * * * *	* * * * *

294 Publishers' Periodicals * * * * *	294.42 Sacking and Labeling * * * * *	Exhibit 294.42 Publishers' Periodicals—All Countries (Except Canada) Labeling, Routing, and Rate Group Information [Revise the Publishers' Periodicals labeling, routing, and rate group information table as follows:]
294.4 Makeup Requirements for Publishers' Periodicals * * * * *		

Destination exchange office code	Country	Routing code	Observations	Publishers' periodical rate group
MAJ	Marshall Islands, Republic of	945		6
PNI	Micronesia, Federated States of	945		6
* * * * *	* * * * *	* * * * *	* * * * *	* * * * *

World Map
[Insert the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia at map reference M5.]
* * * * *

World Map Index
[Add references for the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia to the world map index as follows:]
Micronesia, Federated States of—M5
Marshall Islands, Republic of—M5
* * * * *

Index of Countries and Localities
[Revise the references for the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia by removing the note "See DMM 608" and adding the appropriate IMM page number.]
* * * * *

Individual Country Listings
[Add an individual country listing for the Republic of the Marshall Islands.]

Country Conditions for Mailing—Marshall Islands, Republic of Prohibitions (130)
None furnished.

Restrictions
None furnished.

Observations
None furnished.

Customs Forms Required (123)
Letter-post: PS Form 2976 or 2976-A (see 123.61)
Parcel Post: PS Form 2976-A inside 2976-E (envelope)

Size Limits
Letter-post: See 243.2
Parcel Post: Maximum length: 60 inches
Maximum length and girth combined: 108 inches

Postal/Post Cards (250) \$0.34
 Aerogrammes (250) \$0.75 Enclosures
 NOT permitted

**AIRMAIL LETTER-POST RATES—
 Continued**

**AIRMAIL LETTER-POST RATES—
 Continued**

AIRMAIL LETTER-POST RATES		Weight not over (ozs.)	Letter-post rate	Weight not over (ozs.)	Letter-post rate
Weight not over (ozs.)	Letter-post rate	7	2.60	40	12.00
1	\$0.48	8	2.95	44	13.15
2	0.85	12	4.25	48	14.25
3	1.20	16	5.35	52	15.40
4	1.55	20	6.45	56	16.55
5	1.90	24	7.55	60	17.65
6	2.25	28	8.65	64	18.80
		32	9.75	Weight Limit: 64 ounces (4 lbs.)	
		36	10.90		

AIRMAIL PARCEL POST RATES

Weight not over (lbs.)	Parcel post rate	Weight not over (lbs.)	Parcel post rate
1	\$5.90	36	\$50.30
2	6.75	37	51.55
3	8.20	38	52.85
4	9.60	39	54.05
5	11.00	40	55.25
6	12.20	41	56.50
7	13.40	42	57.70
8	14.75	43	58.95
9	16.05	44	60.15
10	17.25	45	61.40
11	18.55	46	62.60
12	19.80	47	63.85
13	21.10	48	65.05
14	22.35	49	66.25
15	23.60	50	67.45
16	24.90	51	68.70
17	26.15	52	69.90
18	27.45	53	71.15
19	28.70	54	72.35
20	30.00	55	73.60
21	31.20	56	74.80
22	32.50	57	76.05
23	33.80	58	77.25
24	35.05	59	78.50
25	36.35	60	79.70
26	37.55	61	80.95
27	38.85	62	82.10
28	40.15	63	83.40
29	41.40	64	84.55
30	42.70	65	85.85
31	43.90	66	87.00
32	45.20	67	88.25
33	46.50	68	89.45
34	47.75	69	90.70
35	49.00	70	91.95

Weight Limit: 70 lbs.

AIRMAIL DIRECT SACK TO ONE ADDRESSEE—M-BAGS (260)

Weight Not Over 11 lbs	\$29.15
Each additional pound or fraction of a pound	2.65

Weight Limit: 4 pounds

Global Priority Mail (GPM) (230) Not Available

ECONOMY MAIL LETTER-POST RATES—Continued

ECONOMY MAIL LETTER-POST RATES—Continued

ECONOMY MAIL LETTER-POST RATES	
Weight not over (ozs.)	Letter-post rate
16	\$4.10
20	4.85
24	5.55
28	6.20

Weight not over (ozs.)	Letter-post rate
32	6.85
36	7.50
40	8.15
44	8.80
48	9.45
52	10.10

Weight not over (ozs.)	Letter-post rate
56	10.75
60	11.40
64	12.05

Weight Limit: 64 ounces (4 lbs.)

ECONOMY MAIL PARCEL POST RATES

Weight not over (lbs.)	Parcel post rates	Weight not over (lbs.)	Parcel post rate
5	\$9.35	38	\$23.40
6	9.85	39	23.70
7	10.40	40	24.10
8	10.85	41	24.45
9	11.35	42	24.80
10	12.30	43	25.15
11	12.80	44	25.45
12	13.20	45	25.80
13	13.65	46	26.15
14	14.10	47	26.50
15	14.55	48	26.85
16	15.00	49	27.20
17	15.40	50	27.50
18	15.80	51	27.85
19	16.20	52	28.20
20	16.60	53	28.55
21	17.05	54	28.90
22	17.40	55	29.20
23	17.85	56	29.55
24	18.30	57	29.90
25	18.70	58	30.20
26	19.10	59	30.55
27	19.45	60	30.90
28	19.85	61	31.25
29	20.20	62	31.55
30	20.55	63	31.90
31	20.95	64	32.20
32	21.30	65	32.55
33	21.65	66	32.85
34	22.05	67	33.20
35	22.40	68	33.50
36	22.65	69	33.85
37	23.00	70	34.20

Weight Limit: 70 lbs.

ECONOMY MAIL DIRECT SACK TO ONE ADDRESSEE—M-BAGS (260)

Regular:	
Weight Not Over 11 lbs	\$17.05
Each additional pound or fraction of a pound	1.55
Books and Sheet Music:	
Weight Not Over 11 lbs	10.45
Each additional pound or fraction of a pound	0.95

Weight Limit: 66 lbs.

**ECONOMY MAIL BOOKS AND SHEET
MUSIC RATES (295)**

Weight not over (ozs.)	Rate
16	\$1.80
20	2.25
24	2.35
28	2.50
32	2.60
36	3.05
40	3.15
44	3.25
48	3.30
52	3.75
56	3.85
60	3.95
64	4.05

Weight Limit: 64 ounces (4 lbs.)

Note: This is a bulk mail service that is subject to a minimum entry requirement of 200 pieces or 50 pounds of qualifying contents. See 295.

Matter for the Blind (270)

Free when sent as Economy Mail.
Weight Limit: 15 lbs.

**ECONOMY MAIL PUBLISHER'S
PERIODICALS RATES (294)**

Weight not over (ozs.)	Rate
1	\$0.60
2	0.63
3	0.66
4	0.69
5	0.72
6	0.75
7	0.78
8	0.81
12	0.90
16	0.99
20	1.25
24	1.34
28	1.44
32	1.53
36	1.78
40	1.88
44	1.97
48	2.06
52	2.32
56	2.41
60	2.50
64	2.60

**ECONOMY MAIL PUBLISHER'S PERIODI-
CALS RATES (294)—Continued**

Weight not over (ozs.)	Rate
Weight Limit: 64 ounces (4 lbs.)	
\$.25 per pound discount for drop shipments tendered at the New Jersey International and Bulk Mail Center.	
Special Services	
Certificate of Mailing—See 313 for fees	
COD and Certified—NOT for International Mail	
Insurance (320)—NOT Available	
International Business Reply Service (373)—NOT Available	
International Money Order (371)—NOT Available	
International Reply Coupons (372)—NOT Available	
Recorded Delivery (360)—NOT Available	
Registered Mail (330)—NOT Available	
Restricted Delivery (350)—NOT Available	
Return Receipt (340)—NOT Available	
Global Express Guaranteed (210)—NOT Available	

GLOBAL EXPRESS MAIL (EMS) (220)

Weight not over (lbs.)	Rate	Weight not over (lbs.)	Rate
0.5	\$15.00	36	\$99.70
1	19.35	37	102.00
2	20.10	38	104.40
3	23.65	39	106.75
4	27.15	40	109.15
5	30.60	41	111.55
6	34.10	42	114.00
7	37.55	43	116.30
8	39.55	44	118.70
9	41.65	45	120.90
10	43.60	46	122.95
11	45.95	47	125.20
12	49.05	48	127.35
13	51.55	49	129.40
14	53.30	50	131.55
15	55.30	51	133.75
16	57.50	52	135.85
17	59.65	53	138.05
18	61.75	54	140.15
19	63.80	55	142.30
20	65.95	56	144.50
21	68.05	57	146.60
22	70.15	58	148.80
23	72.30	59	151.00
24	74.35	60	153.35
25	76.45	61	155.85
26	78.60	62	158.20
27	80.65	63	160.55
28	82.80	64	163.05
29	84.90	65	165.40
30	87.00	66	167.90
31	89.15	67	170.30
32	91.30	68	172.90
33	93.30	69	175.40
34	95.50	70	177.90

GLOBAL EXPRESS MAIL (EMS) (220)—Continued

Weight not over (lbs.)	Rate	Weight not over (lbs.)	Rate
35	97.75		

Weight Limit: 70 lbs.

Insurance (221.3)—NOT Available

Size Limits (223.2)

Maximum length: 36 inches.
Maximum length and girth combined: 79 inches.

Return Receipt Service (221.4): NOT Available.

Reciprocal Service Name: There is no reciprocal service.

Country Code: MH.
Areas Served: All.

* * * * *

[Add an individual country listing for the Federated States of Micronesia.]

Country Conditions for Mailing—Micronesia, Federated States of Prohibitions (130)

None furnished.

Restrictions

None furnished.

Observations

None furnished.

Customs Forms Required (123)

Letter-post: PS Form 2976 or 2976–A (see 123.61).

Parcel Post: PS Form 2976–A inside 2976–E (envelope).

Size Limits

Letter-post: See 243.2.

Parcel Post: Maximum length: 60 inches.

Maximum length and girth combined: 108 inches.

Postal/Post Cards (250) \$0.34.

Aerogrammes (250) \$0.75 Enclosures NOT permitted.

AIRMAIL LETTER-POST RATES

Weight not over (ozs.)	Letter-post rate
1	\$0.48
2	0.85
3	1.20
4	1.55
5	1.90

AIRMAIL LETTER-POST RATES—Continued

Weight not over (ozs.)	Letter-post rate
6	2.25
7	2.60
8	2.95
12	4.25
16	5.35
20	6.45
24	7.55
28	8.65
32	9.75
36	10.90
40	12.00
44	13.15
48	14.25
52	15.40
56	16.55
60	17.65
64	18.80

Weight Limit: 64 ounces (4 lbs.)

AIRMAIL PARCEL POST RATES

Weight not over (lbs.)	Parcel post rate	Weight not over (lbs.)	Parcel post rate
1	\$5.90	36	\$50.30
2	6.75	37	51.55
3	8.20	38	52.85
4	9.60	39	54.05
5	11.00	40	55.25
6	12.20	41	56.50
7	13.40	42	57.70
8	14.75	43	58.95
9	16.05	44	60.15
10	17.25	45	61.40
11	18.55	46	62.60
12	19.80	47	63.85
13	21.10	48	65.05
14	22.35	49	66.25
15	23.60	50	67.45
16	24.90	51	68.70
17	26.15	52	69.90
18	27.45	53	71.15
19	28.70	54	72.35
20	30.00	55	73.60
21	31.20	56	74.80
22	32.50	57	76.05
23	33.80	58	77.25
24	35.05	59	78.50
25	36.35	60	79.70
26	37.55	61	80.95
27	38.85	62	82.10
28	40.15	63	83.40
29	41.40	64	84.55
30	42.70	65	85.85

AIRMAIL PARCEL POST RATES—Continued

Weight not over (lbs.)	Parcel post rate	Weight not over (lbs.)	Parcel post rate
31	43.90	66	87.00
32	45.20	67	88.25
33	46.50	68	89.45
34	47.75	69	90.70
35	49.00	70	91.95

Weight Limit: 70 lbs.

AIRMAIL DIRECT SACK TO ONE ADDRESSEE—M-BAGS (260)

Weight Not Over 11 lbs	\$29.15
Each additional pound or fraction of a pound	2.65

Weight Limit: 66 pounds

Global Priority Mail (GPM) (230) NOT Available

ECONOMY MAIL LETTER-POST RATES—Continued

ECONOMY MAIL LETTER-POST RATES—Continued

ECONOMY MAIL LETTER-POST RATES

Weight not over (ozs.)	Letter-post rate
16	\$4.10
20	4.85
24	5.55
28	6.20

Weight not over (ozs.)	Letter-post rate
32	6.85
36	7.50
40	8.15
44	8.80
48	9.45
52	10.10

Weight not over (ozs.)	Letter-post rate
56	10.75
60	11.40
64	12.05

Weight Limit: 64 ounces (4 lbs.)

ECONOMY MAIL PARCEL POST RATES

Weight not over (lbs.)	Parcel post rate	Weight not over (lbs.)	Parcel post rate
5	\$9.35	38	\$23.40
6	9.85	39	23.70
7	10.40	40	24.10
8	10.85	41	24.45
9	11.35	42	24.80
10	12.30	43	25.15
11	12.80	44	25.45
12	13.20	45	25.80
13	13.65	46	26.15
14	14.10	47	26.50
15	14.55	48	26.85
16	15.00	49	27.20
17	15.40	50	27.50
18	15.80	51	27.85
19	16.20	52	28.20
20	16.60	53	28.55
21	17.05	54	28.90
22	17.40	55	29.20
23	17.85	56	29.55
24	18.30	57	29.90
25	18.70	58	30.20
26	19.10	59	30.55
27	19.45	60	30.90
28	19.85	61	31.25
29	20.20	62	31.55
30	20.55	63	31.90
31	20.95	64	32.20
32	21.30	65	32.55
33	21.65	66	32.85
34	22.05	67	33.20
35	22.40	68	33.50
36	22.65	69	33.85

ECONOMY MAIL PARCEL POST RATES—Continued

Weight not over (lbs.)	Parcel post rate	Weight not over (lbs.)	Parcel post rate
37	23.00	70	34.20

Weight Limit: 70 lbs.

ECONOMY MAIL DIRECT SACK TO ONE ADDRESSEE—M—BAGS (260)

Regular:	
Weight Not Over 11 lbs	\$17.05
Each additional pound or fraction of a pound	\$1.55
Books and Sheet Music:	
Weight Not Over 11 lbs	10.45
Each additional pound or fraction of a pound	0.95

Weight Limit: 66 lbs.

ECONOMY MAIL BOOKS AND SHEET MUSIC RATES (295)

ECONOMY MAIL PUBLISHERS' PERIODICALS RATES (294)

ECONOMY MAIL PUBLISHERS' PERIODICALS RATES (294)—Continued

Weight not over (ozs.)	Rate	Weight not over (ozs.)	Rate	Weight not over (ozs.)	Rate
16	\$1.80	1	\$0.60	Weight Limit: 64 ounces (4 lbs.)	
20	2.25	2	0.63	\$0.25 per pound discount for drop shipments tendered at the New Jersey International and Bulk Mail Center.	
24	2.35	3	0.66	Special Services	
28	2.50	4	0.69	Certificate of Mailing—See 313 for fees	
32	2.60	5	0.72	COD and Certified—NOT for International Mail	
36	3.05	6	0.75	Insurance (320)—NOT Available	
40	3.15	7	0.78	International Business Reply Service (373)—NOT Available	
44	3.25	8	0.81	International Money Order (371)—NOT Available	
48	3.30	12	0.90	International Reply Coupons (372)—NOT Available	
52	3.75	16	0.99	Recorded Delivery (360)—NOT Available	
56	3.85	20	1.25	Registered Mail (330)—NOT Available	
60	3.95	24	1.34	Restricted Delivery (350)—NOT Available	
64	4.05	28	1.44	Return Receipt (340)—NOT Available	
Weight Limit: 64 ounces (4 lbs.)		32	1.53	Global Express Guaranteed (210)—NOT Available	
Note: This is a bulk mail service that is subject to a minimum entry requirement of 200 pieces or 50 pounds of qualifying contents. See 295.		36	1.78		
		40	1.88		
		44	1.97		
		48	2.06		
		52	2.32		
		56	2.41		
		60	2.50		
		64	2.60		

Matter for the Blind (270)

Free when sent as Economy Mail.
Weight limit: 15 lbs.

GLOBAL EXPRESS MAIL (EMS) (220)

Weight not over (lbs.)	Rate	Weight not over (lbs.)	Rate
0.5	\$15.00	36	\$99.70
1	19.35	37	102.00
2	20.10	38	104.40
3	23.65	39	106.75
4	27.15	40	109.15
5	30.60	41	111.55
6	34.10	42	114.00
7	37.55	43	116.30
8	39.55	44	118.70
9	41.65	45	120.90
10	43.60	46	122.95
11	45.95	47	125.20
12	49.05	48	127.35

GLOBAL EXPRESS MAIL (EMS) (220)—Continued

Weight not over (lbs.)	Rate	Weight not over (lbs.)	Rate
13	51.55	49	129.40
14	53.30	50	131.55
15	55.30	51	133.75
16	57.50	52	135.85
17	59.65	53	138.05
18	61.75	54	140.15
19	63.80	55	142.30
20	65.95	56	144.50
21	68.05	57	146.60
22	70.15	58	148.80
23	72.30	59	151.00
24	74.35	60	153.35
25	76.45	61	155.85
26	78.60	62	158.20
27	80.65	63	160.55
28	82.80	64	163.05
29	84.90	65	165.40
30	87.00	66	167.90
31	89.15	67	170.30
32	91.30	68	172.90
33	93.30	69	175.40
34	95.50	70	177.90

Weight Limit: 70 lbs.

Insurance (221.3) NOT Available
 Size Limits (223.2)
 Maximum length: 36 inches
 Maximum length and girth combined:
 79 inches
 Return Receipt Service (221.4): NOT Available
 Reciprocal Service Name: There is no reciprocal service.
 Country Code: FM
 Areas Served: All
 * * * * *

We will publish an amendment to 39 CFR part 20 to reflect these changes if our proposal is adopted.

Neva R. Watson,
Attorney, Legislative.
 [FR Doc. 05-18259 Filed 9-14-05; 8:45 am]
BILLING CODE 7710-12-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 622

[I.D. 090905A]

RIN 0648-AS66

Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Gulf of Mexico Essential Fish Habitat Amendment

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and

Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Availability of fishery management plan amendment; request for comments.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces the availability of Generic Amendment 3 to the Fishery Management Plans (FMP) of the Gulf of Mexico (EFH Amendment 3) prepared by the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council). EFH Amendment 3 would amend each of the seven Council FMPs - coral and coral reef resources, coastal migratory pelagics, red drum, reef fish, shrimp, spiny lobster, and stone crab- to describe and identify essential fish habitat (EFH); minimize to the extent practicable the adverse effects of fishing on EFH; and encourage conservation and management of EFH. This amendment would establish additional habitat areas of particular concern (HAPC), restrict fishing activities within HAPCs to protect EFH, and require a weak link in bottom trawl gear to protect EFH. The intended effect of EFH Amendment 3 is to facilitate long-term protection of EFH, and, thus, better conserve and manage fishery resources in the Gulf of Mexico.

DATES: Written comments must be received no later than 5 p.m., eastern time, on November 14, 2005.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments by any of the following methods:

- E-mail: 0648-AS66.NOA@noaa.gov. Include in the subject line the following document identifier: 0648-AS66-NOA.
- Federal e-Rulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.
- Mail: Peter Hood, Southeast Regional Office, NMFS, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, FL 33701.
- Fax: 727-824-5308, Attention: Peter Hood.

Copies of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and EFH Amendment 3, which includes a Regulatory Impact Review (RIR) and Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analyses (IRFA), may be obtained from the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, 2203 N. Lois Avenue, Suite 1100, Tampa, FL 33607; telephone: 813-348-1630; fax: 813-348-1711; e-mail: gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Peter Hood, 727-824-5305; fax 727-824-5308; e-mail: peter.hood@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: EFH Amendment 3 addresses fisheries under the FMPs for coral and coral reef resources, coastal migratory pelagics, red drum, reef fish, shrimp, spiny lobster, and stone crab. The FMPs were prepared by the Council, except for the FMPs for coastal migratory pelagics and spiny lobster, which were prepared jointly by the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Councils. All of these FMPs, except the spiny lobster and stone crab FMPs, are implemented under the authority of the