

michelle.yuen@noaa.gov. Include in the subject line of the e-mail, the following identifier: Comments on 5-year review for the Hawaiian monk seal.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Contact Dr. Michelle Yuen at the above email address or at 808-944-2243.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Under the ESA, a list of endangered and threatened wildlife and plant species at 50 CFR 17.11 (for animals) and 150 CFR 7.12 (for plants) must be maintained. Section 4(c)(2)(A) of the ESA requires that we conduct a review of listed species at least once every five years. On the basis of such reviews under section 4(c)(2)(B), we determine whether or not any species should be removed from the List (delisted), or reclassified from endangered to threatened or from threatened to endangered. Delisting a species must be supported by the best scientific and commercial data available, and only considered if such data substantiates that the species is neither endangered nor threatened for one or more of the following reasons: (1) the species is considered extinct; (2) the species is considered to be recovered; and/or (3) the original data available when the species was listed, or the interpretation of such data, were in error. Any change in Federal classification would require a separate rulemaking process. The regulations in 50 CFR 424.21 require that we publish a notice in the **Federal Register** announcing those species currently under active review. This notice announces our active review of the Hawaiian monk seal, currently listed as endangered.

Public Solicitation of New Information

To ensure that the 5-year review is complete and based on the best available scientific and commercial information, we are soliciting new information from the public, concerned governmental agencies, the scientific community, industry, environmental entities, and any other interested parties concerning the status of Hawaiian monk seals.

The 5-year review considers the best scientific and commercial data and all new information that has become available since the listing determination or most recent status review. Categories of requested information include (1) species biology including, but not limited to, population trends, distribution, abundance, demographics, and genetics; (2) habitat conditions including, but not limited to, amount, distribution, and suitability; (3) conservation measures that have been implemented that benefit the species;

(4) status and trends of threats; and (5) other new information, data, or corrections including, but not limited to, taxonomic or nomenclatural changes, identification of erroneous information contained in the List, and improved analytical methods. NMFS is seeking information that has not been previously reported in the recent Hawaiian Monk Seal Stock Assessment Report (SARs) published in 2005 (<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/sars/>), nor previously reported in the revised Recovery Plan for the Hawaiian Monk Seal, which is currently available for public review until January 29, 2007 (71 FR 70964).

If you wish to provide information for this 5-year review, you may submit your information and materials to Dr. Michelle Yuen (see **ADDRESSES** section). Our practice is to make submissions of information, including names and home addresses of respondents, available for public review during regular business hours. Respondents may request that we withhold a respondent's identity, as allowable by law. If you wish us to withhold your name or address, you must state this request prominently at the beginning of your submission. We will not, however, consider anonymous submissions. To the extent consistent with applicable law, we will make all submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, available for public inspection in their entirety. Information and materials received will be available for public inspection, by appointment, during normal business hours (see **ADDRESSES** section).

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*

Dated: January 16, 2007.

Angela Somma,

Chief, Endangered Species Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. E7-811 Filed 1-19-07; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-S

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 011607A]

Magnuson-Stevens Act Provisions; General Provisions for Domestic Fisheries; Application for Exempted Fishing Permits

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

Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice; request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Assistant Regional Administrator for Sustainable Fisheries, Northeast Region, NMFS (Assistant Regional Administrator), has made a preliminary determination that an Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) application submitted by the University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES) contains all of the required information and warrants further consideration. The Assistant Regional Administrator has made a preliminary determination that the activities authorized under this EFP would be consistent with the goals and objectives of the Northeast (NE) Multispecies and Monkfish Fishery Management Plans (FMPs). However, further review and consultation may be necessary before a final determination is made to issue an EFP. Therefore, NMFS announces that the Assistant Regional Administrator proposes to recommend that an EFP be issued that would allow one commercial fishing vessel to conduct fishing operations that are otherwise restricted by the regulations governing the fisheries of the Northeastern United States. The EFP, which would enable researchers to study the biology of large monkfish, would grant exemptions from the NE Multispecies FMP as follows: Western Gulf of Maine (GOM) Closure Area; GOM Rolling Closure Areas I and II; and NE multispecies effort control measures.

Regulations under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act require publication of this notification to provide interested parties the opportunity to comment on applications for proposed EFPs.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before February 6, 2007.

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

• **Email:** *DA6-387@noaa.gov*. Include in the subject line "Comments on UMES monkfish EFP."

• **Mail:** Patricia A. Kurkul, Regional Administrator, NMFS, NE Regional Office, 1 Blackburn Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930. Mark the outside of the envelope "Comments on UMES monkfish EFP, DA6-387."

• **Fax:** (978) 281-9135.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Douglas Potts, Fishery Management Specialist, 978-281-9341.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: An application for an EFP was submitted on December 28, 2006, by Andrea K. Johnson, Ph.D., Research Assistant Professor at UMES, for a project funded

under the New England and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Councils' Monkfish Research Set-Aside (RSA) Program. The primary goal of this study is to investigate the length-weight relationship, spawning frequency, and rate of cannibalism in these members of the population not often reflected in the trawl survey. This information is considered to be very helpful to the management of the species. This is the second year this project has been funded under the Monkfish RSA Program.

The project is scheduled to be conducted for 1 year (May 2007–April 2008) and would collect large monkfish from three industry collaborators fishing using 102 Monkfish Days-At-Sea (DAS) awarded to the project through the RSA Program. Monkfish gillnet vessels fishing in the Southern Fishery Management Area will collect large monkfish as part of otherwise normal fishing activities and do not require an EFP. One vessel would fish inside the eastern edge of the Western GOM Closure Area from August 2007 through April 2008. Fishing would take place in deep mud habitats outside of the Western GOM Habitat Closure Area. This is east of the Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary and would require exemption from the gear restrictions of the Western GOM Closure Area at 50 CFR 648.81(e), as well as from the restrictions of Rolling Closure Areas I and II at § 648.81(f) that will be in effect during March and April 2008. It is expected that this location would provide access to large monkfish and would avoid gear interactions between these gillnets and trawls. The applicant is also requesting exemption from the NE multispecies effort control measures at § 648.80(a)(3)(vi) in order to create sufficient incentive for a commercial vessel to participate in this experiment. This would exempt the vessel from the need to use a NE Multispecies DAS concurrent with Monkfish RSA DAS for these trips.

The vessel would make up to 48 trips (30 DAS) using gillnets that are 13-inch (33-cm) stretch mesh with 24 gauge web and 12 meshes deep. Each net is 300 ft (91 m) long by 3 ft (0.91 m) high, and 150 nets would be used with an average soak time of 72 hr. Ten fish per week would be donated to the research project during the months of August–September, and five fish per week from October–April 2008. This project is specifically interested in large monkfish, so donated fish would be the largest from each trip, at least 90 cm total length. Additional catch, within applicable size and possession limits, would be sold to help offset the costs of

the research. As a consequence of the exemption from the need to use a NE Multispecies DAS, the vessel would not keep any regulated groundfish. Since these trips would use very large mesh nets, the bycatch of regulated groundfish is expected to be minimal.

The applicant may request minor modifications and extensions to the EFP throughout the year. EFP modifications and extensions may be granted without further notice if they are deemed essential to facilitate completion of the proposed research and have minimal impacts that do not change the scope or impact of the initially approved EFP request. Any fishing activity conducted outside the scope of the exempted fishing activity would be prohibited.

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

Dated: January 17, 2007.

James P. Burgess,

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

[FR Doc. E7-767 Filed 1-19-07; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-S

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 011607B]

Magnuson-Stevens Act Provisions; General Provisions for Domestic Fisheries; Application for Exempted Fishing Permits

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

ACTION: Notice; request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Assistant Regional Administrator for Sustainable Fisheries, Northeast Region, NMFS (Assistant Regional Administrator), has made a preliminary determination that an Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) application submitted by Bradford Bowen contains all of the required information and warrants further consideration. The Assistant Regional Administrator has made a preliminary determination that the activities authorized under this EFP would be consistent with the goals and objectives of the Monkfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP). However, further review and consultation may be necessary before a final determination is made to issue an EFP. Therefore, NMFS announces that the Assistant Regional Administrator proposes to recommend that an EFP be issued that would allow one commercial fishing vessel to

conduct fishing operations that are otherwise restricted by the regulations governing the fisheries of the Northeastern United States. The EFP would enable researchers to determine selectivity curves and catch rates for monkfish in large mesh gillnets by granting exemption from possession and landing restrictions of the FMP.

Regulations under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act require publication of this notification to provide interested parties the opportunity to comment on applications for proposed EFPs.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before February 6, 2007.

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

- **E-mail:** DA6-386@noaa.gov. Include in the subject line "Comments on monkfish gillnet EFP."

- **Mail:** Patricia A. Kurkul, Regional Administrator, NMFS, NE Regional Office, 1 Blackburn Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930. Mark the outside of the envelope "Comments on monkfish gillnet EFP, DA6-386."

- **Fax:** (978) 281-9135.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Douglas Potts, Fishery Management Specialist, 978-281-9341.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: An application for an EFP was submitted on December 26, 2006, by Bradford Bowen of the F/V Jessica Marie and Michael Pol of the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries, for a project funded under the New England and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Councils' Monkfish Research Set-Aside (RSA) Program. The primary goal of this study is to provide information on the selectivity of large mesh gillnets that can be used to enhance the management of this species.

The EFP would exempt one vessel from monkfish trip limits while conducting research trips using extra large mesh gillnets. This project was awarded 80 monkfish days-at-sea (DAS) through the 2007 Monkfish RSA Program under project 07-MONK-003. These DAS would be used to conduct the research, as well as to provide funds to support the research through the sale of fish from these trips.

Trips are proposed to occur May 1 through June 30, 2007, and then again from November 1, 2007, through April 30, 2008. Nets would be set south of Cape Cod and would follow the expected movements of the monkfish, starting at a depth of 50 fm in May and gradually moving to 20 fm by the end of June. In November, trips would begin in 15-20 fm and gradually move