potential decrease in landings would be approximately 4 percent for vessels that land in North Carolina. No projected revenue losses are expected for vessels that land in Florida.

The analysis of Alternative 3 concluded that, for the commercial sector, there would be a 24–percent increase in total potential commercial landings in 2008 compared to actual landings in 2006. The analysis of impacts on individual commercial vessels projected that there would be no change in revenue for 298 of the 725 vessels that landed bluefish in 2006, while 407 could incur slight revenue losses (less than 5 percent). Another 20 vessels could incur revenue losses of between 5 percent and 29 percent, and zero vessels would incur revenue losses of greater than 29 percent. The vessels projected to incur revenue losses of greater than 5 percent had home ports in New York and New Jersey.

The impacts of Alternative 3 on commercial vessels in the South Atlantic area were assessed using trip ticket data. The analysis concluded that these impacts would result in revenue reductions, associated with an estimated 9 percent landings decrease, of approximately 1 percent for 820 vessels identified as landing in North Carolina, and no revenue reductions for vessels landing in Florida.

For the recreational sector of the fishery, there were no negative revenue impacts projected to occur with regard to the recommended RHL, because this level would be greater than the recreational landings in 2006 (16.894 million lb (7,663 mt)), and above the recreational landings projected for 2008 (18.864 million lb (8,557 mt)). The recommended RHL is higher than the other two other alternatives, to account for this increase in expected landings. The recreational fishery impacts are not expected to be substantial under any of the alternatives, because the RHL under each alternative is greater than the projected landings for 2008. Although there is very little empirical evidence regarding the sensitivity of charter/party anglers to regulation, it is anticipated that the proposed harvest levels will not affect the demand for charter/party boat trips.

The IRFA also analyzed the impacts on revenues of the proposed RSA amount and found that the social and economic impacts are minimal. Assuming that the full RSA of 50,000 lb (22,680 kg) is landed and sold to support the proposed research project (a supplemental finfish survey in the Mid-Atlantic), then all of the participants in the fishery would benefit from the anticipated improvements in the data underlying the stock assessments. Because the recommended overall commercial quota is higher than 2006 landings, no overall negative impacts are expected in the commercial sector. Based on recent trends in the recreational fishery, recreational landings will more than likely remain below the recommended harvest level in 2008.

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

Dated: December 19, 2007.

Samuel D. Rauch III,

Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. E7–25080 Filed 12–26–07; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 665

RIN 0648–AU22

Fisheries in the Western Pacific; Bottomfish and Seamount Groundfish Fisheries; Management Measures for the Main Hawaiian Islands

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

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

SUMMARY: NMFS announces that the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) proposes to amend the Fishery Management Plan for the Bottomfish and Seamount Groundfish of the Western Pacific Region (Bottomfish FMP). Bottomfish FMP Amendment 14 was developed in response to a determination by NMFS that Hawaiian bottomfish stocks are experiencing overfishing, with the primary problem being excessive fishing mortality on seven deep water bottomfish species in the main Hawaiian Islands. Amendment 14 would end the overfishing by reducing bottomfish fishing mortality by 24 percent in 2008, and by establishing a management mechanism that would control fishing effort by responding to changes in the status of bottomfish stocks in the future.

DATES: Comments on Amendment 14, which includes a final environmental impact statement, must be received by February 25, 2008.

ADDRESSES: Comments on Amendment 14, identified by 0648–AU22, may be sent to either of the following addresses:

- Electronic Submission: Submit all electronic public comments via the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal www.regulations.gov; or
- Mail: William L. Robinson, Regional Administrator, NMFS, Pacific Islands Region (PIR), 1601 Kapiolani Blvd, Suite 1110, Honolulu, HI 96814–4700.

Instructions: All comments received are a part of the public record and will generally be posted to www.regulations.gov without change. All Personal Identifying Information (e.g., name, address, etc.) submitted voluntarily by the commenter may be publicly accessible. Do not submit Confidential Business Information, or otherwise sensitive or protected information. NMFS will accept anonymous comments. Attachments to electronic comments will be accepted in Microsoft Word or Excel, WordPerfect, or Adobe PDF file formats only.

Copies of Amendment 14, including a final environmental impact statement, are available from the Council, 1164 Bishop St., Suite 1400, Honolulu, HI 96813, tel 808–522–8220, fax 808–522–8226.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Karla Gore, NMFS PIR, 808–944–2273.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Electronic Access

This **Federal Register** notice is also accessible at the Office of the **Federal Register**'s web site *www.gpoaccess.gov/fr*.

Background

NMFS determined that overfishing is occurring on the bottomfish species complex in the Hawaiian Archipelago, with the primary problem being excessive fishing mortality on seven deep water species (the ''Deep 7'' species) in the main Hawaiian Islands (MHI). The Deep 7 species are onaga (*Etelis coruscans*), ehu (*E. carbunculus*), gindai (*Pristipomoides zonatus*), kalekale (*P. sieboldii*), opakapaka (*P. filamentosus*), lehi (*Aphareus rutilans*), and hapu'upu'u (*Epinephelus quernus*). NMFS notified the Council of this overfishing determination on May 27, 2005 (70 FR 34452, June 14, 2005). In response, the Council prepared Bottomfish FMP Amendment 14 that would establish measures to end the overfishing.

Amendment 14 would establish the following management measures for vessel-based bottomfish fishing in the Main Hawaiian Islands:

1. New Federal permitting and reporting requirements for non-commercial bottomfish fishermen. Permits would be required for all individuals engaged in vessel-based non-commercial bottomfish fishing in Hawaii, and operators of these non-commercial vessels would be required to submit logbooks of fishing effort and catch;

2. Seasonal closure. The bottomfish fishery in the main Hawaiian Islands would be closed in the summer of 2008. This closure is intended to reduce fishing mortality on Deep 7 bottomfish by commercial and non-commercial fishermen;

3. Total allowable catch (TAC). A mechanism would be established to set an annual TAC. In 2008, a TAC of 178,000 lb would apply only to the commercial fishery. In subsequent years an annual TAC, determined by NMFS and the Council, would apply to both commercial and non-commercial fisheries; and

4. Bag limits for non-commercial fishermen of five fish, all species combined, of the Deep 7 species, per person per trip. The Federal bag limit would be repealed in the future when data on the non-commercial fishery are sufficient to allow the non-commercial fishery to be included in the TAC program.

The measures in Amendment 14 would reduce fishing mortality bottomfish by 24 percent in 2008, and respond to changes in the status of bottomfish stocks by adjusting the allowable fishing mortality in the future. Amendment 14 has the following objectives:

1. End overfishing of the bottomfish stocks in the Hawaiian Archipelago;

2. Reduce the fishing mortality for the deepwater bottomfish species complex in the MHI;

3. Establish a mechanism to respond to changes in stock status beyond 2008; and

4. Improve data collection from non-commercial bottomfish fisheries in Federal waters around the MHI.

Amendment 14 includes a final environmental impact statement that analyzes the management alternatives considered by the Council. A notice of availability for the FEIS will be published in the near future. A proposed rule to implement Amendment 14 has been prepared, and NMFS expects to publish and request public comment on the rule in the near future.

Public comments on Amendment 14 must be received by February 25, 2008 to be considered by NMFS in the decision to approve, partially approve, or disapprove the amendment. To be considered, comments must be received by close of business on the last day of the comment period; that does not mean postmarked or otherwise transmitted by that date.

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

Dated: December 20, 2007.

Galen R. Tromble,

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

[FR Doc. E7–25078 Filed 12–26–07; 8:45 am]

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