

the 2008/2009 Herring RSA Program noted that the proposed research would provide important information that would improve the understanding of midwater trawling effects on herring aggregations.

GMRI requests that a single vessel or paired vessels perform, under sonar surveillance, midwater trawling for up to four nights using standard midwater trawl gear in Area 1A between June 1 and September 30, 2008. Vessels would conduct five or fewer tows per night, with each tow lasting 2 to 4 hr. All trawling operations would be monitored by GMRI staff. All herring caught during the survey would be deducted from GMRI's Area 1A Herring RSA Program compensation allocation of 1,350 mt. Vessels conducting the survey would not be allowed to exceed their Area 1A compensation allocation while fishing under the EFP. Project investigators propose that sonar data prior to, during, and following trawl fishing pressure will illuminate the effect of midwater trawling on herring aggregations.

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. The applicant may place requests for 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 minimal so as not to change the scope or impact of the initially approved EFP request.

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

Dated: March 5, 2008.

**Emily H. Menashes**

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

[FR Doc. E8-4645 Filed 3-7-08; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3510-22-S**

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

**RIN 0648-XF83**

#### Advisory Committee to the U.S. Section to the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT); Spring Species Working Group Meeting

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

**ACTION:** Notice of public meeting.

**SUMMARY:** The Advisory Committee (Committee) to the U.S. Section to the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) announces its spring meeting with its Species Working Group Technical Advisors on March 27–28, 2008. The Committee will meet to discuss matters relating to ICCAT, including the 2007 Commission meeting results; research and management activities; global and domestic initiatives related to ICCAT; consultations required under section 971d(c)(6) of the Atlantic Tunas Convention Act; the results of the meetings of the Committee's Species Working Groups; and other matters relating to the international management of ICCAT species.

**DATES:** The open sessions of the Committee meeting will be held on March 27, 2008, from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., and on March 28, 2008, from 9 a.m. to 9:15 a.m. and from 11 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Closed sessions will be held on March 27, 2008, from 2:45 p.m. to approximately 6 p.m. and on March 28, 2008, from 9:15 a.m. to 11 a.m.

**ADDRESSES:** The meeting will be held at the Hilton Hotel Washington-Silver Spring, 8727 Colesville Road, Silver Spring, MD 20910, telephone: 301-589-5200.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Ryan Wulff at (301) 713-2276.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Advisory Committee to the U.S. Section to ICCAT will meet in open session to receive and discuss information on: (1) the 2007 ICCAT meeting results and U.S. implementation of ICCAT decisions; (2) 2008 ICCAT and NMFS research and monitoring activities; (3) 2008 ICCAT activities; (4) global and domestic initiatives related to ICCAT; (5) consultations required under section 971d(c)(6) of the Atlantic Tunas Convention Act; (6) the results of the meetings of the Committee's Species Working Groups; and (7) other matters relating to the international management of ICCAT species. The public will have access to the open sessions of the meeting, but there will be no opportunity for public comment during the session.

The Committee will meet in its Species Working Groups for a portion of the afternoon of March 27, 2008, and of the morning of March 28, 2008. These sessions are not open to the public, but the results of the species working group discussions will be reported to the full Advisory Committee during the Committee's morning and afternoon open session on March 28, 2008. The Committee may also go into executive session on the afternoon of March 28,

2008, to discuss sensitive information relating to upcoming intersessional meetings of ICCAT. This session would also be closed to the public.

#### Special Accommodations

The meeting location is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Ryan Wulff at (301) 713-2276 at least 5 days prior to the meeting date.

Dated: March 5, 2008.

**Rebecca J. Lent,**

*Director, Office of International Affairs, National Marine Fisheries Service.*

[FR Doc. E8-4698 Filed 3-7-08; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3510-22-S**

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

**RIN: 0648-XG14**

#### Gulf of Mexico 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 Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council to convene its Socioeconomic Panel (SEP) via conference call.

**DATES:** The conference call will be held March 25, 2008, at 1 p.m. EDT.

**ADDRESSES:** The meeting will be held via conference call and listening stations will be available. For specific locations see **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**.

*Council address:* Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, 2203 North Lois Avenue, Suite 1100, Tampa, FL 33607.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Assane Diagne, Economist, Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council; telephone: (813) 348-1630.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The conference call will begin at 1 p.m. EDT and conclude no later than 3 p.m. EDT. Listening stations are available at the following locations:

The Gulf Council office (see **ADDRESSES**), and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) offices as follows:

#### St. Petersburg, FL

263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, FL 33701, Contact: Stephen Holiman, telephone: (727) 551-5719;

#### Galveston, TX

4700 Ave U, Conference room - Bldg 305, Galveston, TX 77551, Contact: Ronnie O'Toole, telephone: (409) 766-3500;

#### Miami, FL

75 Virginia Beach Drive, Miami, FL 33149, Contact: Sophia Howard, telephone: (305) 361-4259; and

#### Panama City, FL

3500 Delwood Beach Road, Panama City, FL 32408, Contact: Janice Hamm, telephone: (850) 234-6541.

The SEP will hold a conference call to discuss Reef Fish Amendment 30-B. Amendment 30B contains potential management measures to define overfishing and overfished thresholds and an optimum yield (OY) target for gag; end overfishing of gag; increase the total allowable catch (TAC) of the red grouper stock to its OY level; establish recreational and commercial allocations for gag and red grouper; establish accountability measures for gag to assure compliance with ending overfishing; adjust commercial grouper quotas and recreational grouper bag limits; closed seasons; and/or size limits; reduce discards and discard mortality of groupers; establish a new reef fish marine reserve and/or extend the duration of the existing Madison-Swanson and Steamboat Lumps marine reserves; and require that federally permitted reef fish vessels comply with the more restrictive of federal or state reef fish regulations when fishing in state waters.

Although other non-emergency issues not on the agenda may come before the SEP for discussion, in accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act), those issues may not be the subject of formal action during the meeting. Actions will be restricted to the issue specifically identified in the agenda 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 SEP's intent to take action to address the emergency.

#### Special Accommodations

The listening stations are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Tina Trezza at the Council (see **ADDRESSES**) at least 5 working days prior to the meeting.

Dated: March 5, 2008.

#### Tracey L. Thompson,

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

[FR Doc. E8-4613 Filed 3-7-08; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3510-22-S**

### DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

#### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN: 0648-XG15

#### New England Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

**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's (Council) Groundfish Oversight Committee will meet to consider actions affecting New England fisheries in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ).

**DATES:** The meeting will be held on Thursday, March 27, 2008, at 9 a.m.

**ADDRESSES:** The meeting will be held at the Holiday Inn by the Bay, 88 Spring Street, Portland, ME 04101; telephone: (207) 775-2311.

*Council address:* New England Fishery Management Council, 50 Water Street, Mill 2, Newburyport, MA 01950.

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

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The items of discussion in the committee's agenda are as follows:

1. The Groundfish Oversight Committee will meet to continue development of Amendment 16 to the Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan. The Committee will address a wide range of issues at this meeting. These will include additional development of effort controls for the commercial fishery, such as days-at-sea restrictions, trip limits, closed areas, gear modifications, or other input controls.

2. They will also further develop Annual Catch Limit and Accountability

Measure alternatives. Sector issues may also be discussed, such as how sectors participate in Special Access Programs and technical issues with respect to calculating each permit's potential sector contribution.

3. The Committee may also review specific measures text, and may consider other groundfish management issues as time permits. Recommendations developed by the Committee will be reported to the Council at a future meeting.

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

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 date.

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

Dated: March 5, 2008.

#### Tracey L. Thompson,

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

[FR Doc. E8-4614 Filed 3-7-08; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3510-22-S**

### DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

#### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN: 0648-XG16

#### New England Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

**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 Skate Committee, in March, 2008, to consider actions affecting New England fisheries in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ). Recommendations from this group will be brought to the full Council for formal consideration and action, if appropriate.