DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RIN 0648–AW83]
Atlantic Highly Migratory Species; Environmental Assessment for Amendment 4 to the 2006 Consolidated Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Fishery Management Plan

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

ACTION: Notice of intent.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces its intent to prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA) for Amendment 4 to the 2006 Consolidated Atlantic Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Fishery Management Plan (FMP) instead an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) as previously announced through publication of a Notice of Intent published on May 27, 2008 (73 FR 30381). NMFS intends to prepare the EA under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to assess the potential effects on the human environment of proposed alternatives and actions under Amendment 4 to the 2006 Consolidated HMS FMP. The EA will analyze potential environmental impacts of various alternatives to permitting and reporting requirements for commercial HMS fisheries in U.S. waters of the Caribbean as well as examine management alternatives to improve catch reporting and data collection in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands consistent with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act), the Atlantic Tunas Convention Act (ATCA), and other relevant Federal laws.

After consideration of substantive comments received through formal scoping and other means, NMFS has determined that an EA would provide an appropriate level of NEPA review for Amendment 4 to the Consolidated HMS FMP and preparation of an EIS is not necessary. NMFS anticipates that the proposed action would have a low level of potential adverse environmental impacts due to the limited geographic area of the Caribbean HMS fishery, small size of the vessels involved, the relatively low number of known participants, and the use of traditional handgears. Additionally, the potential adverse impacts to protected species would be expected to be minimal.

Dated: July 7, 2011.

Margo Schulze-Haugen,
Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RIN 0648–XA561]
New England Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

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

ACTION: Notice; public meeting.

SUMMARY: The New England Fishery Management Council (Council) Research Steering Committee (Committee) will hold a webinar.

DATES: The meeting will be held on Tuesday, August 2, 2011, at 3 p.m.

ADDRESSES: Meeting address: The webinar will be held at the New England Fishery Management Council, 50 Water Street, Mill 2, Newburyport, MA 01950; telephone: (978) 465–0492; fax: (978) 465–3116.

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 purpose of the meeting is to respond to NMFS’ request for additional information regarding adoption of the new eliminator trawl. The RSC will answer the following questions in the form of a recommendation to be reviewed by the Council’s Executive Committee at its August 9th meeting:

1. Is the Council’s intent that the gear be available to both sector and non-sector vessels for use in the Haddock SAP and as a specified gear for the purpose of discard estimation? 2. Does the committee feel there is sufficient information to warrant treating the new eliminator trawl the same as the Ruhle trawl for the purpose of discard estimation, or does it recommend creating a new gear code due to potential for catch performance differences? 3. How does the committee evaluate the gear with respect to the Haddock SAP and Regular B-day program gear performance standards in the regulations?

The research report on the gear in question is available at http://www.nefmc.org under Research Steering Committee meeting materials for the April 14th meeting. The public may obtain information about accessing the webinar by visiting the New England Council’s Web site at http://www.nefmc.org.

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