

Federal permit or tag number, or some other specified form of identification. The regulations further specify how the gear is to be marked (*e.g.*, location and color). Law enforcement personnel rely on this information to assure compliance with fisheries management regulations. Gear that is not properly identified is confiscated. The identifying number on fishing gear is used by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), the United States Coast Guard (USCG), and other marine agencies in issuing violations, prosecutions, and other enforcement actions. Gear marking helps ensure that a vessel harvests fish only from its own traps/pots/other gear and that traps/pots/other gear are not illegally placed. Gear violations are more readily prosecuted when the gear is marked, allowing for more cost effective enforcement. Cooperating fishermen also use the number to report placement or occurrence of gear in unauthorized areas. Regulation-compliant fishermen ultimately benefit from this requirement, because unauthorized and illegal fishing is deterred and more burdensome regulations are avoided.

II. Method of Collection

The physical marking of fishing buoys is done by the affected public (fishermen in the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery) according to regulation. No information is collected.

III. Data

OMB Number: 0648-0352.

Form Number: None.

Type of Review: Regular submission.

Affected Public: Business or other for-profit organizations.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 946.

Estimated Time per Response: 15 minutes per marking.

Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours: 3,798.

Estimated Total Annual Cost to Public: \$3,798.

IV. Request for Comments

Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden (including hours and cost) of the proposed collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques

or other forms of information technology.

Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized and/or included in the request for OMB approval of this information collection; they also will become a matter of public record.

Gwellnar Banks,

Management Analyst, Office of the Chief Information Officer.

[FR Doc. 2011-20491 Filed 8-11-11; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XA505

Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Reef Fish Fishery of the Gulf of Mexico; Exempted Fishing Permit

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

ACTION: Notice of receipt of an application for an exempted fishing permit; request for comments.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces the receipt of an application for an exempted fishing permit (EFP) from the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF). If granted, the EFP would authorize the applicant to collect and retain limited numbers of specimens that would otherwise be prohibited from possession and retention. This study, to be conducted in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of the Gulf of Mexico (Gulf) off Louisiana, is intended to more closely monitor populations of red snapper and other reef fish to ensure public health and seafood quality are maintained.

DATES: Comments must be received no later than 5 p.m., eastern time, on September 12, 2011.

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

- *E-mail:* Steve.Branstetter@noaa.gov.

Include in the subject line of the e-mail comment the following document identifier: "LDWF_EFP".

- *Mail:* Steve Branstetter, Southeast Regional Office, NMFS, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, FL 33701.

The application and related documents are available for review upon written request to any of the above addresses.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Steve Branstetter, 727-824-5305; e-mail: Steve.Branstetter@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The EFP is requested under the authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*), and regulations at 50 CFR 600.745(b) concerning exempted fishing.

The described research is part of a new monitoring program by LDWF. The research is intended to involve recreational fishermen in the collection of fundamental biological information of Gulf reef fish. The proposed collection for scientific research involves activities that could otherwise be prohibited by regulations at 50 CFR part 622, as they pertain to reef fish managed by the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council). The applicant requires authorization through the EFP to collect these Council-managed species that may be taken as part of the normal fishing activities of the recreational for-hire sector of the Gulf reef fish fishery. LDWF would enlist the Louisiana Charter Boat Association, a for-hire recreational fishing body that is recognized by the department and the state legislature to assist with a focused watch for red snapper and other Gulf reef fish species exhibiting biological abnormalities, such as skin lesions or infections. LDWF Office of Fisheries personnel and university researchers would train participating charter boat operators to recognize abnormalities in reef fish and to use scientifically accepted technical procedures to process affected fish for laboratory analysis. The charter boat captain would attach an identification tag to each specimen, record the fishing location using Global Positioning System coordinates, and then contact the LDWF via an emergency call-in number. LDWF field personnel would assist in transferring these samples to shore facilities for transport to a pathology laboratory at Louisiana State University for analysis.

The goal of the research is to more closely monitor populations of red snapper and other reef fish taken from state and Federal waters off Louisiana to ensure public health and seafood quality are maintained. The EFP, if approved, would authorize the take of as many as 100 Federally-managed red snapper or other Gulf reef fish through August 31, 2012. Such fish, collected as biological samples, would be exempted from the recreational bag limit for the particular species, and not subject to size limits or seasonal closures.

NMFS finds this application warrants further consideration. Possible conditions the agency may impose on this permit, if it is indeed granted, include but are not limited to, a prohibition of conducting research within marine protected areas, marine sanctuaries, or special management zones, without additional authorization. Additionally, NMFS would prohibit the possession of Nassau or goliath grouper. A report on the research would be due at the end of the collection period, to be submitted to NMFS and reviewed by the Council.

A final decision on issuance of the EFP will depend on NMFS's review of public comments received on the application, consultations with the affected states, the Council, and the U.S. Coast Guard, as well as a determination that it is consistent with all applicable laws.

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

Dated: August 8, 2011.

Emily H. Menashes,

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

[FR Doc. 2011-20611 Filed 8-11-11; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XA596

Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Reef Fish Fishery of the Gulf of Mexico; Exempted Fishing Permit

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

ACTION: Notice of receipt of an application for an exempted fishing permit; request for comments.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces the receipt of an application for an exempted fishing permit (EFP) for a collaborative effort among personnel from Texas Tech University, Texas A&M—Corpus Christi, and a commercial fishing organization, Shareholders Alliance. If granted, the EFP would authorize the applicants to collect and retain limited numbers of specimens that would otherwise be prohibited from possession and retention. This study, to be conducted in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of the Gulf of Mexico (Gulf), is intended to more closely monitor populations of red snapper and other reef fish to compare relative catch rates and discards

between vessels that possess varying amounts of red snapper allocation under the current Gulf red snapper individual fishing quota (IFQ) program.

DATES: Comments must be received no later than 5 p.m., eastern time, on September 12, 2011.

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

- *E-mail:* Steve.Branstetter@noaa.gov. Include in the subject line of the e-mail comment the following document identifier: "TTU EFP".

- *Mail:* Steve Branstetter, Southeast Regional Office, NMFS, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, FL 33701.

The application and related documents are available for review upon written request to any of the above addresses.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Steve Branstetter, 727-824-5305; e-mail: Steve.Branstetter@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The EFP is requested under the authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*), and regulations at 50 CFR 600.745(b) concerning exempted fishing.

The described research is part of an ongoing Cooperative Research Program Cooperative Agreement (No. NA10NMF4540110) funded by NMFS. The research is intended to involve commercial fishermen in the collection of fundamental fisheries information. Resource collection efforts support the development and evaluation of fisheries management and regulatory options.

The proposed collection for scientific research involves activities that could otherwise be prohibited by regulations at 50 CFR part 622, as they pertain to reef fish managed by the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council). The applicants require authorization through the EFP to collect these Council-managed species that may be taken as part of the normal fishing activities of the commercial sector of the Gulf reef fish fishery. The applicant would be conducting this research in cooperation with a commercial fishing organization, Shareholders Alliance, and would involve as many as 30 vessel owners associated with that organization. Observers from Texas Tech University and Texas A&M—Corpus Christi, would document the catch and bycatch of red snapper and other reef fish during normal commercial fishing operations in the Gulf.

The objective of the study is to compare the discard rate of red snapper and the bycatch rates of other fish

species in the red snapper commercial handline component of the Gulf reef fish fishery between fishermen with high and low amounts of quota allocation in both the eastern and western Gulf. By tagging discarded fish, and examining the return rates for recaptured tagged fish, the intent of the research is to estimate the delayed mortality rate, and long-term survival, of fish discarded in the commercial sector using vertical line gear in the Gulf reef fish fishery based on depth of capture. Information learned from this study is intended to help fishermen reduce discard mortality rates using new methodologies such as descender hooks to return fish to depth during fishing operations. In addition, sampling for age, growth, and size composition of the catch and bycatch would be conducted, providing additional information that can be used to assess the health of stock.

Additionally, the goal of the research is to improve the scientific knowledge of red snapper and other reef fish taken from state and Federal waters of the Gulf and to use that knowledge to support fishery management decisions. The EFP, if approved, would authorize the take of as many as 1,000 Federally-managed red snapper or other reef fish through July 31, 2012. Such fish, collected as biological samples, would be exempt from size limit regulations, and would not count against an individual fishermen's specific red snapper IFQ allocation.

NMFS finds this application warrants further consideration. Possible conditions the agency may impose on this permit, if it is indeed granted, include but are not limited to, a prohibition of conducting research within marine protected areas, marine sanctuaries, or special management zones, without additional authorization. Additionally, NMFS would prohibit the possession of Nassau or goliath grouper. A report on the research would be due at the end of the collection period, to be submitted to NMFS and reviewed by the Council.

A final decision on issuance of the EFP will depend on NMFS's review of public comments received on the application, consultations with the affected states, the Council, and the U.S. Coast Guard, as well as a determination that the EFP is consistent with all applicable laws.

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

Dated: August 8, 2011.

Emily H. Menashes,

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

[FR Doc. 2011-20596 Filed 8-11-11; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-P