

Assessment Part 2 for 2016 Ocean Salmon Fishery Regulations” is scheduled to be posted on the Pacific Council Web site at <http://www.pcouncil.org>. The report will include a description of the salmon management alternatives and a summary of their biological and economic impacts. Public hearings will be held to receive comments on the proposed ocean salmon fishery management alternatives adopted by the Pacific Council. Written comments received at the public hearings and a summary of oral comments at the hearings will be provided to the Pacific Council at its April meeting.

All public hearings begin at 7 p.m. at the following locations:

- March 28, 2016: Chateau Westport, Beach Room, 710 West Hancock, Westport, WA 98595, telephone 360-268-9101.
- March 28, 2016: Red Lion Hotel, South Umpqua Room, 1313 North Bayshore Drive, Coos Bay, OR 97420, telephone 541-267-4141.
- March 29, 2016: Motel 6, Convention Room, 400 South Main St, Fort Bragg, CA 95437, telephone 707-964-4761.

Comments on the alternatives the Pacific Council adopts at its March 2016 meeting, and described in Preseason Report II, may be submitted in writing or electronically as described under **ADDRESSES**, or verbally or in writing at any of the public hearings held on March 28-29, 2016, or at the Pacific Council’s meeting, April 9-14, 2016, at the Hilton in Vancouver, WA. Details of these meetings will be available on the Pacific Council’s Web site (<http://www.pcouncil.org>) and will be published in the **Federal Register**. Written and electronically submitted comments must be received no later than 11:59 p.m. Pacific Time, April 3, 2016, in order to be included in the briefing book for the April Council meeting where they will be considered in the adoption of the Pacific Council’s final recommendation for the 2016 salmon fishery management measures. All comments received accordingly will be reviewed and considered by the Pacific Council and NMFS.

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

Dated: January 27, 2016.

Emily H. Menashes,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XD882

Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Snapper-Grouper Fishery Off the South Atlantic States; Amendment 36

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

ACTION: Notice announcing the preparation of an environmental assessment (EA).

SUMMARY: NMFS, Southeast Region, in collaboration with the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council), is preparing an EA for Amendment 36 to the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for the Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region (Amendment 36). Amendment 36 considers alternatives to implement special management zones (SMZs) in the exclusive economic zone of the South Atlantic. This notice is intended to inform the public of the change from the preparation of a draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) to an EA for Amendment 36.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Rick DeVictor, NMFS Southeast Regional Office, telephone: 727-824-5305, or email: rick.devictor@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: An NOI to prepare a DEIS for Amendment 36 was published in the **Federal Register** on April 8, 2015 (80 FR 18823). The NOI indicated that Amendment 36 would be supported by an environmental impact statement, which was the preliminary determination at the time the original purpose and need of the amendment was drafted. In addition to publication of the NOI, the Council held scoping meetings for Amendment 36 from April 20-23, 2015. When the Council first requested development of this amendment, they were considering SMZs of comparably larger sizes. A reassessment of the actions in Amendment 36 relative to the National Environmental Policy Act indicates an EA is appropriate. Therefore, a DEIS will not be prepared for Amendment 36 at this time.

Through Amendment 36, the Council is considering modifications to the SMZ process and framework procedures to include the consideration of SMZs that would protect locations where snapper-grouper species are likely to spawn and natural habitats that support spawning fish. Protecting locations where fish

spawn and protecting natural habitats that support spawning fish may act as an effective strategy when managing a sustainable fish population. In the EA, the Council is also considering the implementation of SMZs to protect spawning snapper-grouper species in the South Atlantic region, in addition to specifying the anchoring, transit, and sunset provisions. Sunset provisions designate the date that the SMZs would be removed from the regulations unless retained through action by the Council and NMFS.

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

Dated: January 27, 2016.

Emily H. Menashes,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XE401

Pacific Fishery Management Council; Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement

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

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS); request for comments.

SUMMARY: NMFS and the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) announce their intent to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 to analyze the short- and long-term impacts on the human (biological, physical, social, and economic) environment of Amendment 28 to the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP). This notice also requests written comment.

DATES: Public scoping will be conducted through this notice. Written comments must be received by 5 p.m. Pacific Standard Time on March 2, 2016 (see **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**).

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments on issues and alternatives by any of the following methods:

- **Email:**
GroundfishAmendment28.wcr@noaa.gov.

- **Fax:** 360-753-9463, Attention Dr. John Stadler.