

• Email: nmfs.gar.efp@noaa.gov. Include in the subject line "Comments on DA16-013 NFI Incidental Discard Mortality EFP."

• Mail: John K. Bullard, Regional Administrator, NMFS, Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office, 55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930. Mark the outside of the envelope "Comments on DA16-013 NFI Incidental Discard Mortality EFP."

• Fax: (978) 281-9135.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Shannah Jaburek, Fisheries Management Specialist, 978-282-8456.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NOAA awarded the National Fisheries Institute (NFI) a grant through the 2014 Atlantic sea scallop research set-aside program in support of a project titled, "Determining Incidental Discard Mortality of Atlantic Sea Scallops, *Placopecten magellanicus*, in the Scallop Dredge Fishery in the Mid-Atlantic Bight." NMFS issued the National Fisheries Institute (NFI) an Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) on April 30, 2015, to complete the project. On February 16, 2016, NMFS received a request to authorize participating vessels to perform an additional 20 tows over the course of two limited access Atlantic sea scallop days-at-sea (DAS). NFI is requesting exemptions that would allow one commercial fishing vessel to fish outside of the DAS regulations found at 50 CFR 648.53(b); mesh size restrictions at § 648.51(a)(2); obstruction in dredge gear restrictions at § 648.51(b)(4)(iii); and the crew size regulations at § 648.51(c). In addition, the EFP would temporarily exempt the participating vessel from possession limits and minimum size requirements specified in 50 CFR part 648, subsections B and D through O, for sampling purposes only. Any fishing activity conducted outside the scope of the exempted fishing activity would be prohibited.

The project would conduct dredging activities to assess the incidental mortality of scallops passing through the 4-inch (10.16-cm) rings of a 12-foot (4.57-m) Turtle Deflector Dredge on sandy and hard (gravel) substrates. Dredging would be conducted over approximately two DAS during the proposed period of May 2016 through June 2016. All dredging would occur in open access scallop fishing areas off the coast of New Jersey. A total of 20 scallop tows would be conducted (10 tows per substrate). Each tow would be made at depths of 18 to 25 fathoms (32.92 to 45.72 m) for a duration of 40 minutes. The scallop vessel would fish two dredges simultaneously. One dredge

would use an experimental net bag cover and the other would fish with an industry standard 12-foot (4.57-m) turtle excluder dredge. The experimental cover is constructed of 1 $\frac{7}{8}$ -inch (4.76-cm) mesh and sewn into the top of the dredge apron. The bag can be dumped independently of the 4-inch (10.16-cm) ring bag to collect the scallops and other organisms that pass through the 4-inch (10.16-cm) rings. The dredge configurations would be switched to the opposite side after five tows for each substrate.

All scallops that filter through the 4-inch (10.16-cm) rings and into the mesh bag would be measured for shell height and assessed for damage to the shell in one of three categories: Not injured; sub-lethal (repairable); or lethal (non-repairable). After all scallops are assessed, they would be returned to the ocean bottom as soon as practicable. The researchers would then use this information to estimate the proportion of scallops in each injury category. The weight of scallop catch retained in the 4-inch (10.16-cm) ring bags of both dredges would be estimated by the captain. Researchers would take shell measurements of a subsample of 50 scallops per tow per dredge to determine size selectivity within each dredge. All other bycatch in the experimental net bag would be sorted, the captain would estimate the weights, and researchers would measure a minimum of 25 lengths per individual species. No catch would be landed for sale.

If approved, the applicant may request 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 have minimal impacts that do not change the scope or impact of the initially approved EFP request. Any fishing activity conducted outside the scope of the exempted fishing activity would be prohibited.

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

Dated: March 31, 2016.

Alan D. Risenhoover,

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

[FR Doc. 2016-07733 Filed 4-4-16; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XE555

Magnuson-Stevens Act Provisions; General Provisions for Domestic Fisheries; Application for Exempted Fishing Permits

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

ACTION: Notice; request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Assistant Regional Administrator for Sustainable Fisheries, Greater Atlantic Region, NMFS, has made a preliminary determination that an Exempted Fishing Permit application contains all of the required information and warrants further consideration. The Exempted Fishing Permit would allow a commercial fishing vessel to fish outside of the limited access scallop regulations in support of research conducted by the Coonamessett Farm Foundation. The exemptions are in support of gear research designed to reduce flatfish bycatch in the limited access general category scallop fishery.

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 Exempted Fishing Permits.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before April 20, 2016.

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

• Email: nmfs.gar.efp@noaa.gov. Include in the subject line "CFF LAGC Modified Sweep EFP."

• Mail: John K. Bullard, Regional Administrator, NMFS, Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office, 55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930. Mark the outside of the envelope "Comments on CFF LAGC Modified Sweep EFP."

• Fax: (978) 281-9135.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Shannah Jaburek, Fisheries Management Specialist, 978-282-8456.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Coonamessett Farm Foundation (CFF) has submitted a proposal titled "Determining the Impacts of Dredge Bag Modifications on Flatfish Bycatch in the LAGC Scallop Fishery," that has been favorably reviewed and is pending final approval by NOAA's Grants Management Division under the 2016

Atlantic Sea Scallop Research Set-Aside (RSA) Program. The project would test a modified flounder cookie sweep on the outer bale bars of the scallop dredge that is used in the limited access general category (LAGC) scallop fishery and film fish-dredge interactions to monitor the effectiveness of the gear modification in reducing flatfish bycatch. CFF submitted a complete application for an EFP on March 14, 2016, to enable data collection activities during research trips. The EFP would allow one commercial fishing vessel to use gear that may be considered obstructed at 50 CFR 648.51(b)(4)(iii), waive scallop observer program requirements at § 648.11(g) in order to allow a researcher with adequate room to sample catch on deck, and temporarily exempt the participating vessels from possession limits and minimum size requirements specified in 50 CFR part 648, subsections B and D through O, for sampling purposes only. Any fishing activity conducted outside the scope of the exempted fishing activity would be prohibited, including landing fish in excess of a possession limit or below the minimum size.

One vessel would conduct scallop dredging in June 2016-April 2017, on about 25 trips lasting approximately one day-at-sea (DAS) each for a project total of 25 DAS. The first trip would be comprised of shorter tow durations and serve as a calibration day for the underwater video equipment to determine the correct configuration on the dredge that would be used on each of the following trips. All other trips would complete approximately six tows per day for a maximum duration of 90 minutes at a tow speed of 4.2 knots. Trips would take place in the Southern New England Dredge Exemption Area where part of the LAGC fleet normally operates.

All tows would be conducted using a single 9-foot (2.74-m) dredge following an alternate paired tow strategy where a pair consists of one control and one experimental tow. Researchers would attach the two 6- to 7-foot (1.83- to 2.13-m) cookie sweeps to each of the outer bale bars using chain and shackles for the experimental tows and then remove them for the control tows. The cookie sweeps would be constructed of round rubber disks with no larger than a 3-inch (7.62-cm) diameter, and the attachment chains would be evenly spaced and varied in length to account for dredge position while being towed to ensure contact with the ocean bottom. Exemption from the dredge gear obstruction regulation would allow researchers to use the cookie sweep for the experimental tows.

Researchers would weigh all scallop catch in industry bushel baskets caught in both dredges and a one basket subsample from each dredge would be measured in 5-mm increments. Total weight of bycatch species and individual measurements to the nearest centimeter would also be obtained by the researcher. If the volume of the catch is large, subsampling protocols would be necessary. All bycatch would be returned to the sea as soon as practicable following data collection. Exemption from possession limit and minimum sizes would support catch sampling activities, and ensure the vessel is not in conflict with possession regulations while collecting catch data. All catch above a possession limit or below a minimum size would be discarded as soon as practicable following data collection. Exempting the vessel from the sea scallop observer program requirements would allow researchers flexibility for catch sampling timing and space accommodations since vessels in the LAGC fleet are typically smaller with limited deck space.

All research trips would otherwise be conducted in a manner consistent with normal commercial fishing conditions and catch consistent with the LAGC daily possession limit would be retained for sale.

If approved, the applicant may request 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 have minimal impacts that do not change the scope or impact of the initially approved EFP request. Any fishing activity conducted outside the scope of the exempted fishing activity would be prohibited.

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

Dated: March 31, 2016.

Alan D. Risenhoover,

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

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COMMODITY FUTURES TRADING COMMISSION

Agency Information Collection Activities Under OMB Review

AGENCY: Commodity Futures Trading Commission.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: In compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA), this notice announces that the Information Collection Request (ICR) abstracted below has been forwarded to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review and comment. The ICR describes the nature of the information collection and its expected costs and burden.

DATES: Comments must be submitted on or before May 5, 2016.

ADDRESSES: Comments regarding the burden estimated or any other aspect of the information collection, including suggestions for reducing the burden, may be submitted directly to the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs in OMB, within 30 days of publication of the notice, by email at OIRASubmissions@omb.eop.gov. Please identify the comments by OMB Control No. 3038-0031. Please provide the Commission with a copy of all submitted comments at the address listed below. Please refer to OMB Reference No. 3038-0031, found on <http://reginfo.gov>. Comments may also be mailed to the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget, Attention: Desk Officer for the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, 725 17th Street NW., Washington, DC 20503, and to the Commission through its Web site at <http://comments.cftc.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments through the Web site.

Comments may also be mailed to: Christopher Kirkpatrick, Secretary of the Commission, Commodity Futures Trading Commission, Three Lafayette Centre, 1155 21st Street NW., Washington, DC 20581, or by Hand Delivery/Courier at the same address.

A copy of the supporting statements for the collection of information discussed above may be obtained by visiting <http://reginfo.gov>. All comments must be submitted in English, or if not, accompanied by an English translation. Comments will be posted as received to <http://www.cftc.gov>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Sonda R. Owens, Commodity Futures Trading Commission, (202) 418-5182; fax: (202) 418-5414; email: sowens@cftc.gov and refer to OMB Control No. 3038-0031.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The OMB control numbers for the CFTC's regulations were published on December 30, 1981. See 46 FR 63035 (Dec. 30, 1981). The **Federal Register**