

[I.D. 030596F]

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

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

ACTION: Notice of public meeting

SUMMARY: The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) will hold a public meeting of its Executive Committee.

DATES: The meeting will be held on March 27–28, 1996. See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** for specific dates and times.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Town and Country Inn, 2008 Savannah Highway, Charleston, SC 29407; telephone: (803) 571-1000.

Council address: South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, One Southpark Circle, Suite 306; Charleston, SC 29407-4699.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Susan Buchanan, Public Information Officer; telephone: (803) 571-4366; fax: (803) 769-4520; E-mail: Susan_Buchanan@safmc.nmfs.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**Meeting Dates**

March 27, 1996, 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. and March 28, 1996, 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon.

The Executive Committee will review and respond to the NMFS proposed consolidated regulations and removal of the Spiny Lobster Fishery Management Plan (FMP); address the latest proposed Magnuson Act amendments; discuss remaining fiscal year 1996 Council activities and the fiscal year 1996 budget; begin preliminary activities and budget planning for fiscal year 1997; and discuss a Council Weakfish FMP.

Special Accommodations

These meetings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to the Council office (see **ADDRESSES**) by March 20, 1996.

Dated: March 5, 1996.

Richard W. Surdi,

Acting Director, Office of Fisheries Conservation and Management, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 96-5749 Filed 3-11-96; 8:45 am]

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[I.D. 030496D]

Endangered Species; Permits

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

ACTION: Receipt of applications for modifications to a research/enhancement permit (P503A) and two incidental take permits (P503K and 503I).

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that the Idaho Department of Fish and Game in Boise, ID (IDFG) has applied in due form for modifications to permits authorizing takes of endangered and threatened species for the purpose of scientific research/enhancement and as incidental takes.

DATES: Written comments or requests for a public hearing on any of these applications must be received on or before April 11, 1996.

ADDRESSES: The applications and related documents are available for review in the following offices, by appointment:

Office of Protected Resources, F/PR8, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910-3226 (301-713-1401); and

Environmental and Technical Services Division, 525 NE Oregon Street, Suite 500, Portland, OR 97232-4169 (503-230-5400).

Written comments or requests for a public hearing should be submitted to the Chief, Endangered Species Division, Office of Protected Resources.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: IDFG requests modifications to permits under the authority of section 10 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA) (16 U.S.C. 1531-1543) and the NMFS regulations governing listed fish and wildlife permits (50 CFR parts 217-227).

IDFG (P503A) requests modification 7 to scientific research/enhancement permit 795. Permit 795 authorizes IDFG a take of adult and juvenile, endangered, Snake River sockeye salmon (*Oncorhynchus nerka*) associated with a captive broodstock program. For modification 7, IDFG requests: (1) To release juvenile sockeye progeny of ESA-listed adults into net pens in Redfish Lake, ID from June-October annually and to release those fish from the net pens directly into the lake in October each year; and (2) an increase in the annual number of listed juvenile fish to be captured, handled, tagged with passive integrated transponders, and released during the annual juvenile outmigration. Net pen culture of juvenile presmolts was selected as the

most appropriate release strategy for listed sockeye salmon progeny by the Stanley Basin Technical Oversight Committee. A higher take limit of outmigrating, listed, juvenile sockeye salmon would provide more complete monitoring information and eliminate the need to suspend research if the currently authorized limit is reached. Modification 7 is requested for the duration of the permit. Permit 795 expires on July 31, 1997.

IDFG (P503K) requests modification 1 to permit 908. Permit 908 authorizes an incidental take of endangered Snake River sockeye salmon and threatened Snake River spring/summer chinook salmon associated with IDFG's resident fish-stocking program, designed to increase the supply of fish in the Salmon River and its tributary streams and lakes for sport-angling. For modification 1, IDFG proposes to stock Redfish Lake with catchable-sized hatchery rainbow trout in 1996 to provide recreational fishing in the lake. In 1993 and 1995, NMFS denied IDFG's requests to stock Redfish Lake with rainbow trout because of concerns over possible interactions between stocked rainbow trout and ESA-listed sockeye salmon in the lake, primarily diet overlap and predation. IDFG believes the proposed Redfish Lake stocking scenario would have no impact on the recovery of endangered sockeye salmon since the juvenile sockeye released to the lake in 1996 are proposed to be in net pens when the majority of the rainbow trout are present (see preceding paragraph).

Also for modification 1 to permit 908, IDFG proposes to stock catchable-sized hatchery rainbow trout in Pettit Lake in 1996. In 1995, NMFS authorized IDFG a direct take of juvenile, endangered, Snake River sockeye salmon associated with stocking Pettit Lake with juvenile sockeye salmon from their captive broodstock program approximately three weeks after stocking rainbow trout in the lake (modification 6, permit 795, 60 FR 37052) and required that IDFG implement a specific monitoring plan to assess the interactions between trout and sockeye in the lake (amendment, permit 908, 60 FR 40345). IDFG has sponsored scientific research that has provided evidence which suggests that hatchery rainbow trout releases in Stanley Basin lakes would not undermine endangered sockeye salmon recovery efforts. Modification 1 is requested for 1996 only. Permit 908 expires on December 31, 1998.

IDFG (P503I) requests modification 2 to permit 844. Permit 844 authorizes IDFG an incidental take of adult and juvenile, threatened, Snake River

spring/summer chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*) and adult, threatened, Snake River fall chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*) associated with the State of Idaho's sport-fishing activities. For modification 2, IDFG requests an incidental take of residual, endangered, Snake River sockeye salmon (*Oncorhynchus nerka*) associated with a kokanee fishery in Redfish Lake from April 1 through August 7, 1996. The fishery is proposed as a kokanee control measure.

A reduction of the kokanee population in Redfish Lake is desirable because kokanee compete directly with ESA-listed sockeye salmon for food and habitat. An abundant kokanee population threatens IDFG's effort to re-establish the endangered sockeye salmon's productivity in the lake. In 1995, NMFS issued modification 1 to permit 844 authorizing IDFG an incidental take of residual, endangered, Snake River sockeye salmon associated with a kokanee fishery in Redfish Lake for 17 days in July as a kokanee control measure (modification 1, permit 844, FR 60 40345). Angler retention of Redfish Lake kokanee was not allowed since 1992 because of the potential incidental harvest of ESA-listed residual sockeye, visually indistinguishable from kokanee. Modification 2 is requested for 1996 only. Permit 844 expires on April 30, 1998.

Those individuals requesting a hearing (see **ADDRESSES**) should set out the specific reasons why a hearing on any of these applications would be appropriate. The holding of such hearing is at the discretion of the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA. All statements and opinions contained in these application summaries are those of the applicants and do not necessarily reflect the views of NMFS.

Dated: March 6, 1996.

Ann D. Terbush,

Chief, Permits and Documentation Division,
Office of Protected Resources, National
Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 96-5750 Filed 3-11-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-F

Patent and Trademark Office

Notice of Hearings and Request for Comments on Issues Relating to Patent Protection for Nucleic Acid Sequences

AGENCY: Patent and Trademark Office, Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of hearings and request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Patent and Trademark Office (PTO) will hold public hearings, and it requests comments, on issues relating to patent protection for nucleic acid sequences. Interested members of the public are invited to testify at public hearings and to present written comments on any of the topics outlined in the supplementary information section of this notice.

DATES: Public hearings will be held on Tuesday, April 16, 1996, from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m., and Tuesday, April 23, 1996, from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m.

Those wishing to present oral testimony at any of the hearings must request an opportunity to do so no later than Friday, April 12, 1996, for the April 16 hearing, or Friday, April 19, 1996, for the April 23 hearing.

Speakers may provide a written copy of their testimony for inclusion in the record of the proceedings no later than Monday, May 6, 1996.

Written comments will be accepted by the PTO until April 23, 1996.

Written comments and transcripts of the hearings will be available for public inspection on or about Monday, May 13, 1996.

ADDRESSES: The April 16 hearings will be held from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. at the University of California, San Diego, International Center, 9500 Gilman Drive, La Jolla, California.

The April 23 public hearing will be held from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. in Suite 912, Commissioner's Conference Room, Crystal Park Two, 2121 Crystal Drive, Arlington, Virginia.

Requests to testify should be sent to Esther Kepplinger by telephone at (703) 308-2339, by facsimile transmission at (703) 305-3601, or by mail marked to her attention addressed to the Assistant Commissioner for Patents, Box Comments-Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231. No request for oral testimony will be accepted through electronic mail.

Written comments should be addressed to the Assistant Commissioner for Patents, Box Comments-Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231, marked to the attention of Esther Kepplinger. Comments may also be submitted by facsimile transmission at (703) 305-3601, with a confirmation copy mailed to the above address, or by electronic mail over the Internet to sequences@uspto.gov.

Written comments and transcripts of the hearings will be maintained for public inspection in Suite 520 of Crystal Park One, 2011 Crystal Drive, Arlington, Virginia. Transcripts and comments provided in machine readable format will also be available through

anonymous file transfer protocol (ftp) via the Internet (address: sequences@uspto.gov).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Esther Kepplinger by telephone at (703) 308-2339, by facsimile transmission at (703) 305-3601, by electronic mail at ekepplin@uspto.gov, or by mail marked to her attention addressed to the Assistant Commissioner for Patents, Box Comments-Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background

Biotechnology is projected to be an important growth industry from now until well into the twenty-first century, particularly in the United States, which has been a leader in this rapidly developing industry. The PTO has taken a very active role in working together with its customers to simplify and standardize PTO policies and procedures and to encourage and promote the growth of this industry. Nevertheless, PTO needs to continue to seek ways to improve its responsiveness to its customers and to more effectively address the needs of the industry. In order to address both current and future challenges, the PTO is seeking the assistance and advice of the public.

With the growth of the biotechnology industry have come significant changes in the process of research, development and commercialization of biotechnology inventions. For at least a decade, patent applications claiming nucleic acid sequences, such as genes composed of deoxyribonucleic acid ("DNA"), have been examined and granted patent rights by the PTO pursuant to 35 U.S.C. 131. These sequences typically encode known proteins or proteins for which an applicant has discovered a function. Scientific and technological advances have permitted researchers to identify large numbers of gene fragments rapidly. The ease of using automated techniques for sequencing large numbers of random nucleic acid fragments has resulted in the filing of a growing number of patent applications each claiming thousands of nucleic acid sequences. Handling patent applications containing large numbers of sequences creates a significant processing problem for the PTO. While the PTO has acquired sophisticated and costly computer hardware and software necessary to process and search applications containing such sequences, the search and examination of the sequences will significantly overtax the existing system and may necessitate the acquisition of many additional, expensive, massively parallel processor