

envelope "Atlantic Swordfish Comments."

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: William Hogarth at 301-713-2339; Kevin Foster at 508-281-9260.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The proposed regulatory amendments that are the subject of the hearings are necessary to improve management and monitoring of the U.S. Atlantic swordfish fisheries, to implement recommendations of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas, and to enhance collection of data to improve assessment of the environmental, economic, and social impacts of the fisheries.

A complete description of the measures, and the purpose and need for the proposed action, is contained in the proposed rule published April 5, 1996 (61 FR 15212) and is not repeated here. Copies of the proposed rule may be obtained by writing (see **ADDRESSES**) or calling one of the contact persons (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**).

The public hearings are scheduled as follows:

Friday, April 19, 1996, Barnegat Light, NJ, 7-10 p.m.

Barnegat Light Firehouse
West 10th Street
Barnegat Light, NJ 08006

Monday, April 22, 1996, Silver Spring, MD, 2-5:00 p.m.

NOAA Building 4, Room 1W611
(Lobby Conference Room)
1305 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Tuesday, April 23, 1996, Fairhaven, MA, 7-10 p.m.

Seaport Inn (Nantucket Room)
110 Middle Street
Fairhaven, MA 02719

Thursday, April 25, 1996, New Orleans, LA, 7-10 p.m.

Quality Inn Midtown (Napoleon Room)
3900 Tulane Avenue
New Orleans, LA 70119

The purpose of this notice is to alert the interested public of hearings and provide for public participation. These hearings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to William Hogarth by April 15, 1996 (see **ADDRESSES**).

Dated: April 8, 1996.
Richard H. Schaefer,
Director, Office of Fisheries Conservation and Management, National Marine Fisheries Service.
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50 CFR Parts 650 and 651

[I.D. 040396A]

New England Fishery Management Council; Meeting

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

ACTION: Public meeting.

SUMMARY: The New England Fishery Management Council (Council) will hold a 2-day public meeting to consider actions affecting New England fisheries in the exclusive economic zone.

DATES: The meeting will convene on Wednesday, April 17, 1996, at 10 a.m. and on Thursday, April 18, 1996, at 8:30 a.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Providence Biltmore Hotel, Kennedy Plaza, Providence, RI 02903; telephone: (401) 421-0700. Requests for special accommodations should be addressed to the New England Fishery Management Council, 5 Broadway, Saugus, MA 01906-1097; telephone: (617) 231-0422.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Douglas G. Marshall, Executive Director, New England Fishery Management Council, (617) 231-0422.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

April 17, 1996

The April 17, 1996, session will begin with reports from the Council Chairman, Council Executive Director, NMFS Regional Director, Northeast Fisheries Science Center liaison, Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council liaison, and representatives from the Coast Guard, and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. A report on the most recent meeting of the Council's Monkfish Committee will follow. Discussion will include a review of the development of management options for public hearing purposes.

The afternoon agenda will include a discussion on the gear conflict emergency regulations and the Council will explore alternatives for extending these emergency regulations, which are due to expire on June 25, 1996. Following that will be a report from the Council's Sea Scallop Committee. The Council may initiate action on a

framework adjustment to the Atlantic Sea Scallop Fishery Management Plan (Sea Scallop FMP) that would allow some vessels fishing with dredges to also use nets to harvest scallops, if they meet certain criteria. Sea scallop regulations currently prohibit dredge vessels from using nets to harvest scallops. The Herring Committee will report on its deliberations concerning internal waters processing and joint venture allocations for 1996-97.

April 18, 1996

On April 18, 1996, the Large Pelagics Committee will report to the Council on the current situation in the fisheries for pelagic sharks, swordfish, bluefin and other tunas, and on management issues and activities for those fisheries. The Marine Mammal Committee will then brief the Council on its recommendations concerning action to further reduce the bycatch of the Gulf of Maine harbor porpoise and its discussion on the status of the northern right whale. The Groundfish Committee will discuss its recommendation to initiate action on a framework adjustment to the Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan (Northeast Multispecies FMP). The adjustment would modify days-at-sea (DAS) allocated to sea scallop net vessels. A second framework adjustment may be initiated for the purpose of implementing gillnet effort restrictions to replace those measures currently proposed in Amendment 7 to the Northeast Multispecies FMP. The Council meeting will conclude with a discussion of the Enforcement Committee's recommendations on measures contained in the Amendment 7 proposed rule and other broader enforcement issues. Any other outstanding business will be addressed at the end of the day.

Abbreviated Rulemaking Action—Atlantic Sea Scallops

At the recommendation of its Scallop Committee, the Council will consider initial action on Framework Adjustment 8 to the Sea Scallop FMP under the framework for abbreviated rulemaking procedure contained in 50 CFR 650.40. The Council proposes to allow vessels that have used a scallop dredge 5 times or less from 1998 through 1994 to continue to use a net to catch scallops. Other options for determining whether it is impractical for vessels to use dredges include a change of owners, total refitting of the vessel, and horsepower limits.

Abbreviated Rulemaking Action—
Northeast Multispecies

The Council will consider initial action on Framework Adjustment 15 to the Northeast Multispecies FMP under the framework for abbreviated rulemaking procedure contained in 50 CFR 651.40. The action is intended to further reduce the bycatch of harbor porpoise in the Gulf of Maine sink gillnet fishery by increasing the area and possibly changing the time period for the closure referred to as the Northeast Area, currently in place from August 15 through September 13 of each fishing year.

Two additional framework adjustments to the Multispecies FMP may be initiated. One would adjust groundfish DAS allocations to scallop net vessels and the other would implement alternative gillnet effort reduction measures to replace Amendment 7 proposals.

The Council will consider public comments at a minimum of two Council meetings prior to making any final recommendations to the Director, Northeast Region, NMFS (Regional Director) under the provisions for abbreviated rulemaking cited above. If the Regional Director concurs with the

measures proposed by the Council, he will publish them as a final rule in the Federal Register.

This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Douglas G. Marshall (see **ADDRESSES**) at least 5 days prior to the meeting date.

Dated: April 8, 1996.

Richard H. Schaefer,
*Director, Office of Fisheries Conservation and
Management, National Marine Fisheries
Service.*

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