

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

Dated: July 27, 2022.

Rey Israel Marquez,

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

[FR Doc. 2022–16439 Filed 7–29–22; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648–XC123]

Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act; General Provisions for Domestic Fisheries; Applications for Exempted Fishing Permits

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

ACTION: Notice; request for comments.

SUMMARY: NMFS has determined that eight exempted fishing permit (EFP) applications warrant further consideration and is requesting public comment on the applications. All EFP applicants request an exemption from a single prohibition (the use of unauthorized gear to harvest highly migratory species (HMS)) under the Fishery Management Plan for the United States (U.S.) West Coast Fisheries for Highly Migratory Species (HMS FMP) to test the effects and efficacy of using standard deep-set buoy gear (DSBG), and/or deep-set linked buoy gear (DSLBG), to harvest swordfish and other HMS off of the U.S. West Coast.

DATES: Comments must be submitted in writing by August 31, 2022.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments on this document, identified by NOAA–NMFS–2022–0063, by any of the following methods:

- *Electronic Submission:* Submit all electronic public comments via the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal. Go to www.regulations.gov and enter NOAA–NMFS–2022–0063 Click the “Comment” icon, complete the required fields, and enter or attach your comments. EFP applications will be available under Relevant Documents through the same link.

- *Mail:* Attn: Chris Fanning, NMFS West Coast Region, 501 W Ocean Blvd., Suite 4200, Long Beach, CA 90802. Include the identifier “NOAA–NMFS–2022–0063” in the comments.

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

Instructions: Comments sent by any other method, to any other address or

individual, or received after the end of the comment period, may not be considered by NMFS. All comments received are a part of the public record, and will be posted for public viewing on www.regulations.gov without change. All personal identifying information (*e.g.*, name, address, etc.), confidential business information, or otherwise sensitive information submitted voluntarily by the sender will be publicly accessible. NMFS will accept anonymous comments (enter “N/A” in the required fields if you wish to remain anonymous).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Chris Fanning, NMFS, West Coast Region, 562–980–4198.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: DSBG fishing trials have occurred for the past 11 years (2011–2015, research years; 2015–2021, EFP years) in the U.S. West Coast Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) off California. The data collected from this fishing activity have demonstrated DSBG to achieve about a 95 percent marketable catch composition. Non-marketable catch rates have remained low and all non-marketable catch were released alive. Due to DSBG being actively tended, strikes are capable of being detected within minutes of a hooking on the line; as a result, all catches can be tended quickly, with catch brought to the vessel in good condition. To date, DSBG has had five observed or reported interactions with protected species, four Northern elephant seals and one loggerhead sea turtle, which were not seriously injured and were released alive due to the quick strike detection of the gear. Northern elephant seals are protected by the Marine Mammal Protection Act, and loggerhead sea turtles are protected by the Endangered Species Act.

DSLBG trials have produced similar data to DSBG activities. Swordfish and other marketable species have represented about 90 percent of the catch. Non-marketable species are released alive due to DSLBG quick strike detection and active gear tending. To date, there have been no observed or reported interactions with protected species using DSLBG.

At its June 2022 meeting, the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) received fourteen applications for EFPs in time for review and recommended that NMFS issue eight of these EFPs to authorize use of DSBG and/or DSLBG and recommended further Council consideration of the remaining six EFP applications at its September 2022 meeting. Council recommendations can be found on the June 2022 meeting Decision Document here, <https://www.pcouncil.org/june-2022-decision-summary-document/#highly-migratory-species-toc-745c05cb-bb34-4795-a2fd-4ef546ec7a96>.

www.pcouncil.org/june-2022-decision-summary-document/#highly-migratory-species-toc-745c05cb-bb34-4795-a2fd-4ef546ec7a96.

At this time, NMFS is requesting public comment on the eight DSBG EFP applications recommended by the Council in June 2022. NMFS will take the Council’s comments into consideration along with public comments on whether or not to issue these EFPs. If all eight of the June 2022 Council recommended applications are approved, a total of 59 vessels would be allowed to fish with permitted exemptions from the prohibitions related to unauthorized fishing gears used to target swordfish within the U.S. EEZ under the HMS FMP throughout the duration of their respective EFPs. Forty-two of the vessels would be permitted to fish with DSBG only, and 17 of the vessels would be permitted to fish using both DSBG and DSLBG. Aside from the exemption described above, vessels fishing under an EFP would be subject to all other regulations implemented in the HMS FMP, including measures to protect sea turtles, marine mammals, and seabirds.

NMFS will consider all public comments submitted in response to this **Federal Register** notice prior to issuance of any EFP. Additionally, NMFS has analyzed the effects of issuing DSBG and DSLBG EFPs in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act and NOAA’s Administrative Order 216–6, as well as for compliance with other applicable laws, including Section 7(a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), which requires the agency to consider whether the proposed action is likely to jeopardize the continued existence and recovery of any endangered or threatened species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat.

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

Dated: July 27, 2022.

Jennifer M. Wallace,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648–XC219]

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC); Public Meetings

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and

Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice; public meetings.

SUMMARY: Several fishery management bodies on the East Coast of the U.S. are convening two public webinars to continue work on the East Coast Climate Change Scenario Planning initiative. This is a joint effort of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, the New England Fishery Management Council, the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, and NOAA Fisheries. See

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION for agenda details.

DATES: These webinars will be held on Wednesday, August 17, 2022, from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. and Tuesday, August 23, 2022, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The meetings will be held via webinar. Connection information will be posted to the calendar prior to the meeting at www.mafmc.org.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D., Executive Director, Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, telephone: (302) 526-5255.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background: Over the past year, East Coast fishery management bodies have been collaborating on a climate change scenario planning initiative designed to prepare fishing communities and fishery managers for an era of climate change. The goals of this project are to assess how climate change might affect stock distribution and availability of East Coast marine fisheries over the next 20 years and to identify the implications for fishery management and governance.

In June 2022, a group of about 70 stakeholders attended a workshop to develop an initial set of scenarios, describing several different possible futures facing East Coast fisheries out to 2042. The next step in the scenario planning process will be two scenario deepening webinars to be held in August 2022. These webinars will offer all interested stakeholders an opportunity to review, validate, and add details to the initial scenarios. Each 2-hour session will begin with an overview of the outputs and draft stories from the initial scenarios. Webinar participants will then have an opportunity to add comments and suggestions to make the scenarios more plausible, challenging, relevant, memorable, and divergent. For each scenario, participants will be encouraged to imagine specific examples about impacts to particular species, regions, and communities.

Participants only need to attend *one* of the two webinars. Registration information will be made available on the initiative web page at: <https://www.mafmc.org/climate-change-scenario-planning>. A summary of the draft scenarios is being developed and will be posted to the same web page once available. Participants are encouraged to review this summary before the webinars and come prepared to share comments on the specific scenarios.

The outcome of the two webinars will be a more detailed set of scenarios that will be used as a platform for later stages of the process, looking specifically at how fishery management and governance must change to be prepared for a future of climate change.

Special Accommodations

These meetings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aid should be directed to Shelley Spedden, (302) 526-5251, at least 5 days prior to the meeting date.

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

Dated: July 27, 2022.

Rey Israel Marquez,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648-XC214]

New England 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 New England Fishery Management Council (Council) is scheduling a public meeting of its Habitat Committee to consider actions affecting New England fisheries in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ). This meeting will be held in-person with a webinar option. Recommendations from this group will be brought to the full Council for formal consideration and action, if appropriate.

DATES: This hybrid meeting will be held on Thursday, August 18, 2022, at 9 a.m. Webinar registration URL information: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/8844799612808002062>.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Four Points by Sheraton, One Audubon Road, Wakefield, MA 01880; telephone: (781) 245-9300.

Council address: New England Fishery Management Council, 50 Water Street, Mill 2, Newburyport, MA 01950.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Thomas A. Nies, Executive Director, New England Fishery Management Council; telephone: (978) 465-0492.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Agenda

The Committee plans to review a final report from Exempted Fishing Permit project #19066 related to clam dredge-based surveys within the Great South Channel Habitat Management Area and then discuss the utility of the study for managing fishing gear impacts in the area. The Committee also will: (1) receive updates on Blue Water Fisheries offshore aquaculture project and development of the required Environmental Impact Statement; (2) discuss the potential scope and objectives for a related Council action to authorize Atlantic salmon aquaculture in the EEZ; (3) discuss ongoing offshore wind development activities including opportunities for comment; and (4) discuss potential 2023 habitat-related work priorities. Other business may be discussed as necessary.

Although non-emergency issues not contained in this agenda may come before this group for discussion, those issues may not be the subject of formal action during this meeting. Action will be restricted to those issues specifically listed in this notice and any issues arising after publication of this notice that require emergency action under section 305(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, provided the public has been notified of the Council's intent to take final action to address the emergency.

Special Accommodations

This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Thomas A. Nies, Executive Director, at (978) 465-0492, at least 5 days prior to the date.

This meeting will be recorded. Consistent with 16 U.S.C. 1852, a copy of the recording is available upon request.

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

Dated: July 27, 2022.

Rey Israel Marquez,

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

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