

Zone that are reasonably likely to affect any land or water use or natural resources of the Minnesota Coastal Zone must be consistent to the maximum extent practicable with the enforceable policies of the MLSCP. In addition, activities within or outside the Minnesota Coastal Zone requiring a Federal license or permit listed in the P/FEIS, and Federal financial assistance to state agencies and local governments that are reasonably likely to affect any land or water use or natural resource of the Minnesota Coastal Zone must be consistent with the enforceable policies of the MLSCP.

Part V, Chapter 3 of the P/FEIS identifies the enforceable policies of the Minnesota program, Part V, Chapter 6 of the P/FEIS as well as the CZMA regulations at 15 CFR part 930, identifies Federally licensed or permitted activities subject to the Federal consistency requirements and provides specific procedures to be used in the Federal/State coordination process.

ADDRESSES: For further information please contact Neil Christerson at (301) 713-3113, Extension 167; or via fax at (301) 713-4367; or via e-mail at neil.christerson@noaa.gov

(Federal Domestic Assistance Catalog 11.419 Coastal Zone Management Program Administration)

Dated: August 6, 1999.

John Oliver,

*Director, Management and Budget Office,
National Ocean Service.*

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[Docket No. 980212037-8142-02; I.D. 080499A]

RIN 0648-AJ87

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone off Alaska; Prohibited Species Donation Program

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

ACTION: Selection of an authorized distributor.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces the selection of Northwest Food Strategies (NFS) as an authorized distributor for purposes of distributing Pacific salmon to economically disadvantaged individuals under the prohibited species donation (PSD) program. These

salmon are caught incidentally during groundfish fishing operations off Alaska. This action is necessary to comply with provisions of the PSD Program.

DATES: Effective August 16, 1999, through August 16, 2002.

ADDRESSES: Copies of the PSD Permit for Salmon may be obtained from the Sustainable Fisheries Division, NMFS, Alaska Region, P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802-21668, Attn: Lori Gravel. Copies of Amendments 50/50 and the Environmental Assessment/Regulatory Impact Review (EA/RIR) prepared for the amendments may be obtained from the same address.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Sue Salveson, 907-586-7228.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Fishing for groundfish by U.S. vessels in the exclusive economic zone of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA) and Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI) is managed by NMFS according to the Fishery Management Plan for the Groundfish Fishery of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Area and the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Gulf of Alaska (FMPs). These FMPs were prepared by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1801, *et seq.*) (Magnuson-Stevens Act). Regulations governing the Alaska groundfish fisheries appear at 50 CFR parts 600 and 679.

NMFS approved Amendments 26/29 to the BSAI and GOA FMPs, respectively, on July 10, 1996, and implemented a Salmon Donation Program. These amendments were superseded by Amendments 50/50 to the FMPs, which were approved by NMFS on May 6, 1998, and authorize the PSD Program for salmon and Pacific halibut. A final rule implementing Amendments 50/50 was published in the **Federal Register** on June 12, 1998 (63 FR 32144). A full description of, and background information on the PSD Program may be found in the preamble to the proposed rules for Amendments 26/29 and 50/50 (May 16, 1996, 61 FR 24750 and March 4, 1998, 63 FR 10583, respectively).

Regulations at § 679.26 authorize the voluntary distribution of Pacific salmon taken incidentally in the groundfish trawl fisheries off Alaska to economically disadvantaged individuals by tax-exempt organizations through an authorized distributor. The Regional Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), may select one or more tax-exempt organizations to

be authorized distributors, as defined by § 679.2, based on the information submitted by applicants under § 679.26. After review of qualified applicants, NMFS must announce the selection of authorized distributor(s) in the **Federal Register** and issue the selected distributor(s) PSD permits.

On June 29, 1999, the Regional Administrator received an application from NFS. This application was submitted to renew an existing PSD permit issued to NFS on August 16, 1996 (August 16, 1996, 61 FR 42591), which authorized the voluntary distribution of Pacific salmon taken incidentally in groundfish trawl fisheries off Alaska through August 16, 1999. The Regional Administrator reviewed the application and determined that it provided the required information and that NFS met the requirements for an authorized distributor. As required by § 679.26(b)(2), the Regional Administrator based his selection on the following criteria:

1. *The number and qualifications of applicants for PSD permits.* As of the date of this notice, only the application from NFS has been received to distribute salmon taken incidentally in the Alaska groundfish trawl fisheries. NFS has been coordinating the distribution of salmon taken incidentally in these fisheries since 1993 under exempted fishing permits and the Salmon Donation Program. NFS employs independent seafood quality control experts to ensure product quality and has received support from cold storage facilities and common carriers servicing the areas where Pacific salmon are donated.

2. *The number of harvesters and the quantity of salmon that applicants can effectively administer.* The number of processors and vessels currently participating in the PSD program administered by NSF include: 4 shoreside processors, 11 catcher/processor vessels, and 47 catcher vessels. According to its application, NFS has the capacity to receive and distribute salmon from as many as 40 processors and their associated catcher vessels. In 1996, 1997, and 1998, NFS processed 102,735 lbs, 212,143 lbs, and 93,751 lbs, respectively, of salmon for distribution under a food bank program. NMFS does not have information to convert accurately these weights to numbers of salmon. Nonetheless, assuming a recovery rate of 30 percent and an average recovered weight of 8 lbs per fish, the above poundages could represent between 39,000 and 88,400 fish.

3. *The anticipated level of salmon incidental catch based on salmon incidental catch from previous years.* During 1997 and 1998, about 118,000 and 128,000 salmon, respectively, were caught incidentally in the BSAI groundfish trawl fisheries. Another 18,500 and 30,000 salmon, respectively, were taken in the GOA trawl fisheries.

4. *The potential number of vessels and processors participating in the groundfish trawl fisheries.* In 1997, about 8 shoreside processors, 59 trawl catcher/processors, 3 motherships, and 113 trawl catcher vessels participated in the BSAI groundfish trawl fisheries. During the same year, about 18 shoreside processors, 29 trawl catcher/processors, and 174 trawl catcher vessels participated in the GOA groundfish trawl fisheries.

This PSD permit is in effect for a 3-year period from the publication date of this notice unless suspended or revoked. It may not be transferred; however it may be renewed following the application procedures in § 679.26.

If the authorized distributor modifies any information on the PSD permit application submitted under § 679.26(b)(1)(xi) or (b)(1)(xiii), the authorized distributor must submit a modified list of participants or a modified list of delivery locations to the Regional Administrator.

This permit may be suspended, modified, or revoked under 15 CFR part 904 for noncompliance with terms and conditions specified in the permit or for a violation of this section or other regulations in 50 CFR part 679.

Classification

This action is taken under 50 CFR 679.26.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 773 *et seq.*, 1408 *et seq.*, and 3631 *et seq.*

Dated: August 9, 1999.

Bruce C. Morehead,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.
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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 080499C]

Advisory Panels on Billfish and Highly Migratory Species Fisheries

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

ACTION: Notice of intent; request for nominations.

SUMMARY: NMFS solicits nominations for the Billfish and Highly Migratory Species (HMS) advisory panels (APs). The purpose of the APs is to assist NMFS in the collection and evaluation of information relevant to the development of management plans, plan amendments, and regulatory amendments for Atlantic billfish and for Atlantic tunas, swordfish, and sharks. The APs include representatives from all interests in HMS fisheries.

DATES: Nominations must be submitted on or before September 13, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Nominations should be submitted by mail to Rebecca Lent, Highly Migratory Species Management Division, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD, 20910, or by fax: 301-713-1917.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jill Stevenson or Alicon Morgan at (301) 713-2347.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

In accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, (Magnuson-Stevens Act), 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*, as amended by the Sustainable Fisheries Act, Public Law 104-297, two Advisory Panels (APs) were established in 1997 to consult with NMFS in the collection and evaluation of information relevant to the development of fishery management plans (FMPs), FMP amendments, and regulatory amendments under the framework provisions for Atlantic billfish and Atlantic tunas, swordfish and sharks. Members of these two APs were selected to serve for approximately 2 years. The HMS AP Statement of Organization, Practices and Procedures (SOPPs) call for half of the AP members to be replaced after 2 years, with the other half being replaced 6 months later. This staggered renewal process was designed to allow for a more gradual adjustment as the AP members are replaced. The HMS AP SOPPs further state that, of the 22 non-federal members of the AP, 8 are representatives of the commercial fisheries for Atlantic HMS, 7 are representatives of the recreational fisheries for Atlantic HMS, 6 are from the academic and environmental community active in the conservation and management of Atlantic HMS, and 1 is from the U.S. Advisory Committee to the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT). The Billfish AP SOPPs indicate that the membership term for all members of the

Billfish AP expired June 1, 1999. Of the 7 non-federal voting members of the Billfish AP, 4 are representatives of the recreational fisheries for Atlantic HMS, 1 is a representative of commercial fisheries for whom billfish are incidental catch or bycatch, 1 is a representative of the environmental organizations active in the conservation and management of Atlantic billfish, and 1 is a representative of the academic community.

Five additional members of the HMS AP include one representative each of the New England Fishery Management Council, the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, and the Caribbean Fishery Management Council. The HMS AP also includes 22 *ex-officio* participants: 20 representatives of the constituent states and 2 representatives of the constituent interstate commissions: the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission.

Five additional voting members of the Billfish AP include one representative each of the New England Fishery Management Council, the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, and the Caribbean Fishery Management Council. The Billfish AP also includes 23 non-voting members: 20 representatives of the constituent states, 2 representatives of the constituent interstate commissions; the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission; and the chair, or his or her designee, of the U.S. Advisory Committee to ICCAT.

In order to determine which HMS AP members are to be replaced within 2 years and which within 2 1/2 years, NMFS selected every odd-numbered member from an alphabetically ordered list of the original appointees. Nevertheless, NMFS is soliciting nominations for replacing the entire membership of the AP at this time, with some new members to begin their 2-year term on October 11, 1999, and others on April 6, 2000. Selection of AP members will not be limited to those that are nominated.

The following HMS AP members' terms expire October 11, 1999: Recreational representatives - Joe McBride, Ray Bogan, Bob Eakes and Mark Sampson; Commercial representatives - Rich Ruais and Peter Weiss; and academic/environmental representatives: John Dean, Sonja