

other for the period December 1, 1998, through May 31, 1999.

(4) The annual directed fishery quota for the South Atlantic swordfish stock for the period June 1, 1999, through May 31, 2000, is 289 mt dw and is divided into two equal semiannual quotas of 144.5 mt dw, one for the period June 1 through November 30, 1999, and the other for the period December 1, 1999, through May 31, 2000.

(5) The annual directed fishery quota for the South Atlantic swordfish stock for the period June 1, 2000, through May 31, 2001, is 289 mt dw and is divided into two equal semiannual quotas of 144.5 mt dw, one for the period June 1 through November 30, 2000, and the other for the period December 1, 2000, through May 31, 2001.

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(d) *Annual adjustments.* (1) As necessary, NMFS will reevaluate the annual directed fishery quotas for the north and south Atlantic swordfish stocks and the annual incidental catch quota for the north Atlantic swordfish stock. NMFS will consider the best available scientific information regarding the following factors:

- (i) Swordfish stock abundance assessments;
- (ii) Swordfish stock age and size composition;
- (iii) Catch and effort in the swordfish fishery; and
- (iv) Consistency with ICCAT recommendations.

(2) Except for the carryover provisions of paragraph (d)(3), of this section, NMFS will announce any adjustments to the annual quotas by publication of a notice in the Federal Register, providing for a 30-day minimum comment period. NMFS will prepare a report of its evaluations, a regulatory impact review, and an environmental assessment, and such documents will be made available to the public. The Assistant Administrator will take into consideration all information received during this comment period and will publish a final rule in the **Federal Register**.

(3) If consistent with applicable ICCAT recommendations, total landings above or below the specific north Atlantic or south Atlantic swordfish annual quota will be subtracted from, or added to, the following year's quota for that management area. Any adjustments to the 12-month directed fishery quota will be apportioned equally between the two semiannual periods. NMFS will publish notification in the **Federal Register** of any adjustment and of the apportionment made under this paragraph (d)(3), of this section.

(e) *Inseason adjustments.* (1) NMFS may adjust the December 1 through May 31 semiannual directed fishery quota and gear quotas to reflect actual catches during the June 1 through November 30 semiannual period, provided that the 12-month directed fishery and gear quotas are not exceeded.

(2) If NMFS determines that the annual incidental catch quota will not be taken before the end of the fishing year, the excess quota may be allocated to the directed fishery quotas.

(3) If NMFS determines that it is necessary to close the directed fishery, any estimated overharvest or underharvest of the directed fishery quota available immediately prior to that closure will be used to adjust the annual incidental catch quota accordingly.

(4) NMFS will publish notification in the **Federal Register** of any inseason adjustment and its apportionment made under this paragraph (e).

(f) *Gear allocations.* If NMFS determines that the annual or semiannual directed fishery or incidental catch quotas must be adjusted pursuant to paragraph (d) or (e) of this section, the annual or semiannual gear quotas will be adjusted so that the new gear quotas represent the same proportion (percentage) of the adjusted quota as they did of the quota before adjustment, provided such adjusted gear quotas are consistent with applicable requirements under the Endangered Species Act and the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 648

[I.D. 060298A]

New England Fishery Management Council; Public 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 on June 24 and 25, 1998, to consider actions affecting New England fisheries in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ).

DATES: The meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 24, 1998, at 10 a.m.

and on Thursday, June 25, 1998, at 8:30 a.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Peabody Marriott Hotel, 8A Centennial Drive, Peabody, MA 01960; telephone (978) 977-9700. Requests for special accommodations should be addressed to the New England Fishery Management Council, 5 Broadway, Saugus, MA 01906-1097; telephone: (781) 231-0422.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Paul J. Howard, Executive Director, New England Fishery Management Council, (781) 231-0422.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Wednesday, June 24, 1998

At 9 a.m., the Council will convene a meeting of its Interspecies Committee to develop comments on NMFS' proposed list of authorized fisheries and gear and on draft proposed regulations for fishing vessel buyback programs. The full Council meeting will begin at 10 a.m. with discussions on several experimental fishery proposals for sea scallops. The Administrator, Northeast Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), will seek public input at this time on a proposal to allow the use of Atlantic sea scallop dredge vessels in the Northeast Multispecies Georges Bank closed areas to investigate scallop growth, natural mortality, and population densities and to collect data that would assist the Council in the development of a scallop area management program. The Interspecies Committee will then review their comments on the fisheries/gear list and proposed buyback program regulations and, if necessary, modify them based on feedback from the Council. The Habitat Committee will approve proposed essential fish habitat (EFH) designations and alternatives for American plaice, pollock, redfish, whiting, sea scallops, Atlantic salmon, winter and windowpane flounder, and white hake for purposes of preparing a public hearing document. The Committee also will ask for overall approval of the EFH Amendment public hearing document.

Thursday, June 25, 1998

The meeting will begin with reports from the Council Chairman, Executive Director, Regional Administrator, Northeast Fisheries Science Center and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council liaisons, and representatives of the Coast Guard and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. Following reports, the Council will provide guidance to the Spiny Dogfish Committee on draft management measures for inclusion in the fishery

management plan public hearing document. The Overfishing Definition Review Panel will present its final report on definitions revised or developed to meet the requirements of the Sustainable Fisheries Act. During the afternoon session, the Enforcement Committee will review its evaluation of the effectiveness of current management measures, including trip limits, closed areas, days-at-sea, and NMFS penalty schedule. The Whiting Committee will ask the Council to approve additional management measures to be considered at public hearings, including a moratorium on commercial permits, limited access qualification criteria, mesh size restrictions, trip limits, and other options for the northern and southern management areas. The Groundfish Committee Chairman will review the Committee's plan to address Gulf of Maine cod management proposals and summarize the most recent Canadian management information on Georges Bank groundfish

stocks. Prior to addressing any other outstanding business, the Council will consider interim management measures for the monkfish fishery.

Announcement of Experimental Fishery Applications

The Regional Administrator will consider the authorization of two experimental fisheries based on recently submitted proposals. The first would allow the harvest of dogfish using longlines in the Nantucket Shoals Dogfish Exemption Area. The second proposal would allow the applicant to study the effects of a modified whiting net on flatfish bycatch in the Southern New England Regulated Mesh Area. Exempted fishing permits to conduct experimental fishing would be issued to exempt participating vessels from various restrictions in the Atlantic Sea Scallop and Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plans.

Although other issues not contained in this agenda may come before this

Council for discussion, in accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, those issues may not be the subject of formal Council action during this meeting. Council action will be restricted to those issues specifically listed in this notice.

Special Accommodations

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

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

Dated: June 4, 1998.

Richard W. Surdi,

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