

& Radiation Docket # A-96-50, Room 1500-M (Mail Code 6102), 401 M Street SW., Washington, DC 20460. Copies of information relevant to this NPRM are available for inspection in public docket A-96-50 at the above address, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For information concerning the NPRM, contact Linda Hormes, Vehicle Programs and Compliance Division, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2000 Traverwood, Ann Arbor MI 48105, Phone (734) 214-4502, E-mail: hormes.linda@epa.gov.

Dated: September 4, 1998.

Robert Perciasepe,

Assistant Administrator, Air and Radiation.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 648

[I.D. 083198D]

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 to consider actions affecting New England fisheries in the exclusive economic zone. The full Council meeting will begin after the joint meeting of the Council's Herring Committee and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's (ASMFC) Herring Section.

DATES: The meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 23, 1998, at 1:30 p.m. and on Thursday, September 24, 1998, at 8:30 a.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Tavern on the Harbor, 30 Western Avenue, Gloucester, MA 01930; telephone (978) 283-4200. Requests for special accommodations should be addressed to the New England Fishery Management Council, 5 Broadway, Saugus, MA 01906-1036; telephone: (781) 231-0422.

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

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Wednesday, September 23, 1998

The morning session will be a joint meeting of the Council's Herring Committee and ASMFC Herring Section to select proposed management measures for the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for the Atlantic Herring Fishery. There will also be a discussion and possible recommendation of a control date for the herring fishery and consideration of two requests for foreign-directed fishing and joint venture herring allocations.

The full Council meeting will begin in the afternoon with reports on recent activities from the Council Chairman; Executive Director; the Acting Regional Administrator, Northeast Region, NMFS; the Northeast Fisheries Science Center and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council liaisons; and representatives of the Coast Guard, the ASMFC, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Habitat Committee's report will be presented, after which approval will be requested for the Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) Amendment documents, including the Council's Habitat Policy, the identification of fishing threats and non-fishing threats to EFH, EFH conservation and enhancement measures, research and information needs, and the EFH strategic plan.

Thursday, September 24, 1998

The meeting will begin with the Herring Committee Report and a request for approval of the Atlantic Herring FMP proposed management measures, following review of public comments and committee and advisory panel recommendations. Additionally, the Council may also approve a control date for the herring fishery and approval of two requests for foreign-directed fishing and joint venture herring allocations. Final approval is also expected for the Northeast Multispecies FMP Amendment 9 submission documents (description of measures, draft proposed rule, and summary of impacts).

Amendment 9 includes new overfishing definitions and the specification of optimum yield (OY), measures to rebuild Atlantic halibut, an increase in the minimum size for winter flounder to 13 inches (33 cm), postponement of the mandatory use of electronic vessel monitoring systems, a prohibition on the use of "streetsweeper" trawl gear, and the ability to approve individual aquaculture projects through the established framework adjustment process. Approval of the Groundfish Committee's recommendations on management strategies for cod to be transmitted as guidance to the Council's

Multispecies Monitoring Committee is also scheduled. The Scallop Committee will ask the Council for final approval of the Atlantic Sea Scallop FMP Amendment 7 submission documents (description of measures, draft proposed rule, and summary of impacts). Amendment 7 includes a scallop rebuilding program, a new overfishing definition, the specification of OY, continuation of the Mid-Atlantic closed areas, an annual review and adjustment process, and a system for closing and opening areas to improve yield-per-recruit. The amendment also will include the following additional measures that may be implemented through a framework adjustment to the FMP: Leasing of days-at-sea, provided there is a full set of public hearings; scallop size restrictions, except a minimum individual meat size; and the approval of individual aquaculture projects. The Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee will present a briefing on the sea scallop overfishing definition and the scientific information that formed the basis for the most recent proposed management measures. The Interspecies Committee Chairman will ask for approval of management measures for the Vessel Permit Consistency Amendment. The amendment would improve consistency among New England and Mid-Atlantic Council FMPs concerning vessel permitting and upgrading (the action would amend the Council's Atlantic Sea Scallop, Northeast Multispecies, and American Lobster FMPs; and the Mid-Atlantic Council's Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass FMP, Atlantic Mackerel, Squid and Butterfish FMP, and Atlantic Surf Clam and Ocean Quahog FMP). Finally, the Interspecies Committee may also identify further vessel upgrade issues for the Council and ask for development of a response to a letter from the Federal Investment Task Force. The meeting will conclude once the Council has addressed any other outstanding business.

Announcement of an Experimental Fishery Application

The Regional Administrator is considering the authorization of a limited experimental fishery conducted by the Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC) on the NOAA Research Vessel (R/V) Delaware II. The experimental fishery would be conducted to evaluate trawl performance of trawl gear used on NOAA research vessels in resource surveys routinely conducted by the NEFSC. An exempted fishing permit would be issued to exempt the R/V Delaware II from fishery regulations that

would otherwise prohibit the R/V's activities.

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 document.

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: September 4, 1998.

Richard W. Surdi,

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

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