

#1



New England Fishery Management Council

50 WATER STREET | NEWBURYPORT, MASSACHUSETTS 01950 | PHONE 978 465 0492 | FAX 978 465 3116
John Pappalardo, *Chairman* | Paul J. Howard, *Executive Director*

March 18, 2011

Ms. Patricia Kurkul
Regional Administrator
NMFS, Northeast Regional Office
55 Great Republic Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930

RE: Comments on REDNET EFP Proposal

Dear Pat:

The New England Fishery Management Council has no objection to the experimental fishery proposal noted above published in the *Federal Register* on March 8, 2011.

If you have any question please contact me.

Sincerely,



Paul J. Howard
Executive Director

the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), has primary responsibility for managing fishery-related activities. These agencies are required to consult with the Secretary of Defense, the United States (U.S.) Coast Guard, and the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in managing the monument. A subsequent Secretary of the Interior action on January 16, 2009, delegated management responsibilities for the monument to the Fish and Wildlife Service through, and placed two of the units (the Mariana Trench and Volcanic Units) within, the National Wildlife Refuge System as the Mariana Trench and Mariana Arc of Fire National Wildlife Refuges.

Management activities are anticipated to include public education programs and public outreach regarding the coral reef ecosystem and related marine resources and species of the monument and efforts to conserve them; traditional access by indigenous persons, for culturally significant subsistence, cultural and religious uses within the monument; a program to assess and promote monument-related scientific exploration and research, tourism, and recreational and economic activities and opportunities in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI); a process to consider requests for recreational fishing permits in certain areas of the Islands Unit, based on an analysis of the likely effects of such fishing on the marine ecosystems of these areas, sound professional judgment that such fishing will not materially interfere with or detract from the fulfillment of the purposes of this proclamation, and the extent to which such recreational fishing shall be managed as a sustainable activity; programs for monitoring and enforcement necessary to ensure that scientific exploration and research, tourism, and recreational and commercial activities do not degrade the monument's coral reef ecosystem or related marine resources or species or diminish the monument's natural character.

The Human Dimensions Research Program at NOAA Fisheries Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center is initiating a survey to support development of a management plan for the Monument. Designation of the Monument was accompanied by social debate over the merits of designation, the economic benefits, increased Federal management in the archipelago, the impacts to fishermen and fishing communities, and other effects. Now that the Monument has been established and management planning is beginning,

there is a need for research to define CNMI and Guam residents' management preferences and perceptions of effects so this information is available to managers as they develop and begin to implement the plan. The survey contains questions on awareness, knowledge, and attitudes regarding the Monument, preferences for management and scientific research, and level of interest in becoming involved in Monument management and outreach activities. Additional questions include experiences with and attitudes toward existing uses of coastal and marine resources, to provide a context for interpreting responses regarding the Monument.

II. Method of Collection

Data will be collected through a telephone survey of a random sample of adult members of Guam and CNMI households.

III. Data

OMB Control Number: None.

Form Number: None.

Type of Review: Regular submission.

Affected Public: Individuals or households.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 800.

Estimated Time per Response: 20 minutes.

Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours: 267.

Estimated Total Annual Cost to Public: \$0.

IV. Request for Comments

Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden (including hours and cost) of the proposed collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized and/or included in the request for OMB approval of this information collection; they also will become a matter of public record.

Dated: March 3, 2011.

Gwellnar Banks,

Management Analyst, Office of the Chief Information Officer.

[FR Doc. 2011-5150 Filed 3-7-11; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[0648-XA239]

Magnuson-Stevens Act Provisions; General Provisions for Domestic Fisheries; Application for Exempted Fishing Permit

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

ACTION: Notice; request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Assistant Regional Administrator for Sustainable Fisheries, Northeast Region, NMFS, has made a preliminary determination that the subject exempted fishing permit (EFP) application contains all the required information and warrants further consideration. The subject EFP would allow commercial fishing vessels to conduct fishing operations that are otherwise restricted by the regulations governing the fisheries of the Northeastern United States. Regulations under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act require publication of this notification to provide interested parties the opportunity to comment on applications for proposed EFPs.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before March 23, 2011.

ADDRESSES: Comments may be submitted by e-mail to NERO.EFP@noaa.gov. Written comments should be sent to Patricia A. Kurkul, Regional Administrator, NMFS, Northeast Regional Office, 55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930. Mark the outside of the envelope "Comments on the REDNET EFP." Comments may also be sent via facsimile (fax) to (978) 281-9135.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Travis Ford, Fishery Management Specialist, (978) 281-9233, fax (978) 281-9135.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Maine Department of Marine Resources (DMR) has submitted an EFP application for five vessels participating in a study titled, "REDNET: A Network to Redevelop a Sustainable Redfish (*Sebastes fasciatus*) Trawl Fishery in the Gulf of Maine (GOM)". This project is funded by the Northeast Fisheries Science Center's (NEFSC) Cooperative Research Program. The primary objective of this study is to devise strategies and means to efficiently harvest the redfish resource in the Gulf of Maine (GOM) while avoiding non-

target catch. The proposed work is to meet the following objectives: Catch and bycatch assessment of a targeted redfish fishery; bottom trawl mesh size evaluation and optimization for targeted redfish catch retention and reduction of juvenile redfish and other bycatch; redfish processing and marketing evaluation and strategies; and outreach and implementation of the project results. The anticipated results of the project are defined gear type(s) and/or time/area combinations that maximize the long-term benefit from the redfish resource while minimizing negative impacts, thereby providing a means to achieve the Acceptable Catch Limit (ACL) for a rebuilt, but largely inaccessible, redfish resource.

The EFP would exempt the vessels from the following regulations implementing the Northeast (NE) Multispecies Fishery Management Plan (FMP): NE multispecies minimum fish size for redfish, specified at 50 CFR 648.83(a); and minimum mesh size of 6.5 inches (16.5 cm) for multispecies vessels fishing in the GOM specified at 50 CFR 648.80(a)(3)(i). In addition, vessels would be exempt from the following regulations for other groundfish species for sampling purposes only: Other minimum fish size restrictions; fish possession limits; species quota closures; prohibited fish species, not including species protected under the Endangered Species Act; and gear-specific fish possession restrictions. All non-compliant fish would be discarded as soon as practicable following data collection. These exemptions would allow investigators to evaluate the optimal mesh size to harvest legal-sized redfish (22.9 cm; 9 inches) while minimizing bycatch, and to selectively harvest redfish.

Baseline data would be collected by means of 10 days of experimental redfish fishing under this EFP using 10.16-cm (4-inch) mesh in the codend of a standard groundfish trawl. Based on initial sampling, investigators intend to refine sampling levels, times, and areas as the project progresses. Investigators will review potential sources of variability and evaluate them in terms of their potential effects on results. Sources of variability include: Area fished; seasonal availability; life stage; time of day; gear; and towing speed. Catches of all legal-sized species (target and non-target) will count against the appropriate groundfish sector allocation. No fish below the minimum fish size will be landed.

During the initial experimental fishing, fishermen will be asked to fish in a commercial manner using

groundfish trawl nets equipped with a 10.16-cm (4-inch) mesh codend to maximize their legal-sized redfish catches and minimize discards. The fishermen will attempt to identify schools of redfish, set the net, catch the school, and haul back. This protocol will reduce the likelihood of towing between schools and thereby reduce bycatch based on historical experience.

Project investigators and/or technicians will be on board every experimental fishing trip and will document all catch and bycatch encountered following NE Fishery Observer Program protocols. Project personnel will estimate, when necessary, the total catch of legal and sublegal redfish per tow (separately), and then identify and weigh all other species. If there is a very large catch, the observers will follow NMFS sub-sampling protocols. Lengths of 100 individuals will be collected for redfish and other regulated species, with sub-sampling if necessary. Up to six tows will be made per trip. Tows will last between approximately 30 minutes and 1 hour, at a speed of between 3–3.5 knots, which conforms to normal fishing operations.

Bycatch and non-target species will be quantified using the “Standardized Bycatch Reporting Methodology” developed as part of the national bycatch initiative. Selectivity by size will be estimated using the ratios of cumulative size distributions from the baseline observer samples to the cumulative size distribution of redfish in NEFSC trawl surveys during the same period. Data will be entered into Excel and uploaded into the DMR biological database (MARVIN) and then transferred to NMFS and other project partners.

The initial experimental fishing activity is scheduled to start in March 2011. Ten experimental fishing days are planned over two trips of 5 days each. This initial phase will be completed by the end of April 2011. Based on the data gathered through this effort, the next 30 experimental fishing days would be allocated among the remaining three quarters of the year. It is possible that, after the initial 10 days, the project partners will decide 4-inch mesh is not ideal, and a larger mesh might be selected for the remaining trials. All experimental fishing activity is scheduled to be complete by April 2012.

If approved, the applicants may request minor modifications and extensions to the EFP throughout the course of research. EFP modifications and extensions may be granted without further public notice if they are deemed essential to facilitate completion of the

proposed research and result in only a minimal change in the scope or impacts of the initially approved EFP request.

In accordance with NAO Administrative Order 216–6, a Categorical Exclusion or other appropriate National Environmental Policy Act document would be completed prior to the issuance of the EFP. Further review and consultation may be necessary before a final determination is made to issue the EFP. After publication of this document in the **Federal Register**, the EFP, if approved, may become effective following the public comment period.

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

Dated: March 3, 2011.

Emily H. Menashes,

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

[FR Doc. 2011–5236 Filed 3–7–11; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–22–P

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Department of the Navy

Meeting of the Board of Visitors of Marine Corps University

AGENCY: Department of the Navy, DoD.

ACTION: Notice of open meeting.

SUMMARY: The Board of Visitors of the Marine Corps University (BOV MCU) will meet to review, develop and provide recommendations on all aspects of the academic and administrative policies of the University; examine all aspects of professional military education operations; and provide such oversight and advice, as is necessary, to facilitate high educational standards and cost effective operations. The Board will be focusing primarily on the internal procedures of Marine Corps University. All sessions of the meeting will be open to the public.

DATES: The meeting will be held on Friday, April 8, 2011, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at Marine Corps University President's Conference Room (Hooper Room). The address is: 2076 South Street, Quantico, Virginia 22134.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Joel Westa, Director of Academic Support, Marine Corps University Board of Visitors, 2076 South Street, Quantico, Virginia 22134, telephone number 703–784–4037.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
NORTHEAST REGION
55 Great Republic Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930-2276

Paul J. Howard, Executive Director
New England Fishery Management Council
50 Water Street, Mill 2
Newburyport, MA 01950



March 9, 2011

Re: Experimental Fishing Permit Proposal

Dear Paul J. Howard:

The regulations on exempted experimental fishing activities at 50 CFR 600.745(b)(3) require that the Regional Administrator forward copies of experimental fishing permit applications to the Regional Fishery Management Council(s), the U.S. Coast Guard, and the appropriate fishery management agencies of affected states, accompanied by the following information: (A) The effect of the proposed Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) on the target and incidental species, including the effect on any Total Allowable Catch; (B) a citation of the regulation or regulations that, without the EFP, would prohibit the proposed activity; and (C) biological information relevant to the proposal, including appropriate statements of environmental impacts, including impacts on marine mammals and threatened or endangered species. Therefore, we have attached the Federal Register notice that describes the activities proposed by the applicant.

Please respond to the following contact person with any comments you have on the experimental fishing proposal within 15 days of your receipt of this letter.

CONTACT Travis Ford
Sustainable Fisheries Division, Northeast Region, NMFS
55 Great Republic Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930
Phone: (978) 281-9233
FAX: (978) 281-9135

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

George H. Darcy
Assistant Regional Administrator
for Sustainable Fisheries

