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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 30, 2011

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

RE: Comments on UMES Monkfish RSA 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 24, 2011.

If you have any question please contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul J. Howard". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Paul J. Howard
Executive Director

grant; the Project Record Form 90-1, which collects summary data on projects; and the Sea Grant Budget Form 90-4, which provides information similar to, but more detailed than on, forms SF-424A or SF-424C.

The National Sea Grant College Program Act (33 U.S.C. 1126) provides for the designation of a public or private institution of higher education, institute, laboratory, or State or local agency as a Sea Grant college or Sea Grant institute. Applications are required for designation of Sea Grant Colleges and Sea Grant Institutes.

II. Method of Collection

Responses are made in a variety of formats, including forms and narrative submissions, via mail, fax or e-mail. The Sea Grant Project Record Form and Sea Grant Budget Form must be submitted in electronic format through grants.gov if the grant applicant has the means to do so.

III. Data

OMB Control Number: 0648-0362.
Form Number: NOAA Forms 90-1, 90-2 and 90-4.

Type of Review: Regular submission (renewal of a current information collection).

Affected Public: Not-for-profit institutions; business or other for-profit organizations; individuals or households; State, Local or Tribal Government.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 768.

Estimated Time per Response: 30 minutes for a Sea Grant Control form; 20 minutes for a Project Record Form; 15 minutes for a Sea Grant Budget form; and 20 hours for an application for designation as a Sea Grant college or Sea Grant institute.

Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours: 857.

Estimated Total Annual Cost to Public: \$1,833.

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 21, 2011.

Gwellnar Banks,

Management Analyst, Office of the Chief Information Officer.

[FR Doc. 2011-6944 Filed 3-23-11; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-KA-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XA261

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

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 (Assistant Regional Administrator), has made a preliminary determination that an Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) application contains all of the required information and warrants further consideration, and that the activities authorized under this EFP would be consistent with the goals and objectives of the Monkfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP). However, further review and consultation may be necessary before a final determination is made to issue an EFP. This would grant exemptions from monkfish days-at-sea (DAS) possession limits.

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 April 8, 2011.

ADDRESSES: You may submit written comments by any of the following methods:

- *E-mail:* nero.efp@noaa.gov. Include in the subject line "Comments on UMES Monkfish RSA EFP."

- *Mail:* Patricia A. Kurkul, Regional Administrator, NMFS, NE Regional Office, 55 Great Republic Drive,

Gloucester, MA 01930. Mark the outside of the envelope "Comments on UMES monkfish RSA EFP."

- *Fax:* (978) 281-9135.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Jason Berthiaume, Fishery Management Specialist, 978-281-9177.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: An application for an EFP was submitted by the University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES) on February 18, 2011, in support of a project preliminarily selected under the New England and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Councils' Monkfish RSA Program. The project proposes to investigate the influence of temperature on monkfish distribution and abundance. This EFP would grant an exemption from monkfish possession limits to facilitate compensation fishing to fund this research project. While conducting RSA compensation trips, participating vessels would use gillnets that are 12-inch (30.5 cm) stretch mesh with a 3.5-inch (30.5 cm) diameter gauge web that is 12 meshes deep. The nets do not exceed 300 ft (91.4 m) in length. Average soak times differ between vessels, with a range of 36 to 72 hours. Each vessel would receive two temperature and depth loggers to attach to gillnets during RSA compensation fishing trips. The loggers would collect temperature and depth at intervals of 1 hour, and would be downloaded approximately every 2 months. Catch data (number and size of monkfish) from panels with probes would be recorded by collaborating fishermen, along with information on location, depth fished, water currents, and lunar cycle. UMES plans to collect histological samples on board the fishing vessels from a subset of trips for analysis of reproductive condition. Weights and length measurements would be taken each trip from a minimum of 25 randomly selected monkfish from the nets with attached temperature probes to gain information about fish distribution.

Compensation fishing for this research would occur from May 2011 through April 2012, with a possible extension through April 2013, as authorized by the Monkfish FMP and 50 CFR 648.92(c)(1)(v). Pending a final award by NOAA Grants, UMES has been awarded 96 monkfish DAS under the Monkfish RSA Program. To facilitate compensation fishing, the applicant has requested exemptions from monkfish DAS possession limits at §§ 648.94(b)(1) and (2). The applicant has stated that these exemptions would provide vessels the flexibility they need to generate sufficient income to meet projected

costs of the research activity, while minimizing operating expenses. Based on the preliminary award of 96 DAS and projected monkfish catch rates, this would allow a total catch of 345,600 lb (156,762 kg) of whole monkfish (104,097 lb (47,218 kg) tail weight). Operating under this total landings cap, compensation fishing would continue until the goal of 345,600 lb (156,762 kg) of whole monkfish is caught, or until the awarded DAS have been fully utilized, whichever occurs first. Aside from these exemptions, fishing activity would be conducted under normal commercial practices. NMFS is considering imposing a cap on monkfish DAS possession limit exemptions for vessels operating under the monkfish RSA program due to potential effect that such exemptions may have on monkfish market price and catch rates for non-RSA vessels.

The applicant may request minor modifications and extensions to the EFP throughout the year. EFP modifications and extensions may be granted without further notice if they are deemed essential to facilitate completion of the proposed research and have minimal impacts that do not change the scope or impact of the initially approved EFP request. Any fishing activity conducted outside the scope of the exempted fishing activity would be prohibited.

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

Dated: March 21, 2011.

Margo Schulze-Haugen,

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

[FR Doc. 2011-7020 Filed 3-23-11; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XA269

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

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 (Assistant Regional Administrator), has made a preliminary determination that an Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) application contains all of the required

information and warrants further consideration and that the activities authorized under this EFP would be consistent with the goals and objectives of the Monkfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP). However, further review and consultation may be necessary before a final determination is made to issue an EFP. This EFP would grant exemptions from monkfish days-at-sea (DAS) possession limits.

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 April 8, 2011.

ADDRESSES: You may submit written comments by any of the following methods:

- *E-mail:* nero.efp@noaa.gov. Include in the subject line "Comments on GMRI Monkfish RSA EFP."

- *Mail:* Patricia A. Kurkul, Regional Administrator, NMFS, NE Regional Office, 55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930. Mark the outside of the envelope "Comments on GMRI monkfish RSA EFP."

- *Fax:* (978) 281-9135.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jason Berthiaume, Fishery Management Specialist, 978-281-9177.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: An application for an EFP was submitted by the Gulf of Maine Research Institute (GMRI) on February 23, 2011, in support of a project preliminarily selected under the New England and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Councils' Monkfish RSA Program. The project proposes to use archival tagging and age validation efforts to assess monkfish movement, age structure, and growth. This EFP would grant an exemption from monkfish possession limits to facilitate compensation fishing to fund this research project. GMRI would tag monkfish using data storage tags that would record time, pressure (depth), and temperature. GMRI would charter fishing vessels to conduct the research. The vessels would use standard commercial gear and land monkfish for sale, but sampling locations and protocol would be controlled by the researcher. The research vessels would not land any fish below the legal size for commercial purposes.

Compensation fishing for this research would occur from May 2011 through April 2012, with a possible extension through April 2013, as authorized by the Monkfish FMP and 50 CFR 648.92(c)(1)(v). Pending a final award by NOAA Grants, GMRI has been

awarded 368 monkfish DAS under the Monkfish RSA Program. To facilitate compensation fishing, the applicant has requested exemptions from monkfish DAS possession limits at 50 CFR 648.94(b)(1) and (2). The applicant stated that these exemptions would provide the vessels with flexibility to fulfill the financial needs of the project, while minimizing vessel operating expenses. Based on budget needs and an estimated monkfish price per pound, the project would need a total catch of 1,324,800 lb (600,919 kg) of whole monkfish (399,036 lb (181,000 kg) tail weight). Operating under this total landings cap, compensation fishing would continue until the goal of 1,324,800 lb (600,919 kg) of whole monkfish is caught, or until the awarded DAS have been fully utilized, whichever occurs first. Aside from these exemptions, fishing activity would be conducted under normal commercial practices. NMFS is considering imposing a cap on monkfish DAS possession limit exemptions for vessels operating under the monkfish RSA program due to potential effects that such exemptions may have on monkfish market price and catch rates for non-RSA vessels.

The applicant may request minor modifications and extensions to the EFP throughout the year. EFP modifications and extensions may be granted without further notice if they are deemed essential to facilitate completion of the proposed research and have minimal impacts that do not change the scope or impact of the initially approved EFP request. Any fishing activity conducted outside the scope of the exempted fishing activity would be prohibited.

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

Dated: March 21, 2011.

Margo Schulze-Haugen,

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

[FR Doc. 2011-7023 Filed 3-23-11; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XA270

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.



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

MAR 24 2011

Re: Experimental Fishing Permit (EFP) Proposal

Dear Paul J. Howard:

The regulations on exempted fishing activities at 50 CFR 600.745(b)(3) require that the Regional Administrator forward copies of EFP 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 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, in addition to the EFP application, we have attached the Federal Register notice that describes the activities proposed by the applicant.

University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES) submitted a complete application for an EFP on February 18, 2011, to conduct fishing activities that the regulations would otherwise prohibit. The EFP would exempt vessels from monkfish days-at-sea possession limits in the Northern and Southern Monkfish Fishery Management Areas. Fishing activity would otherwise be conducted under normal monkfish commercial gillnet fishing practices.

This study has been preliminarily selected under the 2011 Monkfish Research Set-Aside (RSA) Program. The primary goal of this study is to investigate the influence of temperature on monkfish distribution and abundance. This study is intended to provide information on the biology of monkfish that could be used to enhance the management of this species. While conducting RSA compensation trips, participating vessels would use gillnets that are 12-inch stretch mesh with a 3.5-inch diameter gauge web that is 12 meshes deep. The nets do not exceed 300 ft in length. Average soak times differ between vessels, with a range of 36 to 72 hours. Each vessel would receive two temperature and depth loggers to attach to gillnets during RSA compensation fishing trips. The loggers would collect temperature and depth at intervals of 1 hour, and would be downloaded approximately every 2 months. Catch data (number and size of monkfish) from panels with probes would be recorded by collaborating fishermen, along with information on location, depth fished, water currents, and lunar cycle. UMES plans



to collect histological samples on board the fishing vessels from a subset of trips for analysis of reproductive condition. Weights and length measurements would be taken each trip from a minimum of 25 randomly selected monkfish from the nets with attached temperature probes to gain information about fish distribution.

Pending a final award by NOAA Grants, this project will receive 96 monkfish RSA DAS. Based on the preliminary award of 96 DAS and projected monkfish catch rates, this would allow a total catch of 345,600 lb of whole monkfish, equivalent to 104,097 lb tail weight. Compensation fishing would continue until the goal of 345,600 lb of whole monkfish is caught or until the awarded DAS have been fully utilized, whichever occurs first. Compensation fishing would occur May 2011 through April 2012, with a possible extension through April 2013, as authorized by the Monkfish FMP and the regulations at 50 CFR 648.92(c)(1)(v). The applicant states that exemptions from monkfish possession limits are needed to provide vessels with the flexibility they need to make compensation fishing more cost effective and efficient for their industry partners, allowing them to generate sufficient income to meet projected costs of the research activity, while minimizing operating expenses. However, NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service is considering imposing a cap on monkfish DAS possession limit exemptions for vessels operating under the monkfish RSA program due to potential effects that such exemptions may have on monkfish market price and catch rates for non-RSA vessels.

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

Jason Berthiaume
Sustainable Fisheries Division, Northeast Region, NMFS
55 Great Republic Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930
Phone: (978) 281-9326
FAX: (978) 281-9135

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,



George H. Darcy
Assistant Regional Administrator
for Sustainable Fisheries