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New England Fishery Management Council

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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 CFFI Flounder Bycatch 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 18, 2011.

If you have any question please contact me.

Sincerely,

Paul J. Howard
Executive Director

meals, and incidentals will be the responsibility of each mission participant.

Conditions for Participation

- An applicant must submit a completed and signed mission application and supplemental application materials, including adequate information on the company's products and/or services, primary market objectives, and goals for participation. If the U.S. Department of Commerce receives an incomplete application, the Department may reject the application, request additional information, or take the lack of information into account when evaluating the applications.
- Each applicant must also certify that the products and services it seeks to export through the mission are either produced in the United States, or, if not, marketed under the name of a U.S. firm and have at least 51 percent U.S. content of the value of the finished product or service.

Selection for Participation

- Suitability of the company's products or services to the mission goals.
- Applicant's potential for business in South Africa, including likelihood of exports resulting from the mission.
- Consistency of the applicant's goals and objectives with the stated scope of the mission.

Additional factors, such as diversity of company size, type, location, and demographics, may also be considered during the selection process.

Referrals from political organizations and any documents containing references to partisan political activities (including political contributions) will be removed from an applicant's submission and not considered during the selection process.

Selection Timeline

Mission recruitment will be conducted in an open and public manner, including publication in the **Federal Register**, posting on the Commerce Department trade mission calendar—<http://www.trade.gov/trade-missions/>—and other Internet Web sites, press releases to general and trade media, direct mail, broadcast fax, notices by industry trade associations and other multiplier groups, and publicity at industry meetings, symposia, conferences, and trade shows.

Recruitment for the mission will begin immediately, and conclude at 11:59 p.m. on July 18, 2011. Applications received after 11:59 p.m. on July 18, 2011, will be considered

only if space and scheduling constraints permit.

Contacts

Teresa Yung, International Trade Specialist, Global Trade Programs, U.S. Commercial Service, Washington, DC 20230, Tel: 202-482-5496, Fax: 202-482-9000, E-mail: teresa.yung@trade.gov.
Larry Farris, Senior Commercial Officer, U.S. Consulate, Johannesburg, South Africa, Tel: +55-11 290-3316, Fax: +55-11 884-0538, E-mail: larry.farris@trade.gov.

Teresa Yung,
Global Trade Programs, Commercial Service Trade Missions Program.

[FR Doc. 2011-5993 Filed 3-17-11; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-PP-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XA303

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. In support of research conducted by the Coonamessett Farm Foundation, Inc. (CFFI), this EFP would grant exemptions from the limited access scallop days-at-sea (DAS) program to allow CFFI to conduct tests with its low profile excluder dredge (CFFI dredge). In addition, limited access and limited general category (LAGC) vessels would be authorized to temporarily retain fish that would otherwise be restricted by commercial fishing regulations. Such regulations include minimum fish sizes; fish possession limits; species quota closures; prohibited fish species, not including species protected under the Endangered Species Act; and gear-specific fish possession restrictions. The Assistant Regional Administrator has made a preliminary determination that the activities authorized under this EFP

would be consistent with the goals and objectives of the Atlantic sea scallop Fishery Management Plan (FMP). However, further review and consultation may be necessary before a final determination is made to issue an EFP.

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 4, 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 CFFI flounder bycatch 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 CFFI flounder bycatch EFP."
- *Fax:* (978) 281-9135.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Christopher Biegel, Fisheries Management Specialist, 978-281-9112.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: CFFI has been awarded a research grant through the Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation titled, "Testing of a Low Profile Excluder Dredge for Winter Flounder Bycatch Reduction." The goal of this research is to examine how modifications to the CFFI excluder dredge will impact the bycatch of winter flounder by commercial scallop vessels. The research will consist of three or four trips of 5 to 7 days each, for a total of 21 days, and deploy the CFFI dredge to document the impacts of dredge modifications on catch and bycatch rates. Over the course of the project, there will be 240 tows of less than 30 minutes at 4.5 knots. The vessel is expected to catch the following: Scallops 45,000 lb (20,412 kg); winter flounder 4,000 lb (1,815 kg); yellowtail flounder 300 lb (136 kg); monkfish 2,000 lb (907 kg); and little skate 8,000 lb (3,629 kg). All catch will be discarded after standard species composition, size, and catch rate data have been collected. The gear testing would occur between April 2011 and April 2012, in open areas of offshore of Massachusetts and Rhode Island at a depth of 15 to 30 fathoms (30-60 m), including Cape Cod Bay, South Channel, and Southern New England.

CFFI submitted a complete EFP application on February 4, 2011, requesting exemption allowing commercial fishing vessels to fish

outside of the limited access Atlantic sea scallop DAS regulations at 50 CFR 648.53(b) and to temporarily retain fish that would otherwise be restricted by commercial fishing regulations. 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 15, 2011.

Margo Schulze-Haugen,

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

[FR Doc. 2011-6443 Filed 3-17-11; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XA296

Endangered and Threatened Species; Take of Anadromous Fish

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

ACTION: Applications for four new scientific research permits.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that NMFS has received four scientific research permit application requests relating to Pacific salmonids. The proposed research is intended to increase knowledge of species listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and help guide management and conservation efforts. The applications may be viewed online at: https://apps.nmfs.noaa.gov/preview/preview_open_for_comment.cfm

DATES: Comments or requests for a public hearing on the applications must be received at the appropriate address or fax number (*see ADDRESSES*) no later than 5 p.m. Pacific standard time on April 18, 2011.

ADDRESSES: Written comments on the applications should be sent to the Protected Resources Division, NMFS, 1201 NE Lloyd Blvd., Suite 1100, Portland, OR 97232-1274. Comments may also be sent via fax to 503-230-5441 or by e-mail to nmfs.nwr.apps@noaa.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Garth Griffin, Portland, OR (*ph.*: 503-231-2005, *Fax*: 503-230-5441, *e-mail*: Garth.Griffin@noaa.gov). Permit application instructions are available from the address above, or online at apps.nmfs.noaa.gov <http://www.nwr.noaa.gov/>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Species Covered in This Notice

The following listed species are covered in this notice:

Chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*): threatened lower Columbia River (LCR), Snake River fall-run Chinook salmon (*O. tshawytscha*), Puget Sound Chinook salmon (*O. tshawytscha*), California Coast Chinook salmon (*O. tshawytscha*).

Chum salmon (*O. keta*): Threatened Columbia River (CR).

Steelhead (*O. mykiss*): Threatened SR.

Coho salmon (*O. kisutch*): Threatened LCR, threatened Oregon Coast (OC).

Authority

Scientific research permits are issued in accordance with section 10(a)(1)(A) of the ESA (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) and regulations governing listed fish and wildlife permits (50 CFR parts 222-226). NMFS issues permits based on findings that such permits: (1) Are applied for in good faith; (2) if granted and exercised, would not operate to the disadvantage of the listed species that are the subject of the permit; and (3) are consistent with the purposes and policy of section 2 of the ESA. The authority to take listed species is subject to conditions set forth in the permits.

Anyone requesting a hearing on an application listed in this notice should set out the specific reasons why a hearing on that application would be appropriate (*see ADDRESSES*). Such hearings are held at the discretion of the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NMFS.

Applications Received

Permit 16333

NOAA Fisheries' Northwest Fisheries Science Center (NWFSC) is seeking a 5-year permit to conduct yearly survey trawling operations off the West Coast of the U.S. The researchers would take individuals from all the species covered in this notice except for OC coho. The purpose of the research is to provide fisheries-independent indices of stock abundance to support stock assessment models for commercially and recreationally harvested groundfish species. The survey would collect data on 90+ fish species in the ocean to fulfill the mandates of the Magnuson-Stevens Sustainable Fisheries Act (MSA). The survey would run from May through October every year and cover the area from the US-Canada border at Cape Flattery, Washington to the US-Mexico border, at depths ranging from 55 meters to 1,280 meters. The objectives of the survey are to: (1)

Quantify the distribution and relative abundance of commercially valuable groundfish species, with an emphasis on rockfish species of the genus *Sebastes*; (2) obtain biological data (length, weight, gender, and maturity) from various species of interest; (3) collect age structures for species covered by MSA fisheries management plans; (4) record net mensuration and trawl performance data; and (5) collect oceanographic data (i.e., surface and bottom water temperature, salinity, near bottom dissolved oxygen concentration, chlorophyll fluorescence, and irradiance near bottom).

The research would benefit listed species by increasing our understanding of the connections between various oceanographic conditions and fish survival in the marine environment. This greater understanding, in turn, will be used to inform future decisions regarding listed species management and recovery. The researchers do not intend to kill any listed fish, but a few may die as an inadvertent result of the proposed activities.

Permit 16335

The NWFSC is seeking a 5-year permit to conduct biennial acoustic surveys of Pacific hake along the West Coast of the U.S. during odd-numbered years. The researchers would take individuals from all species covered in this notice except for SR steelhead. The age-specific estimates of total population abundance derived from the surveys are a key data source for the joint U.S.-Canada Pacific hake stock assessments and, ultimately, are critical to informing decisions about U.S., Tribal, and international harvest levels. This integrated acoustic and trawl survey is used to assess the distribution, biology, and status and trends in abundance of Pacific hake. The survey would be conducted from June to September; it would target aggregations of Pacific hake along the continental shelf and break. The survey would extend from Monterey, California to Dixon Entrance, Alaska, in depths from about 50 meters to 1,500 meters. The NWFSC is seeking authorization for the U.S. portion of the survey. The goal of the survey is to obtain representative catches of acoustically-detected organisms.

The research would benefit listed species by helping make the West Coast hake fishery more specific to the target species and thereby reducing bycatch of other species. The researchers do not intend to kill any listed fish, but a few may die as an inadvertent result of the proposed activities.