

January 5, 2016, and the meeting is summarized at https://docs.google.com/document/d/1VdP96SYCPcZZvXprowMq8rp6FURCxSh1uo4Dd1tTpJY/edit?usp=drive_web.

There is no cost for participating in the consortium. No proprietary information will be shared as part of the consortium, and all research results will be in the public domain.

All attendees are required to pre-register. Anyone wishing to attend this meeting must pre-register at <https://appam.certain.com/profile/form/index.cfm?PKformID=0x311041593> by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on Thursday, September 8, 2016, in order to attend.

Kent Rochford,

Associate Director for Laboratory Programs.

[FR Doc. 2016–20120 Filed 8–22–16; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–13–P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Proposed Information Collection; Comment Request; South Pacific Tuna Act

AGENCY: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Commerce, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, invites the general public and other Federal agencies to take this opportunity to comment on proposed and/or continuing information collections, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995.

DATES: Written comments must be submitted on or before October 24, 2016.

ADDRESSES: Direct all written comments to Jennifer Jessup, Departmental Paperwork Clearance Officer, Department of Commerce, Room 6616, 14th and Constitution Avenue NW., Washington, DC 20230 (or via the Internet at Jjessup@doc.gov).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Requests for additional information or copies of the information collection instrument and instructions should be directed to Tom Graham, (808) 725–5032 or tom.graham@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Abstract

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) collects vessel license, vessel

registration, catch, and unloading information from operators of United States (U.S.) purse seine vessels fishing within a large region of the western and central Pacific Ocean, which is governed by the Treaty on Fisheries between the Governments of Certain Pacific Island States and the Government of the United States of America. The Treaty, along with its annexes, schedules and implementing agreements, was signed in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, in 1987. This collection of information is required to meet U.S. obligations under the Treaty.

The Treaty authorizes U.S. tuna vessels to fish within fishing zones of a large region of the Pacific Ocean. The South Pacific Tuna Act of 1988 (16 U.S.C. 973–973r) and U.S. implementing regulations (50 CFR part 300, subpart D) authorize the collection of information from participants in the Treaty fishery. Vessel operators who wish to participate in the Treaty Fishery must submit annual vessel license and registration (including registration of vessel monitoring system (VMS) units) applications and periodic written reports of catch and unloading of fish from licensed vessels. They are also required to ensure the continued operation of VMS units on board licensed vessels, which is expected to require periodic maintenance of the units. The information collected is submitted to the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) through the U.S. government, NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). The license and registration application information is used by the FFA to determine the operational capability and financial responsibility of a vessel operator interested in participating in the Treaty fishery. Information obtained from vessel catch and unloading reports is used by the FFA to assess fishing effort and fishery resources in the region and to track the amount of fish caught within each Pacific island state's exclusive economic zone for fair disbursement of Treaty monies. Maintenance of VMS units is needed to ensure the continuous operation of the VMS units, which, as part of the VMS administered by the FFA, are used as an enforcement tool. If the information is not collected, the U.S. government will not meet its obligations under the Treaty, and the lack of fishing information will result in poor management of the fishery resources.

II. Method of Collection

All information should be submitted in hard copy via mail.

III. Data

OMB Control Number: 0648–0218.

Form Number(s): None.

Type of Review: Regular submission (extension of a currently approved collection).

Affected Public: Business or other for-profit organizations.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 41.

Estimated Time per Response: License application, 15 minutes; VMS registration application, 45 minutes; catch report, 1 hour; and unloading logsheet, 30 minutes.

Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours: 402.

Estimated Total Annual Cost to Public: \$143,121 in recordkeeping/reporting costs.

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: August 18, 2016.

Sarah Brabson,

NOAA PRA Clearance Officer.

[FR Doc. 2016–20080 Filed 8–22–16; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648–XE794

Atlantic Highly Migratory Species; Advisory Panel for Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Southeast Data, Assessment, and Review Workshops

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

ACTION: Notice; nominations for shark stock assessment Advisory Panel.

SUMMARY: NMFS solicits nominations for the “SEDAR Pool,” also known as the Advisory Panel for Atlantic Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Southeast Data, Assessment, and Review (SEDAR) Workshops. The SEDAR Pool is comprised of a group of individuals who may be selected to consider data and advise NMFS regarding the scientific information, including but not limited to data and models, used in stock assessments for oceanic sharks in the Atlantic Ocean, Gulf of Mexico, and Caribbean Sea. Nominations are being sought for a 5-year appointment (2017–2022). Individuals with definable interests in the recreational and commercial fishing and related industries, environmental community, academia, and non-governmental organizations will be considered for membership on the SEDAR Pool.

DATES: Nominations must be received on or before September 22, 2016.

ADDRESSES: You may submit nominations and request the SEDAR Pool Statement of Organization, Practices, and Procedures by any of the following methods:

- *Email:* SEDAR.pool@noaa.gov.
- *Mail:* Karyl Brewster-Geisz, Highly Migratory Species Management Division, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Include on the envelope the following identifier: “SEDAR Pool Nomination.”
- *Fax:* 301–713–1917.

Additional information on SEDAR and the SEDAR guidelines can be found at <http://www.sefsc.noaa.gov/sedar/>. The terms of reference for the SEDAR Pool, along with a list of current members, can be found at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/SEDAR/SEDAR.htm>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Delisse Ortiz, (240–681–9037) or Karyl Brewster-Geisz, (301) 425–8503.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Section 302(g)(2) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act), 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*, states that each Council shall establish such advisory panels as are necessary or appropriate to assist it in carrying out its functions under the Act. For the purposes of this section, NMFS applies the above Council provision to the HMS Management Division (See Section 304(g)(1) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, which provides that the Secretary will prepare fishery management plans for

HMS and consult with Advisory Panels under section 302(g) for such FMPs). As such, NMFS has established the SEDAR Pool under this section. The SEDAR Pool currently consists of 27 individuals, each of whom may be selected to review data and advise NMFS regarding the scientific information, including but not limited to data and models, used in stock assessments for oceanic sharks in the Atlantic Ocean, Gulf of Mexico, and Caribbean Sea. While the SEDAR Pool was created specifically for Atlantic oceanic sharks, it may be expanded to include other HMS, as needed.

The primary purpose of the individuals in the SEDAR Pool is to review, at SEDAR workshops, the scientific information (including but not limited to data and models) used in stock assessments that are used to advise NMFS, as a delegate to the Secretary of Commerce (Secretary), about the conservation and management of the Atlantic HMS, specifically but not limited to, Atlantic sharks. Individuals in the SEDAR Pool, if selected, may participate in the various data, assessment, and review workshops during the SEDAR process of any HMS stock assessment. In order to ensure that the peer review is unbiased, individuals who participated in a data and/or assessment workshop for a particular stock assessment will not be allowed to serve as reviewers for the same stock assessment. However, these individuals may be asked to attend the review workshop to answer specific questions from the reviewers concerning the data and/or assessment workshops. Members of the SEDAR Pool may serve as members of other Advisory Panels concurrent with, or following, their service on the SEDAR Pool.

Procedures and Guidelines

A. Participants

The SEDAR Pool is comprised of individuals representing the commercial and recreational fishing communities for Atlantic sharks, the environmental community active in the conservation and management of Atlantic sharks, and the academic community that have relevant expertise either with sharks and/or stock assessment methodologies for marine fish species. Also, individuals who may not necessarily work directly with sharks, but who are involved in fisheries with similar life history, biology and fishery issues may be part of the SEDAR panel. Members of the SEDAR Pool must have demonstrated experience in the fisheries, related industries, research, teaching, writing, conservation, or

management of marine organisms. The distribution of representation among the interested parties is not defined or limited.

Additional members of the SEDAR Pool may also include representatives from each of the five Atlantic Regional Fishery Management Councils, each of the 18 Atlantic states, both the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, and each of the interstate commissions: the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission.

If NMFS requires additional members to ensure a diverse pool of individuals for data or assessment workshops, NMFS may request individuals to become members of the SEDAR Pool outside of the annual nomination period.

Panel members serve at the discretion of the Secretary. Not all members will attend each SEDAR workshop. Rather, NMFS will invite certain members to participate at specific stock assessment workshops dependent on their ability to participate, discuss, and recommend scientific decisions regarding the species being assessed.

NMFS is not obligated to fulfill any requests (e.g., requests for an assessment of a certain species) that may be made by the SEDAR Pool or its individual members. Members of the SEDAR Pool who are invited to attend stock assessment workshops will not be compensated for their services but may be reimbursed for their travel-related expenses to attend such workshops.

B. Nomination Procedures for Appointments to the SEDAR Pool

Member tenure will be for 5 years. Nominations are sought for terms beginning early in 2017 and expiring in 2022. Nomination packages should include:

1. The name, address, phone number, and email of the applicant or nominee;
2. A description of the applicant's or nominee's interest in Atlantic shark stock assessments or the Atlantic shark fishery;
3. A statement of the applicant's or nominee's background and/or qualifications; and
4. A written commitment that the applicant or nominee shall participate actively and in good faith in the tasks of the SEDAR Pool, as requested.

C. Meeting Schedule

Individual members of the SEDAR Pool meet to participate in stock assessments at the discretion of the Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS. Stock assessment timing, frequency, and relevant species will vary depending on

the needs determined by NMFS and SEDAR staff. In 2017, NMFS intends to update the Gulf of Mexico blacktip shark stock assessment and conduct a standard assessment for sandbar sharks. In 2018, NMFS intends to conduct a benchmark assessment for Atlantic blacktip sharks. During an assessment year, meetings and meeting logistics will be determined according to the SEDAR Guidelines. All meetings are open for observation by the public.

Dated: August 18, 2016.

Alan D. Risenhoover,

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

[FR Doc. 2016-20103 Filed 8-22-16; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XE812

Pacific Island Fisheries; Aquaculture

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

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement; request for comments.

SUMMARY: NMFS, in coordination with the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council), intends to prepare a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) to analyze the potential environmental impacts of a proposed Pacific Islands Region (PIR) aquaculture management program and alternatives. Publication of this notice begins the official public scoping process to help identify alternatives and determine the scope of environmental issues for consideration in the PEIS. The PEIS is intended to support offshore aquaculture development, including appropriate management unit species (MUS) for aquaculture, reasonably foreseeable types of offshore aquaculture operations, and permitting and reporting requirements for persons conducting aquaculture activities in Federal waters.

DATES: See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section for meeting dates. NMFS must receive comments by October 31, 2016.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments on this action, identified by NOAA-NMFS-2016-0111, by any of the following methods:

- *Electronic Submission:* Submit all electronic public comments via the

Federal e-Rulemaking Portal. Go to <http://www.regulations.gov/docket?D=NOAA-NMFS-2016-0111>, click the "Comment Now!" icon, complete the required fields, and enter or attach your comments.

- *Mail:* Send written comments to Michael D. Tosatto, Regional Administrator, NMFS Pacific Islands Region (PIR), 1845 Wasp Blvd., Bldg. 176, Honolulu, HI 96818.

- *Scoping Meeting:* Submit written comments at a scoping meeting held by NMFS for this action.

Instructions: You must submit comments by the above methods to ensure that NMFS receives, documents, and considers your comments. NMFS may not consider comments sent by any other method, to any other address or individual, or received after the end of the comment period. NMFS will consider all comments received as part of the public record and will generally post comments for public viewing on www.regulations.gov without change. All personal identifying information (e.g., name, address) submitted voluntarily by the sender will be publicly accessible. Do not submit confidential business information, or otherwise sensitive or protected information. NMFS will accept anonymous comments (enter "N/A" in the required fields if you wish to remain anonymous).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

David Nichols, NMFS, Pacific Islands Regional Office, (808) 725-5180.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NMFS and the Council manage fisheries in U.S. Federal waters in the Pacific Islands through five fishery ecosystem plans (FEPs). The Council recommended amending the five FEPs to establish a management program for aquaculture fisheries under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act). NMFS is working with the Council to develop a management program that would regulate and promote environmentally sound and economically sustainable aquaculture in Federal waters of the Pacific Islands Region.

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and consistent with Council recommendations, the intent of the PEIS is to evaluate the potential direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts on the human environment of the proposed Federal action that includes alternative management approaches to implementing an aquaculture management program in the PIR. NEPA requires NMFS to consider the potential impacts of the proposed action and

reasonable alternatives to inform the selection of a final preferred alternative for the proposed Pacific Islands aquaculture management program.

Under the Magnuson-Stevens Act, NMFS has authority to regulate commercial fisheries in Federal waters, including aquaculture. Landings or possession of fish in the EEZ from the commercial marine aquaculture production of any species managed under an FEP in the PIR constitutes "fishing" as defined in Magnuson-Stevens Act Section 3(16). Fishing includes all activities and operations related to the taking, catching, or harvesting of fish. The U.S. EEZ in the Pacific Islands generally consists of waters from 3 nm to 200 nm around American Samoa, Guam, Hawaii, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), Baker Island, Howland Island, Jarvis Island, Johnston Atoll, Kingman Reef, Midway Island, Wake Island, and Palmyra Atoll and includes all islands and reefs appurtenant to such islands, reefs, or atolls.

With the exception of coral reef ecosystem species, there is no requirement for Federal permits to conduct aquaculture for MUS in Federal waters. The existing regulatory process is complex and requires multiple permits from several different Federal agencies, including the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), and NMFS.

The preliminary proposed Federal action will identify areas and species suitable for offshore aquaculture, describe the reasonably foreseeable types of offshore aquaculture operations, and provide an early assessment of the potential social, economic, and environmental impacts of such proposed activities. Completing a PEIS for an aquaculture management program will facilitate the review and processing of aquaculture fishery proposals, supporting NEPA reviews for future projects.

The PEIS will include information that NMFS would use to understand the potential effects of managing aquaculture in compliance with applicable laws, including the Magnuson-Stevens Act, Endangered Species Act (ESA), Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA), and other applicable laws. In addition, the PEIS would allow for intergovernmental public review and input as NMFS develops and considers approval of the management program. The development and content of the PEIS must also be consistent with the NOAA Administrative Orders (NAO) 216-6A as