

§ 216.176 will be undertaken and that there will not be a substantial modification to the described work, mitigation or monitoring undertaken during the upcoming season;

(2) Timely receipt of the monitoring reports required under § 216.175, which have been reviewed by the National Marine Fisheries Service and determined to be acceptable;

(3) A determination by the National Marine Fisheries Service that the mitigation, monitoring and reporting measures required under §§ 216.174 and 216.175 and the Letter of Authorization were undertaken and will be undertaken during the upcoming period of validity of a renewed Letter of Authorization; and

(4) Renewal of a Letter of Authorization will be based on a determination that the number of marine mammals taken by the activity continues to be small, and that the number of marine mammals taken by the activity, specified in § 216.170(b) will have no more than a negligible impact on the species or stock of affected marine mammal(s).

(b) A notice of issuance or denial of a renewal of a Letter of Authorization will be published in the **Federal Register** within 30 days of a determination.

§ 216.178 Modifications to a Letter of Authorization.

(a) In addition to complying with the provisions of §§ 216.106 and 216.176, except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section, no substantive modification (including withdrawal or suspension) to the Letter of Authorization issued pursuant to §§ 216.106 and 216.176 and subject to the provisions of this subpart shall be made by the National Marine Fisheries Service until after notification and an opportunity for public comment has been provided. For purposes of this paragraph, a renewal of a Letter of Authorization under § 216.177, without modification, except for the period of validity is not considered a substantive modification.

(b) If the Assistant Administrator determines that an emergency exists that poses a significant risk to the well-being of the species or stocks of marine mammals specified in § 216.170(b), a Letter of Authorization issued pursuant to §§ 216.106 and 216.176 may be substantively modified without prior notification and an opportunity for public comment. Notification will be published in the **Federal Register** within 30 days subsequent to the action. [FR Doc. 00-32725 Filed 12-21-00; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 622

[I.D. 121200K]

Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Shrimp Fishery of the Gulf of Mexico; Public Hearings

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

ACTION: Notice of public hearings; request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) will convene additional public hearings to receive comments on Draft Amendment 11 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Gulf of Mexico Shrimp Fishery (Draft Amendment 11). Public hearings were previously held from Port Isabel, TX to Key West, FL.

DATES: Written comments will be accepted until 5 p.m., January 3, 2001. Public hearings will be held in January; for specific dates and times see

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION.

ADDRESSES: Written comments should be sent to, and copies of Draft Amendment 11 are available from, the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, 3018 U.S. Highway 301, North, Suite 1000, Tampa, FL 33619; telephone: (813)228-2815. Public hearings will be held in Texas, Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana, and Florida. For specific locations see

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Richard Leard, Senior Fishery Biologist, Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council; telephone: (813) 228-2815.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Council held public hearings on Draft Amendment 11 throughout the Gulf of Mexico region from October 2, 2000, through October 26, 2000 (65 FR 57159). The Council will convene additional public hearings to review Draft Amendment 11. Draft Amendment 11 contains alternative measures for requiring shrimp vessel and boat permits, shrimp vessel and boat registration, and operator permits and for prohibiting trap gear in the royal red shrimp fishery in the Gulf exclusive economic zone (EEZ). Shrimp "vessels" refer to fishing craft usually over 5 net tons that carry a certificate-of-documentation issued by the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG); shrimp "boats" refer to

fishing craft under 5 net tons that do not carry a USCG certificate-of-documentation but that are issued a number by the appropriate state.

For its initial round of public hearings, it was the Council's belief that a major difference between vessel/boat permits and registrations, as noted in the earlier hearings, was that permits are subject to law enforcement sanctions, while vessel registrations are not. In a recent review of Draft Amendment 11, NOAA General Counsel determined that if a vessel/boat registration was required as a condition for participating in the shrimp fishery, then such vessel/boat registration is a permit, and would therefore be subject to law enforcement sanctions. This clarification is important because some persons may have previously supported vessel/boat registrations over permits in the belief that the former would not be subject to law enforcement sanctions. Further public hearings have been scheduled to give those persons a chance to change or retract their previous comments and to receive additional comments on a revised Draft Amendment 11.

Dates, Times, and Locations for Public Hearings

Public hearings for Draft Amendment 11 are scheduled as follows:

1. Wednesday, January 3, 2001, 7 p.m.—Laguna Madre Learning Center, Port Isabel High School, Highway 100, Port Isabel, TX 78578; telephone: 956-943-0052;
2. Thursday, January 4, 2001, 7 p.m.—Palacios Recreation Center, 2401 Perryman, Palacios, TX 77465; telephone: 361-972-3821;
3. Monday, January 8, 2001, 6 p.m.—MS Department of Marine Resources, 1141 Bayview Drive, Biloxi, MS 39530; telephone: 228-374-5000;
4. Tuesday, January 9, 2001, 7 p.m.—Bayou LaBatre Community Center, Padgett Switch Road, Bayou La Batre, AL 36509; telephone: 334-824-7918;
5. Wednesday, January 10, 2001, 7 p.m.—New Orleans Airport Hilton, 901 Airline Drive, Kenner, LA 70062; telephone: 504-469-5000; and
6. Wednesday, January 10, 2001, 7 p.m.—Madeira Beach City Hall, 300 Municipal Drive, Madeira Beach, FL 33708; telephone: 727-391-9951.

The Council will also hear public testimony at the January Council Meeting on January 17, 2001, before taking final action on Draft Amendment 11.

Special Accommodations

These meetings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language

interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Anne Alford at the Council (see **ADDRESSES**) by December 27, 2000.

Dated: December 15, 2000.

Bruce C. Morehead,

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

[FR Doc. 00-32724 Filed 12-21-00; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 660

[I.D. 121800E]

Pelagics Fisheries of the Western Pacific Region; Public Meetings

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

ACTION: Notice of public meetings.

SUMMARY: On October 6, 1999, and on October 20, 1999, NMFS announced its intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on Federal management of the fishery for pelagic species in the U.S. exclusive economic zone (EEZ) waters of the western Pacific Region. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) has been prepared and is available to the public. The scope of the DEIS includes all activities related to the conduct of the fishery authorized by and managed under the Fishery Management Plan for the Pelagics Fisheries of the Western Pacific Region (FMP) and all amendments thereto. NMFS is holding public meetings to solicit public input on the range of actions, alternatives, and impacts addressed in the DEIS. In addition to holding the public meetings, NMFS is also accepting written comments on the DEIS.

DATES: Written comments will be accepted through January 29, 2001. See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** for meeting times.

ADDRESSES: Written comments and requests to be included on a mailing list of persons interested in the DEIS/EIS should be sent to Marilyn Luipold, Pacific Islands Area Office, NMFS, 1601 Kapiolani Blvd., Suite 1110, Honolulu, HI 96814-4700. Comments also may be faxed to 808-973-2941. Comments will not be accepted if submitted via e-mail or the Internet. Public meetings will be held in Hawaii, Guam, American Samoa (AS), and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). For specific meeting locations, see **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Marilyn Luipold (see **ADDRESSES**).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On October 6, 1999 (64 FR 54272), and on October 20, 1999 (64 FR 56479), NMFS announced its intent to prepare an EIS on Federal management of the fishery for pelagic species in the U.S. EEZ waters of the western Pacific Region. NMFS has prepared the DEIS and made it available to the public. The Notice of Availability of the DEIS was published on December 15, 2000, (65 FR 78485).

Dates, Times, and Locations for Public Meetings

1. Kahului, Maui, HI: January 3, 2001, 6 to 9 p.m., Maui Beach Hotel, Maui Room, 170 Kaahumanu Avenue, Kahului, Maui, HI 96732.

2. Lihue, Kauai, HI: January 4, 2001, 6 to 9 p.m., Wilcox Elementary School, 4319 Hardy St., Lihue, HI 96766.

3. Fagatogo, AS: January 6, 2001, 9 a.m. to noon, Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources (DMWR) conference room (behind market), Fagatogo, AS. Phone contact c/o DMWR (684-633-4456).

4. Waianae, Oahu, HI: January 10, 2001, 6 to 9 p.m., Waianae Public

Library, 85-625 Farrington Highway, Waianae, HI, 96792.

5. Haleiwa, Oahu, HI: January 11, 2001, 6 to 9 p.m., Haleiwa Alii Beach Park, Haleiwa, HI 96712.

6. Honolulu, Oahu, HI: January 12, 2001, 6 to 9 p.m., Ala Moana Hotel, Carnation Room, 410 Atkinson Boulevard, Honolulu, HI 96814.

7. Agana (Hagatna), Guam: January 16, 2001, 6 to 9 p.m., Guam Fishermen's Cooperative Association, Hagatna Boat Basin, Agana (Hagatna), Guam.

8. Susupe Village, Saipan, CNMI: January 17, 2001, 6 to 9 p.m., Saipan Diamond Hotel, Hibiscus Room. No street address, Susupe Village, P.O. Box 66, CNMI.

9. Kaunakakai, Molokai, HI: January 22, 2001, 6 to 9 p.m., Mitchell Pauole Center, 90 Ainoa St., Kaunakakai, HI 96748.

10. Kona, Hawaii, HI: January 23, 2001, 6 to 9 p.m., King Kamehameha Hotel, 75-5660 Palani Road, Kona, HI 96740.

11. Hilo, Hawaii, HI: January 24, 2001, 6 to 9 p.m. Cooperative Extension Services, College of Agriculture, Conference Room B, 875 Komohana Street, Hilo, HI 96720.

12. Lanai, HI: January 26, 2001, 6 to 9 p.m., Lanai Airport Conference Room, Lanai, HI 96763.

Special Accommodations

Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Marilyn Luipold (see **ADDRESSES**), 808-973-2937 (voice) or 808-973-2941 (facsimile), at least 5 days prior to meeting date.

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

Dated: December 19, 2000.

Bruce C. Morehead,

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

[FR Doc. 00-32727 Filed 12-21-00; 8:45 am]

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