

# NOTICE OF OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET ACTION

Date 12/29/2017

Department of Commerce  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

FOR CERTIFYING OFFICIAL: Rod Turk  
FOR CLEARANCE OFFICER: Jennifer Jessup

In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act, OMB has taken action on your request received 11/27/2017

ACTION REQUESTED: Extension without change of a currently approved collection

TYPE OF REVIEW REQUESTED: Regular

ICR REFERENCE NUMBER: 201711-0648-009

AGENCY ICR TRACKING NUMBER:

TITLE: NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Region Vessel Identification Requirements

LIST OF INFORMATION COLLECTIONS: See next page

OMB ACTION: Approved without change

OMB CONTROL NUMBER: 0648-0350

The agency is required to display the OMB Control Number and inform respondents of its legal significance in accordance with 5 CFR 1320.5(b).

EXPIRATION DATE: 12/31/2020

DISCONTINUE DATE:

BURDEN:	RESPONSES	HOURS	COSTS
Previous	3,675	2,756	36,750
New	3,665	2,749	36,650
Difference			
Change due to New Statute	0	0	0
Change due to Agency Discretion	0	0	0
Change due to Agency Adjustment	-10	-7	-100
Change due to PRA Violation	0	0	0

TERMS OF CLEARANCE:

OMB Authorizing Official: Dominic J. Mancini  
Deputy and Acting Administrator,  
Office Of Information And Regulatory Affairs

## List of ICs

IC Title	Form No.	Form Name	CFR Citation
Greater Atlantic Region Vessel Identification Requirements			50 CFR 697.8

# PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT SUBMISSION

**Please read the instructions before completing this form. For additional forms or assistance in completing this form, contact your agency's Paperwork Clearance Officer. Send two copies of this form, the collection instrument to be reviewed, the supporting statement, and any additional documentation to: Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget, Docket Library, Room 10102, 725 17th Street NW, Washington, DC 20503.**

1. Agency/Subagency originating request	2. OMB control number <span style="float: right;">b. <input type="checkbox"/> None</span> a. _____ - _____
3. Type of information collection ( <i>check one</i> ) a. <input type="checkbox"/> New Collection b. <input type="checkbox"/> Revision of a currently approved collection c. <input type="checkbox"/> Extension of a currently approved collection d. <input type="checkbox"/> Reinstatement, without change, of a previously approved collection for which approval has expired e. <input type="checkbox"/> Reinstatement, with change, of a previously approved collection for which approval has expired f. <input type="checkbox"/> Existing collection in use without an OMB control number For b-f, note Item A2 of Supporting Statement instructions	4. Type of review requested ( <i>check one</i> ) a. <input type="checkbox"/> Regular submission b. <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency - Approval requested by _____ / _____ / _____ c. <input type="checkbox"/> Delegated
	5. Small entities Will this information collection have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	6. Requested expiration date a. <input type="checkbox"/> Three years from approval date b. <input type="checkbox"/> Other Specify: _____
7. Title	
8. Agency form number(s) ( <i>if applicable</i> )	
9. Keywords	
10. Abstract	
11. Affected public ( <i>Mark primary with "P" and all others that apply with "x"</i> ) a. ___ Individuals or households d. ___ Farms b. ___ Business or other for-profit e. ___ Federal Government c. ___ Not-for-profit institutions f. ___ State, Local or Tribal Government	12. Obligation to respond ( <i>check one</i> ) a. <input type="checkbox"/> Voluntary b. <input type="checkbox"/> Required to obtain or retain benefits c. <input type="checkbox"/> Mandatory
13. Annual recordkeeping and reporting burden a. Number of respondents _____ b. Total annual responses _____ 1. Percentage of these responses collected electronically _____ % c. Total annual hours requested _____ d. Current OMB inventory _____ e. Difference _____ f. Explanation of difference 1. Program change _____ 2. Adjustment _____	14. Annual reporting and recordkeeping cost burden ( <i>in thousands of dollars</i> ) a. Total annualized capital/startup costs _____ b. Total annual costs (O&M) _____ c. Total annualized cost requested _____ d. Current OMB inventory _____ e. Difference _____ f. Explanation of difference 1. Program change _____ 2. Adjustment _____
15. Purpose of information collection ( <i>Mark primary with "P" and all others that apply with "X"</i> ) a. ___ Application for benefits e. ___ Program planning or management b. ___ Program evaluation f. ___ Research c. ___ General purpose statistics g. ___ Regulatory or compliance d. ___ Audit	16. Frequency of recordkeeping or reporting ( <i>check all that apply</i> ) a. <input type="checkbox"/> Recordkeeping b. <input type="checkbox"/> Third party disclosure c. <input type="checkbox"/> Reporting 1. <input type="checkbox"/> On occasion 2. <input type="checkbox"/> Weekly 3. <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly 4. <input type="checkbox"/> Quarterly 5. <input type="checkbox"/> Semi-annually 6. <input type="checkbox"/> Annually 7. <input type="checkbox"/> Biennially 8. <input type="checkbox"/> Other (describe) _____
17. Statistical methods Does this information collection employ statistical methods <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	18. Agency Contact (person who can best answer questions regarding the content of this submission)  Name: _____ Phone: _____

## 19. Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions

On behalf of this Federal Agency, I certify that the collection of information encompassed by this request complies with 5 CFR 1320.9

**NOTE:** The text of 5 CFR 1320.9, and the related provisions of 5 CFR 1320.8(b)(3), appear at the end of the instructions. *The certification is to be made with reference to those regulatory provisions as set forth in the instructions.*

The following is a summary of the topics, regarding the proposed collection of information, that the certification covers:

- (a) It is necessary for the proper performance of agency functions;
- (b) It avoids unnecessary duplication;
- (c) It reduces burden on small entities;
- (d) It used plain, coherent, and unambiguous terminology that is understandable to respondents;
- (e) Its implementation will be consistent and compatible with current reporting and recordkeeping practices;
- (f) It indicates the retention period for recordkeeping requirements;
- (g) It informs respondents of the information called for under 5 CFR 1320.8(b)(3):
  - (i) Why the information is being collected;
  - (ii) Use of information;
  - (iii) Burden estimate;
  - (iv) Nature of response (voluntary, required for a benefit, mandatory);
  - (v) Nature and extent of confidentiality; and
  - (vi) Need to display currently valid OMB control number;
- (h) It was developed by an office that has planned and allocated resources for the efficient and effective management and use of the information to be collected (see note in Item 19 of instructions);
- (i) It uses effective and efficient statistical survey methodology; and
- (j) It makes appropriate use of information technology.

If you are unable to certify compliance with any of the provisions, identify the item below and explain the reason in Item 18 of the Supporting Statement.

Signature of Senior Official or designee

Date

Agency Certification (signature of Assistant Administrator, Deputy Assistant Administrator, Line Office Chief Information Officer, head of MB staff for L.O.s, or of the Director of a Program or StaffOffice)

Signature

Date

Signature of NOAA Clearance Officer

Signature

Date

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT  
NOAA FISHERIES GREATER ATLANTIC REGION VESSEL IDENTIFICATION  
REQUIREMENTS  
OMB CONTROL NO. 0648-0350**

**A. JUSTIFICATION**

**1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary.**

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA's) National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) requests the approval by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) of an extension of the existing collection of information under OMB Control Number 0648-0350 for Greater Atlantic Region Vessel Identification Requirements. *The information collection title is being changed to NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Region Vessel Identification Requirements.*

Regulations at [50 CFR parts 648.8](#) and [697.8](#) require that vessels over 25 ft in registered length with Federal permits to fish in the Greater Atlantic region display the vessel's name and official number. The success of fisheries management programs depends upon regulatory compliance. The vessel identification requirement, which is required of all Federally permitted fishing vessels in the Greater Atlantic region, is essential to facilitate enforcement. The ability to link fishing or other activities to a vessel owner or operator is crucial to the enforcement of regulations issued under the authority of the [Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Conservation and Management Act](#) (Magnuson-Stevens Act). When this information is clearly displayed, it enables enforcement personnel to easily identify Federal permit holders while engaged in fishing.

**2. Explain how, by whom, how frequently, and for what purpose the information will be used. If the information collected will be disseminated to the public or used to support information that will be disseminated to the public, then explain how the collection complies with all applicable Information Quality Guidelines.**

No information is submitted directly to NMFS, or to the public, as a result of this collection. Vessel identification information must be affixed to the vessel in the designated locations, as specified in the regulations, so as to be visible from enforcement vessels and aircraft. This identification allows law enforcement personnel, including U.S. Coast Guard, NMFS Office of Law Enforcement, and state enforcement agency marine patrols, to ascertain whether the vessel's observed activities coincide with those authorized for that vessel. Concerned fishermen also use the identification number to report suspicious activities that they observe on the water. Fishermen ultimately benefit from this requirement as unauthorized and illegal fishing is deterred, which reduces the need for more restrictive fishing regulations. All characters used in vessel identification (e.g., Federal permit number, the vessel's official number) are considered public information.

**3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological techniques or other forms of information technology.**

The identification requirements facilitate the visual identification of fishing vessels. Although technologies have been developed to electronically identify and monitor vessels, this required form of vessel identification is indispensable. The visual collection of the vessel identification characters by the public and law enforcement personnel may involve binoculars, plain sight, or other sight enhancement technologies.

**4. Describe efforts to identify duplication.**

There is no duplication of this requirement with other collections by NMFS. However, the U.S. Coast Guard and state regulatory agencies may require the same identification of vessel name and official number. These requirements are complementary and do not create any additional nor duplicative requirements on the respondents.

**5. If the collection of information involves small businesses or other small entities, describe the methods used to minimize burden.**

Nearly all commercial fishing vessels subject to this information collection are categorized as small businesses. However, it is not anticipated that the information collection will have any significant impact on the operations of these small businesses.

**6. Describe the consequences to the Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently.**

If commercial fishing vessels were not identifiable by the National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Coast Guard, or any other cooperating enforcement agency the ability to enforce fishery regulations would be significantly impaired. The requirements of this collection are only repeated once the identification markings become illegible.

**7. Explain any special circumstances that require the collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with OMB guidelines.**

No special circumstances require the collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with the OMB guidelines.

**8. Provide information on the PRA Federal Register Notice that solicited public comments on the information collection prior to this submission. Summarize the public comments received in response to that notice and describe the actions taken by the agency in response to those comments. Describe the efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and recordkeeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.**

A *Federal Register* notice was published on July 12, 2017, (82 FR 32175) soliciting public comments. The comment period closed on September 11, 2017. No comments were received.

In addition, the Greater Atlantic Regional Administrator announced the open comment period at the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council meeting on August 10, 2017. The announcement included a summary of the information collection included in this renewal and encouraged affected parties to review the *Federal Register* Notice and submit comments. The full comment period was announced, with the deadline for comment submission made clear. The same information that was presented by the Greater Atlantic Regional Administrator was also available in physical form as a handout included with the meeting materials at the aforementioned Council meetings. No comments were received. The status reports containing the information are included as supplementary documents.

**9. Explain any decisions to provide payments or gifts to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.**

No payments or gifts are provided to respondents as a part of this collection.

**10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.**

Vessel identification is not considered confidential information and thus no confidentiality is provided.

**11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private.**

No sensitive questions are asked as part of this collection.

**12. Provide an estimate in hours of the burden of the collection of information.**

The regulations state that the vessel’s name must be affixed to the port and starboard sides of the bow and, if possible, on its stern. The official number must be displayed on the port and starboard sides of the deckhouse or hull, and on an appropriate weather deck so as to be clearly visible from enforcement vessels and aircraft. It is estimated that each vessel will require 45 minutes to apply (paint) this official information. Each vessel is expected to need repainting of identification information on an annual basis. Table 1 provides a summary of annual burden for vessel identification. **The total estimated burden for this collection is approximately 2,749 hours, annually (45 minutes x 3,665 vessels).**

**Table 1. Greater Atlantic Region Vessel Identification Burden Table**

Number of Entities	Items per Entity	Total Number of Items	Cost of Materials per Vessel	Response Time (Hours)	Total Burden (Hours)	Cost to Government	Cost to Public
3,665	1	3,665	\$10	0.75	2748.75	\$0	\$36,650

**13. Provide an estimate of the total annual cost burden to the respondents or record-keepers resulting from the collection (excluding the value of the burden hours in Question 12 above).**

The cost to respondents is minimal. Materials needed are paint and paintbrush, and possibly a stencil. Annual costs are estimated to be \$10 per respondent to purchase paint or other materials for repainting. Given natural weathering of the paint, it is estimated that the repainting process for vessel identification will need to be repeated on an annual basis. **This action affects a total of 3,665 entities, thus the annual cost burden to respondents is estimated at \$36,650.00 (3,665 x \$10).** Table 1 provides a summary of annual costs for vessel identification.

**14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government.**

There are no costs to the Federal government associated with the requirement to identify vessels.

**15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments.**

Changes reflect the most current information regarding the number of relevant vessels (respondents) estimated for the next three years. The average number of respondents per year was reduced by only 10, due to the current number of permitted vessels currently listed in the permit database that are greater than or equal to 25 feet in overall length, creating very minimal adjustments to burden estimates. The total number of respondents is now estimated to be 3,665 entities per year, down from 3,675 in the previous collection. As a result of this decrease, this extension is predicted to have an annual reduction of 7.5 burden hours and \$100 cost compared to the previous collection. All differences in burden are due to this minor adjustment and not to a program change.

**16. For collections whose results will be published, outline the plans for tabulation and publication.**

No results from this publication will be published.

**17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons why display would be inappropriate.**

No forms are used in this information collection.

**18. Explain each exception to the certification statement.**

There are no exceptions.

**B. COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS**

This collection does not employ statistical methods.



National Marine Fisheries Service  
Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office  
Sustainable Fisheries Division  
[www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov](http://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov)



# Status Report of Greater Atlantic Region Actions

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Prepared for the September 26-28, 2017  
Meeting of the  
New England Fishery Management Council

September 25, 2017

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## **New England Council Actions**

### **Small-Mesh Multispecies**

#### **Northern Red Hake Trip Limit Adjustment**

NMFS published a temporary rule in the Federal Register on August 10, 2017, (82 FR 37359) as notification that, effective August 7, 2017, the 2017 northern red hake commercial possession limit was reduced from 3,000 lb to 400 lb per trip. For additional information, please contact Michael Ruccio at (978) 281-9104, or email at Michael.Ruccio@noaa.gov.

### **Groundfish**

#### **Framework Adjustment 56**

On August 1, 2017, NMFS published the final rule for Framework 56 in the Federal Register (82 FR 35660). This action set 2017 specifications for three U.S./Canada stocks (Eastern Georges Bank (GB) cod, Eastern GB haddock, and GB yellowtail flounder), as well as 2017-2018 specifications for witch flounder. This action also established an allocation for northern windowpane flounder for the scallop fishery, revised the trigger for implementing the scallop fishery accountability measures (AMs) for both its GB yellowtail flounder allocation and its new northern windowpane flounder allocation, and increased the GB haddock catch allocation for the midwater trawl fishery.

NMFS also used Framework 56 to implement 2017 northern and southern windowpane flounder AMs, which were triggered due to 2015 overages for both stocks. The AMs were effective on August 1, 2017. We announced in Framework 56 that we were able to remove the northern and southern windowpane flounder AMs for groundfish trawl vessels after September 1, 2017, because 2016 catch was below the total annual catch limit for both stocks.

While NMFS was able to remove the accountability measures for the groundfish vessels through an existing regulatory process, we had to implement an emergency rule (below) to remove the southern windowpane flounder AMs for non-groundfish trawl vessels.

For additional information, please contact Aja Szumylo at (978) 281-9195, or email at Aja.Szumylo@noaa.gov.

#### **Emergency Removal of Southern Windowpane Accountability Measure**

On September 1, 2017, NMFS published an emergency rule in the Federal Register (82 FR 41564) to remove the 2017 southern windowpane flounder AM for non-groundfish trawl vessels that was triggered as a result of a 2015 quota overage. The comment period for this rule ends on October 2, 2017. For additional information, please contact Aja Szumylo at (978) 281-9195, or email at Aja.Szumylo@noaa.gov.

**2017 Recreational Measure for Gulf of Maine Cod and Haddock**

On July 27, 2017, NMFS published a final rule in the Federal Register (82 FR 24086) to set recreational management measures for Gulf of Maine cod and haddock for the remainder of the 2017 fishing year. This action prohibited recreational possession of cod, reduced the haddock bag limit, and implements a new closed season for haddock in the fall. The intended effect of this action is to reduce catch of cod and haddock in order to ensure that fishing year 2017 recreational catch limits are not exceeded. For additional information, please contact Emily Keiley at (978) 281-9116 or email at [Emily.Keiley@noaa.gov](mailto:Emily.Keiley@noaa.gov).

**Approval of Modifications to a Regulatory Exemption for Groundfish Sectors (Final Sector Rule)**

On August 18, 2017, NMFS published a final rule in the Federal Register (82 FR 39363) to approve changes to the small-mesh exemption area for groundfish sectors. We proposed changes to the exemption area in the interim final sector rule. This action increased the area where sector vessels may use the exemption, but excluded areas overlapping with the windowpane flounder AM areas. For additional information, please contact Kyle Molton at (978) 281-9236 or email at [Kyle.Molton@noaa.gov](mailto:Kyle.Molton@noaa.gov).

**Reimbursement of Sector At-Sea Monitoring Costs**

For the 2017 fishing year, NMFS has continued to offset a portion of industry's costs for the groundfish at-sea monitoring program through a cooperative agreement with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. The ASMFC is reimbursing sectors for 60 percent of their ASM and electronic monitoring costs for sector trips beginning on or after May 1, 2017. We are actively monitoring and evaluating the spend-down of available funds consistent with projected effort for the remainder of the fishing year. For additional information, please contact Liz Sullivan at (978) 282-8493 or email at [Liz.Sullivan@noaa.gov](mailto:Liz.Sullivan@noaa.gov).

## **Scallops**

None at this time

## **Monkfish**

**Framework Adjustment 10 to the Monkfish Fishery Management Plan**

NMFS approved Framework 10 through a final rule in the Federal Register (82 FR 32145) on July 12, 2017. Framework 10 sets monkfish specifications for fishing years 2017-2019 (May 1, 2017, through April 30, 2020). It also increases days-at-sea allocations and trip limits to provide additional operational flexibility and fishing opportunities. For additional information, please contact the Sustainable Fisheries Division at (978) 281-9315.

## **Herring**

None at this time

## **Skate**

### **Skate Framework 4**

This action would modify effort controls and possession limits to reduce the risk of the skate bait fishery from closing down as it did in fishing year 2016. Several measures are proposed to de-couple the skate wing and bait inseason trip limit triggers that control catch, and provide a more consistent supply of skate bait to the lobster fishery. The proposed rule is currently in development. For additional information, please contact Michael Ruccio at (978) 281-9104, or email at [Michael.Ruccio@noaa.gov](mailto:Michael.Ruccio@noaa.gov).

## **Atlantic Deep-Sea Red Crab**

None at this time

## **Mid-Atlantic Council Actions**

### **Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass**

#### **Massachusetts Commercial Summer Flounder Closure**

NMFS published a temporary rule in the Federal Register on July 21, 2017, (82 FR 33827) as notification that the 2017 commercial summer flounder quota allocated to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has been harvested, and the fishery is closed for the remainder of the fishing year. Vessels holding Federal commercial permits are prohibited from landing summer flounder, effective 0001 hours, July 20, 2017, for the remainder of the 2017 calendar year, unless additional quota becomes available through a transfer from another state. This closure was coordinated with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' closure of its commercial summer flounder fishery to state permitted vessels and dealers on July 19, 2017. For additional information, please contact Cynthia Hanson at (978) 281-9180, or email at [Cynthia.hanson@noaa.gov](mailto:Cynthia.hanson@noaa.gov).

### **Surfclam and Ocean Quahog**

#### **Surfclam and Ocean Quahog ITQ Cost Recovery**

On May 10, 2017, NMFS announced the 2017 cost recovery tag fees for the surfclam and ocean quahog individual transferable quota (ITQ) fisheries. This is the start of the new cost recovery program for the surfclam and ocean quahog ITQ fisheries. The 2017 tag fees are \$0.32 per surfclam tag and \$0.20 per ocean quahog tag. The fee to the ITQ shareholder will be based on how many cage tag numbers initial allocated to each shareholder are used to land clams, even if some or all of those tags are leased or otherwise transferred to another individual who uses them to land clams. NMFS will issue ITQ shareholders a single bill in March 2018 based on all of the cage tags used during 2017. Shareholders who do not use any tags will not receive a bill. The tag fee announcement is available online at:

[www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/sustainable/species/clam/](http://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/sustainable/species/clam/). For additional information, please contact Doug Potts at 978-281-9341 or [Douglas.Potts@noaa.gov](mailto:Douglas.Potts@noaa.gov).

**2018-2020 Surfclam and Ocean Quahog Specifications**

This action would implement surfclam and ocean quahog specifications for fishing years 2018 through 2020. The proposed commercial quotas are status quo, continuing measures in place from previous years. We are currently preparing a proposed rule to seek public comment on the action. For additional information, please contact Michael Ruccio at (978) 281-9104, or email at [Michael.Ruccio@noaa.gov](mailto:Michael.Ruccio@noaa.gov).

**Atlantic Bluefish**

None at this time

**Spiny Dogfish**

None at this time

**Atlantic Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish**

**Closure of the Directed *Illex* Squid Fishery for the Remainder of the 2017 Season**

NMFS published a temporary rule in the Federal Register on September 11, 2017, (82 FR 42610) as notification that 95% of the 2017 *Illex* squid quota is projected to be harvested by September 15, 2017, and the directed fishery is closed for the remainder of the fishing year. Vessels holding Federal *Illex* moratorium permits are prohibited from landing no more than the incidental limit of 10,000 lb. of *Illex* squid, effective 0001 hours, September 15, 2017, for the remainder of the 2017 calendar year. For additional information, please contact Alyson Pitts at 978-281-9352 or email at [alyson.pitts@noaa.gov](mailto:alyson.pitts@noaa.gov)

**Tilefish**

**Tilefish Framework 2**

This action would modify the incidental possession limit, clarify allowed gear for recreational fishing, and make several improvements to the tilefish individual fishing quota (IFQ) program. We are currently preparing a proposed rule to seek public comment on the action. For additional information, please contact Doug Potts at 978-281-9341 or [Douglas.Potts@noaa.gov](mailto:Douglas.Potts@noaa.gov).

**Golden Tilefish Specifications 2018-2020**

This action would identify separate quotas for the individual fishing quota and incidental fisheries, and implement golden tilefish specifications for fishing years 2018 through 2020. These specifications represent an approximately 14-percent reduction in overall commercial quota from 2017 to ensure overfishing does not occur. Three comments were received on the proposed rule, but no changes have been made to the specifications as a result of these comments. We are currently preparing a final rule to implement this action.. For additional information, please contact Cynthia Hanson at (978) 281-9180, or email at [Cynthia.hanson@noaa.gov](mailto:Cynthia.hanson@noaa.gov).

## Other Actions

### Paperwork Reduction Act

#### **Comment Period for Information Collection for the Greater Atlantic Region Vessel Identification Requirements**

NFMS published a notice in the Federal Register on April 17, 2017, (82 FR 32175) announcing a 60-day comment period on a proposed extension to the Greater Atlantic Region Gear Identification collection of information as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden. Regulations require that owners of vessels over 25 ft in registered length that have Federal permits to fish in the Greater Atlantic Region display the vessel's name and official number. The name and number must be of a specific size at specified locations to be clearly visible from enforcement vessels and aircraft. The display of the identifying characters aids in fishery law enforcement. The public comment period is currently open, and ends on September 11, 2017. For additional information, please contact Cynthia Hanson at (978) 281-9180, or email at [Cynthia.hanson@noaa.gov](mailto:Cynthia.hanson@noaa.gov).

### Forage Species

#### **Final Rule for the Unmanaged Forage Fish Omnibus Amendment**

NMFS published a final rule for the Unmanaged Forage Fish Omnibus Amendment in the Federal Register on August 28, 2017, (82 FR 40721). This amendment implemented an annual landing limit and possession limits for Atlantic chub mackerel and certain forage fish species and species groups within Mid-Atlantic Federal waters, permit and reporting requirements, a transiting provision, and a list of allowable framework measures. We disapproved the inclusion of bullet and frigate mackerel as forage fish under this action because the best available scientific information did not support the determination that these species are forage for species managed by the Mid-Atlantic Council. For additional information, please contact Douglas Christel at (978) 281-9141 or email at [douglas.christel@noaa.gov](mailto:douglas.christel@noaa.gov).

### Lobster

None at this time

### Jonah Crab

None at this time

### Blueline Tilefish

#### **Blueline Tilefish Amendment**

NMFS published a Notice of Availability in the Federal Register on June 14, 2017, (82 FR 27223) and a proposed rule on June 28, 2017 (82 FR 29263) for Tilefish Amendment 6. This amendment would add blueline tilefish to the Tilefish Fishery Management Plan and establish management measures for the resource in the Mid-Atlantic. The comment period on the proposed rule has closed, but we are accepting comments on the notice of availability through August 14, 2017. For additional information, please contact Doug Potts at 978-281-9341 or email at [Douglas.Potts@noaa.gov](mailto:Douglas.Potts@noaa.gov).

## **Industry Funded Monitoring Omnibus Amendment**

None at this time

## **Electronic Vessel Trip Report Omnibus Framework**

NMFS published a final rule on September 11, 2017, that implements a requirement for charter and party vessels that hold a Federal permit to fish for species managed by a Mid-Atlantic Council FMP, while on a trip carrying passengers for hire, to submit VTRs by electronic means. Vessels must submit these reports within 48 hours following the completion of a fishing trip. This action will be effective on trips occurring on or after March 12, 2018. For additional information, please contact Dan Luers at 978-282-8457 or [Daniel.Luers@noaa.gov](mailto:Daniel.Luers@noaa.gov).

## **Omnibus Acceptable Biological Catch Framework**

### **Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council; Omnibus Acceptable Biological Catch Framework Adjustment**

NMFS published a proposed rule in the Federal Register on July 19, 2017, (82 FR 33036) that would provide consistency with the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council's risk policy for the Scientific and Statistical Committee to recommend constant multi-year ABCs if the overfishing probability average adheres to the appropriate risk policy overfishing probability goal. This action would also automatically incorporate new or updated status determination criteria at the conclusion of stock assessment peer-reviews for the Atlantic Bluefish, Golden Tilefish, and Atlantic Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish Fishery Management Plans (FMPs). In addition, this action would add regulatory language clarifying the assessment level designations for the Council's ABC control rule. The comment period for this proposed rule closed on August 18, 2017. We are currently preparing a final rule for implementation of this action. For additional information, please contact Michael Ruccio at (978) 281-9104, or email at [Michael.Ruccio@noaa.gov](mailto:Michael.Ruccio@noaa.gov).

## **Cost Recovery Programs**

### **Cost Recovery Transition to CRS**

The Regional Office is working to transition some aspects of cost recovery billing and collections for our catch share programs (LAGC Scallop IFQ, Tilefish IFQ, and Surfclam and Ocean Quahog ITQ) to Central Receivables Service (CRS). CRS is a free service of the Treasury Dept. that assists other federal agencies to issue bills and collect past-due funds. This transition should help streamline our process and reduce some administrative costs currently charged to the industry. We are still finalizing some aspects of this change, and the transition **will not** affect the upcoming LAGC Scallop IFQ bills scheduled for November. When we finalize the new system, we will have a larger outreach effort to make sure the Council and the industry know exactly what these changes mean for them. For additional information, contact Doug Potts at 978-281-9341. For additional information, please contact Doug Potts at 978-281-9341 or email at [Douglas.Potts@noaa.gov](mailto:Douglas.Potts@noaa.gov).

## **Protected Resources Actions**

### **An update on Atlantic sturgeon critical habitat**

Five distinct population segments (DPS) of Atlantic sturgeon were listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) in 2012. The ESA requires that we designate critical habitat at the time of listing, unless it is not then determinable, in which case we must designate critical habitat within a year of the species listing. At the time of listing, we found that critical habitat was not determinable. The Delaware Riverkeeper and NRDC sued NMFS in 2014 for failing to designate critical habitat. In accordance with a court consent decree, we issued proposed critical habitat designations for the five DPSs on June 3, 2016, (81 FR 35701 and 81 FR 36078). The public comment period was open for 105-days. We published a final rule designating critical habitat for all five DPSs on August 17, 2017, (82 FR 39160). All of the designated critical habitat is within rivers along the US Atlantic Coast; there is no critical habitat designated in marine waters. The critical habitat designation does not create preserves or refuges and does not come with any prohibitions on in-water activities, including fishing and boating. Rather, it means that Federal agencies must consider the effects of actions they authorize, fund or carry out on the critical habitat through the ESA section 7 consultation process. We do not anticipate any impacts to fisheries managed by the councils to result from the critical habitat designation. Information on the final rule, including maps of the areas designated, is available at:

<https://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/protected/atlsturgeon/index.html>.

Questions regarding the designation can be directed to Lynn Lankshear, GARFO Atlantic sturgeon coordinator at (978-282-8473 or [Lynn.Lankshear@noaa.gov](mailto:Lynn.Lankshear@noaa.gov)) or Julie Crocker, GARFO ESA Fish Recovery Coordinator at (978-282-8480 or [Julie.Crocker@noaa.gov](mailto:Julie.Crocker@noaa.gov)).

## **Research Permits and Acknowledgments - Applications Under Review**

On March 7, 2017, NMFS received an initial Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) request from the Environmental Defense Fund and Gulf of Maine Research Institute to test a maximized retention electronic monitoring (EM) program. A revised and complete EFP request was submitted on April 17, 2017. The application requests that participating vessels be exempt from commercial minimum fish sizes and be required to retain all allocated groundfish catch, regardless of size. Vessels would run EM on 100 percent of trips, and the video footage would be used to verify compliance with retention requirements. Catch would be sampled through a dockside monitoring program for all EFP trips. The applicants also requested that participating vessels be granted access to closed areas and be exempt from minimum mesh size requirements for trawl gear. For additional information, please contact Claire Fitz-Gerald at (978)281-9255, or email at [claire.fitzgerald@gmail.com](mailto:claire.fitzgerald@gmail.com).

On April 27, 2017, NMFS received a complete EFP application from the Gulf of Maine Research Institute (GMRI) to test an experimental, off-bottom trawl net outfitted with 5.1-inch, or 4.5-inch codend mesh to target haddock and redfish. The EFP would allow researchers to test the experimental net during commercial fishing operations. This project was funded through the 2015 Saltonstall-Kennedy Grant Program. Testing of the off-bottom trawl would occur August-December 2017. For additional information, please contact Emily Keiley at (978) 281-9116 or email at [Emily.Keiley@noaa.gov](mailto:Emily.Keiley@noaa.gov).

On August 14, 2017, NMFS received an EFP application from the Coonamessett Farm Foundation to test the selectivity of raised webbing and 6.0-inch gillnets in the commercial haddock fishery. The applicant has requested access to Closed Area I and an exemption from the minimum mesh regulations to facilitate their research. This project was funded through the Bycatch Reduction Engineering Program. For additional information, please contact Kyle Molton at (978) 281-9236 or email at [Kyle.Molton@noaa.gov](mailto:Kyle.Molton@noaa.gov).

On August 10, 2017, NMFS received a complete renewal application from the Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation (CFRF) for their EFP to conduct a fleet-based study on the abundance and distribution of juvenile American lobster in Lobster Management Areas 2 and 3. This renewal also expanded the project to include Jonah crab as a target species and shift the survey area to include lobster management areas 4 and 5 as well. Under this EFP, each of the 18 participating vessels would be allowed to fish up to 3 modified traps in excess of its Federal trap allocation, for no more than 54 ventless traps in the water at any given time. For additional information, please contact Cynthia Hanson at (978) 281-9180, or email at [Cynthia.hanson@noaa.gov](mailto:Cynthia.hanson@noaa.gov).

## **Research Permits and Acknowledgments - Application Review Completed**

NMFS issued a Letter of Acknowledgement (LOA) to the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (MA DMF), on August 3, 2017, to test an experimental, off-bottom trawl net. This project was funded through the 2015 Saltonstall-Kennedy Grant Program. For additional information, please contact Emily Keiley at (978) 281-9116 or email at [Emily.Keiley@noaa.gov](mailto:Emily.Keiley@noaa.gov).

NMFS issued an LOA to GMRI on August 1, 2017, in support of a study on the age structure of Atlantic cod inside and outside of the Cashes Ledge closed area. This project is funded by the Saltonstall-Kennedy Grant Program. Cod will be collected at 21 sites during a total of four research trips. For additional information, please contact Emily Keiley at (978) 281-9116 or email at [Emily.Keiley@noaa.gov](mailto:Emily.Keiley@noaa.gov).

NMFS issued an LOA to the University of New Hampshire on September 14, 2017, to test a traditional trawl outfitted with a deflector panel. The addition of the deflector panel results in a low profile opening, which has been designed to target flounder, while reducing the incidental catch of cod and other roundfish. This project is funded by the NMFS Bycatch Reduction Engineering Program. For additional information please contact Emily Keiley at (978) 281-9116 or email at [Emily.Keiley@noaa.gov](mailto:Emily.Keiley@noaa.gov).

On July 21, 2017, NMFS issued a scientific research permit (SRP) to the Northeast Fisheries Science Center in support of a research project to estimate the capture efficiency of the Center's survey bottom trawl. A chartered commercial fishing vessel will conduct survey work using a twin trawl rig in southern New England and mid-Atlantic Bight waters from August 7–27, 2017. For additional information, please contact Spencer Talmage at (978) 281-9232 or email at [Spencer.Talmage@noaa.gov](mailto:Spencer.Talmage@noaa.gov).

On July 25, 2017, NMFS issued an extension of an LOA to the Maine Department of Marine Resources in support of a tagging study of adult halibut. The participating commercial fishing vessels will use longline gear in the Gulf of Maine to catch and tag halibut through September 30, 2017. For additional information, please contact Kyle Molton at (978) 281-9236 or email at [Kyle.Molton@noaa.gov](mailto:Kyle.Molton@noaa.gov).

On August 15, 2017, NMFS issued an LOA to the Maine Department of Marine Resources in support of the Maine and New Hampshire inshore trawl survey. A chartered commercial fishing vessel will conduct survey work in nearshore waters of the Gulf of Maine during the fall of 2017 and the spring of 2018. For additional information, please contact Kyle Molton at (978) 281-9236 or email at [Kyle.Molton@noaa.gov](mailto:Kyle.Molton@noaa.gov).

On August 31, 2017, NMFS issued an EFP to the Cape Cod Commercial Fishermen's Alliance to conduct a 100 percent electronic monitoring project. This EFP expands upon an existing EFP awarded to The Nature Conservancy in fishing year 2016. Data collected through this EFP will be used to further explore an audit-based EM model, in which vessel captains report discarded catch in an electronic logbook, and a subset of EM video footage is reviewed for verification purposes. Participating vessels will use EM on 100 percent of sector trips and must adhere to catch handling and reporting requirements at-sea. Vessels fishing under this EFP may use hook gear in the Western Gulf of Maine and Cashes Ledge Closure Areas, and both hook gear and sink gillnets in Closed Areas I and II. For additional information, please contact Claire Fitz-Gerald at (978) 281-9255, or email at [claire.fitz-gerald@noaa.gov](mailto:claire.fitz-gerald@noaa.gov).

On July 20, 2017, NMFS issued an EFP to the Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation (CFRF) for their Southern New England Cooperative Ventless Trap Survey, which they are conducting in cooperation with the University of Rhode Island to better understand the distribution and habitat use of American lobster and Jonah crab in the RI/MA Wind Energy Area in Lobster Management Area 2. This EFP is a cooperative expansion of a Letter of Acknowledgement project (issued on May 10, 2017), in order to allow the participation of CFRF, and will expire on November 30, 2017. For additional information, please contact Cynthia Hanson at (978) 281-9180, or email at [Cynthia.hanson@noaa.gov](mailto:Cynthia.hanson@noaa.gov).

On July 7, 2017, NMFS issued a revision to an EFP originally issued to the Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation (CFRF) on November 21, 2016; extending the project period nine months, and adding the F/V Johnny B. The extension is not an expansion of effort or scope, but an attempt to reach the initial sampling data target that was not reached due to unforeseen financial and scheduling obstacles. The captain of the new additional vessel is already a current fleet participant, and because sampling effort in this project applies to each individual captain and not a particular vessel, this addition will not alter the sampling maximums for the research fleet. The sampling protocol, requested Federal exemptions, and overall project remain the same. The new expiration date of this project is April 30, 2018. For additional information, please contact Cynthia Hanson at (978) 281-9180, or email at [Cynthia.hanson@noaa.gov](mailto:Cynthia.hanson@noaa.gov).

On July 6, 2017, NMFS issued an EFP to the Coonamessett Farm Foundation to conduct a scallop resource survey in the Northern Gulf of Maine Scallop Management Area. The vessel will deploy both the HabCam video survey, as well as the NMFS survey dredge for 10 tows. For additional information, please contact Shannah Jaburek at (978) 282-8456 or email at [Shannah.jaburek@noaa.gov](mailto:Shannah.jaburek@noaa.gov).

*Status Report of Greater Atlantic Region Regulatory Actions*

On August 7, 2017, NMFS issued an EFP revision to the CFRF for their fleet-based study on the abundance and distribution of juvenile American lobster in Lobster Management Areas 2 and 3. This revision added two vessels to the research fleet and removed one, bringing the total number of vessels to 18. For additional information, please contact Cynthia Hanson at (978) 281-9180, or email at [Cynthia.hanson@noaa.gov](mailto:Cynthia.hanson@noaa.gov).

On August 15, 2017, NMFS issued a short-term extension to the CFRF's fleet-based EFP studying the abundance and distribution of juvenile American lobster in Lobster Management Areas 2 and 3. This extension would allow time for a full EFP renewal without an interruption in the research. The sampling protocol, participating vessels, requested Federal exemptions, and overall project remain the same. The new expiration date of this EFP is November 24, 2017. For additional information, please contact Cynthia Hanson at (978) 281-9180, or email at [Cynthia.hanson@noaa.gov](mailto:Cynthia.hanson@noaa.gov).

On August 15, 2017, NMFS issued an LOA to INSPIRE Environmental for the final year of the Deepwater Wind Block Island Wind Farm Trawl Survey. This project is in its fifth year, and works to characterize the fishery resources in the area of the Block Island wind farm before, during, and after construction of the turbines. For additional information, please contact Cynthia Hanson at (978) 281-9180, or email at [Cynthia.hanson@noaa.gov](mailto:Cynthia.hanson@noaa.gov).

On September 1, 2017, NMFS issued an LOA to Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in support of its annual horseshoe crab abundance monitoring survey. The participating commercial vessel will conduct approximately 70 collection trawls over 20 trips from September 2017 through the end of December 2017. Trawling is conducted using a commercial flounder trawl during both daytime and nighttime hours, with tows lasting 15 minutes each. Horseshoe crabs from each tow will be counted, measured, and identified to sex and maturity stage before being immediately released back into the area of capture. Cynthia Hanson at (978) 281-9180, or email at [Cynthia.hanson@noaa.gov](mailto:Cynthia.hanson@noaa.gov).

On September 6, 2017, NMFS issued two SRPs to the Northeast Fisheries Science Center for a pair of studies evaluating the target catch retention of trawls equipped with cable turtle excluder devices (TEDs) compared to standard trawls (without the TEDs) in both the longfin squid and summer flounder fisheries. These SRPs allow one commercial trawl vessel (F/V Karen Elizabeth, #410326) with NEFSC scientific personnel onboard to conduct each study using a twin trawl and paired comparative experimental design from September 2017 through October 2018. The participating vessel is allowed to sell normal/legal catch consistent with their permits during the studies as compensation, and all undersized or non-permitted will be returned to the water after being recorded. For additional information, please contact Cynthia Hanson at (978) 281-9180, or email at [Cynthia.hanson@noaa.gov](mailto:Cynthia.hanson@noaa.gov).



National Marine Fisheries Service  
Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office  
Sustainable Fisheries Division  
[www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov](http://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov)



# Status Report of Greater Atlantic Region Actions

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Prepared for the August 8-10, 2017  
Meeting of the  
Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council

August 8, 2017

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## **New England Council Actions**

### **Small-Mesh Multispecies**

None at this time

### **Groundfish**

#### **Framework Adjustment 56 to the Northeast Multispecies FMP**

The final rule for Framework 56 published in the Federal Register on August 1, 2017 (82 FR 35660). The action sets 2017 specifications for three U.S./Canada stocks (Eastern Georges Bank (GB) cod, Eastern GB haddock, and GB yellowtail flounder), as well as 2017-2019 specifications for witch flounder. This action also allocates northern windowpane flounder to the scallop fishery, revises the trigger for implementing the scallop fishery accountability measures (AMs) for GB yellowtail flounder and northern windowpane flounder, and increases the GB haddock allocation for the midwater trawl fishery.

The Framework 56 final rule also announced the implementation of AMs for northern and southern windowpane flounder due to a 2015 overage of the total annual catch limit (ACL) for both stocks. Based on new catch information, catch of both windowpane stocks was below the quota in 2016. The Groundfish FMP allows us to remove the groundfish fishery AM early if a subsequent overage does not occur. As a result, the AMs for groundfish vessels will only be in place for 1 month, through August 31, and will be removed on September 1. Because the FMP only provides us flexibility to remove the AM early for groundfish vessels, we are considering a future action to remove the AM for non-groundfish trawl vessels fishing with a codend mesh of 5 inches or greater. More information on the windowpane AM is available here: <https://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/regs/infodocs/windowpaneaminfosheet.pdf>.

#### **Trimester Total Allowable Catch (TAC) Closure for Georges Bank Cod**

On July 28, 2017, NMFS filed a temporary rule in the Federal Register to close the Trimester TAC area for Georges Bank Cod to groundfish common pool vessels fishing with hook, gillnet, and trawl gear. This closure includes statistical areas 521, 522, 525, and 561. This action is required when catch information shows the common pool fishery has harvested 90 percent of its Trimester 1 TAC for Georges Bank Cod. The area will reopen at the start of Trimester 2 on September 1, 2017. For additional information, please contact Claire Fitz-Gerald at (978) 281-9255 or email at [Claire.Fitz-Gerald@noaa.gov](mailto:Claire.Fitz-Gerald@noaa.gov)

## Scallops

None at this time

## Monkfish

### **Framework Adjustment 10 to the Monkfish Fishery Management Plan**

NMFS approved Framework 10 through a final rule in the Federal Register (82 FR 32145) on July 12, 2017. Framework 10 sets monkfish specifications for fishing years 2017-2019 (May 1, 2017, through April 30, 2020). It also increases days-at-sea allocations and trip limits to provide additional operational flexibility and fishing opportunities. For additional information, please contact William Whitmore at (978) 281-9182 or email at [William.Whitmore@noaa.gov](mailto:William.Whitmore@noaa.gov).

## Herring

None at this time

## Skate

None at this time

## Atlantic Deep-Sea Red Crab

None at this time

## Mid-Atlantic Council Actions

### Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass

#### **Massachusetts Commercial Summer Flounder Closure**

NMFS published a temporary rule in the Federal Register on July 21, 2017, (82 FR 33827) as notification that the 2017 commercial summer flounder quota allocated to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has been harvested, and the fishery is closed for the remainder of the fishing year. Vessels holding Federal commercial permits are prohibited from landing summer flounder, effective 0001 hours, July 20, 2017, for the remainder of the 2017 calendar year, unless additional quota becomes available through a transfer from another state. This closure was coordinated with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' closure of its commercial summer flounder fishery to state permitted vessels and dealers on July 19, 2017. For additional information, please contact Cynthia Hanson at (978) 281-9180, or email at [Cynthia.hanson@noaa.gov](mailto:Cynthia.hanson@noaa.gov).

## Atlantic Bluefish

None at this time

## **Spiny Dogfish**

None at this time

## **Surfclam and Ocean Quahog**

### **Surfclam and Ocean Quahog ITQ Cost Recovery**

On May 10, 2017, NMFS announced the 2017 cost recovery tag fees for the surfclam and ocean quahog individual transferable quota (ITQ) fisheries. This is the start of the new cost recovery program for the surfclam and ocean quahog ITQ fisheries. The 2017 tag fees are \$0.32 per surfclam tag and \$0.20 per ocean quahog tag. The fee to the ITQ shareholder will be based on how many cage tag numbers initial allocated to each shareholder are used to land clams, even if some or all of those tags are leased or otherwise transferred to another individual who uses them to land clams. NMFS will issue ITQ shareholders a single bill in March 2018 based on all of the cage tags used during 2017. Shareholders who do not use any tags will not receive a bill. The tag fee announcement is available online at:

[www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/sustainable/species/clam/](http://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/sustainable/species/clam/). For additional information, please contact Doug Potts at 978-281-9341 or Douglas.Potts@noaa.gov.

## **Atlantic Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish**

### **Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for Chub Mackerel**

NMFS published a notice of intent in the Federal Register on March 22, 2017, (82 FR 14694) documenting the Mid-Atlantic Council's intent to prepare an environmental impact statement to support integrating Atlantic chub mackerel into the Atlantic Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish Fishery Management Plan. This action would consider implementing annual catch limits, accountability measures, essential fish habitat designations, and a definition of the management unit for this species. The Council may also consider other measures such as permit requirements, annual catch targets, possession limits, minimum fish size restrictions, gear restrictions and reporting requirements. The comment period on the notice of intent closed on May 31, 2017. For additional information, please contact Douglas Christel at (978) 281-9141, or email at douglas.christel@noaa.gov.

## **Tilefish**

### **Tilefish Framework 2**

This action would modify the incidental possession limit, clarify allowed gear for recreational fishing, and make several improvements to the tilefish individual fishing quota (IFQ) program. We are currently preparing a proposed rule to seek public comment on the action. For additional information, please contact Doug Potts at 978-281-9341 or Douglas.Potts@noaa.gov.

### **Golden Tilefish Specifications 2018-2020**

This action would identify separate quotas for the individual fishing quota and incidental fisheries, and implement golden tilefish specifications for fishing years 2018 through 2020. The proposed specifications represent an approximately 14-percent reduction in overall commercial quota from 2017 to ensure overfishing does not occur. We are currently preparing a proposed rule to seek public comment on the action. For additional information, please contact Cynthia Hanson at (978) 281-9180, or email at Cynthia.hanson@noaa.gov.

## Other Actions

### Paperwork Reduction Act

#### **Comment Period for Information Collection for the Greater Atlantic Region Vessel Identification Requirements**

NFMS published a notice in the Federal Register on April 17, 2017, (82 FR 32175) announcing a 60-day comment period on a proposed extension to the Greater Atlantic Region Gear Identification collection of information as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden. Regulations require that owners of vessels over 25 ft in registered length that have Federal permits to fish in the Greater Atlantic Region display the vessel's name and official number. The name and number must be of a specific size at specified locations to be clearly visible from enforcement vessels and aircraft. The display of the identifying characters aids in fishery law enforcement. The public comment period is currently open, and ends on September 11, 2017. For additional information, please contact Cynthia Hanson at (978) 281-9180, or email at [Cynthia.hanson@noaa.gov](mailto:Cynthia.hanson@noaa.gov).

### Forage Species

#### **Decision on the Unmanaged Forage Omnibus Amendment**

On June 16, 2017, NMFS partially approved the Unmanaged Forage Omnibus Amendment. NMFS disapproved the inclusion of bullet and frigate mackerel as ecosystem component species, but approved all other measures, including forage species and chub mackerel possession limits, an annual landing limit for chub mackerel, permit and reporting requirements, a transiting provision, and a list of allowable framework measures. We will publish a final rule documenting this decision, our responses to public comments, and final regulations shortly. For additional information, please contact Douglas Christel at (978) 281-9141 or email at [douglas.christel@noaa.gov](mailto:douglas.christel@noaa.gov).

### Lobster

None at this time

### Jonah Crab

None at this time

### Blueline Tilefish

#### **Blueline Tilefish Amendment**

NMFS published a Notice of Availability in the Federal Register on June 14, 2017 (82 FR 27223), and a proposed rule on June 28, 2017 (82 FR 29263) for Tilefish Amendment 6. This amendment would add blueline tilefish to the Tilefish Fishery Management Plan and establish management measures for the resource in the Mid-Atlantic. The comment period on the proposed rule has closed, but we are accepting comments on the notice of availability through August 14, 2017. For additional information, please contact Doug Potts at 978-281-9341 or email at [Douglas.Potts@noaa.gov](mailto:Douglas.Potts@noaa.gov).

## **Industry Funded Monitoring Omnibus Amendment**

None at this time

## **Electronic Vessel Trip Report Omnibus Framework**

NMFS published a proposed rule in the Federal Register on May 24, 2017, (83 FR 23774) soliciting public comment on the eVTR Omnibus Framework Adjustment. The comment period closed on June 23, 2017. The eVTR Framework would implement a requirement for charter and party vessels that hold a Federal permit to fish for species managed by a Mid-Atlantic Council FMP, while on a trip carrying passengers for hire, to submit VTRs by electronic means. Vessels would be required to submit these reports through a NOAA-approved software application within 48 hours following the completion of a fishing trip. NMFS anticipates publishing a final rule shortly. For additional information, please contact Dan Luers at 978-282-8457 or [Daniel.Luers@noaa.gov](mailto:Daniel.Luers@noaa.gov).

## **Omnibus Acceptable Biological Catch Framework**

### **Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council; Omnibus Acceptable Biological Catch Framework Adjustment**

NMFS published a proposed rule in the Federal Register on July 19, 2017, (82 FR 33036) that would provide consistency with the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council's risk policy for the Scientific and Statistical Committee to recommend constant multi-year ABCs if the overfishing probability average adheres to the appropriate risk policy overfishing probability goal. This action would also automatically incorporate new or updated status determination criteria at the conclusion of stock assessment peer-reviews for the Atlantic Bluefish, Golden Tilefish, and Atlantic Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish Fishery Management Plans (FMPs). In addition, this action would add regulatory language clarifying the assessment level designations for the Council's ABC control rule. The comment period for this proposed rule will close on August 18, 2017. For additional information, please contact Reid Lichwell at 978-281-9112 or email at [Reid.lichwell@noaa.gov](mailto:Reid.lichwell@noaa.gov).

## **Cost Recovery Programs**

### **Cost Recovery Transition to CRS**

The Regional Office is working with Centralized Receivables Service (CRS) to handle some aspects of billing and collections for the cost recovery aspects of our catch share programs; specifically Tilefish IFQ, LAGC Scallop IFQ, and Surfclam and Ocean Quahog ITQ. CRS is a free service of the U.S. Treasury Dept. that assists other Federal agencies to issue bills and collect funds. This transition should help streamline our process and reduce some administrative costs that are currently charged to the industry. We are still working out some aspects of this change. When we finalize the new system, we will have a larger outreach effort to make sure the Council and the industry know exactly what these changes mean for them. The transition may be complete before the LAGC Scallop IFQ bills scheduled for November, and more certainly before the Tilefish IFQ and Surfclam/Ocean Quahog ITQ bills scheduled for March 2018. For additional information, please contact Doug Potts at 978-281-9341 or email at [Douglas.Potts@noaa.gov](mailto:Douglas.Potts@noaa.gov).

## **Protected Resources Actions**

None at this time

## **Research Permits and Acknowledgments - Applications Under Review**

On March 7, 2017, NMFS received an initial Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) request from the Environmental Defense Fund and Gulf of Maine Research Institute to test a maximized retention electronic monitoring (EM) program. A revised and complete EFP request was submitted on April 17, 2017. The application requests that participating vessels be exempt from commercial minimum fish sizes and be required to retain all allocated groundfish catch, regardless of size. Vessels would run EM on 100 percent of trips, and the video footage would be used to verify compliance with retention requirements. Catch would be sampled through a dockside monitoring program for all EFP trips. The applicants also requested that participating vessels be granted access to closed areas and be exempt from minimum mesh size requirements for trawl gear. For additional information, please contact Claire Fitz-Gerald at (978)281-9255, or email at [claire.fitz-gerald@gmail.com](mailto:claire.fitz-gerald@gmail.com).

On April 5, 2017, NMFS received an EFP request from The Nature Conservancy (TNC) to expand TNC's existing electronic monitoring project. Data collected through this EFP would be used to further explore an audit-based EM model, in which a subset of EM video footage is reviewed to ensure accurate reporting. Participating vessels would use EM on 100 percent of sector trips and adhere to catch handling and reporting requirements. Participating vessels may be granted access to closed areas and other measures to improve business flexibility. NMFS published a notice for comment in the Federal Register on July 14, 2017 (82 FR 32534), and public comment closed on July 31, 2017. Vessels are in four separate sectors and use trawl, gillnet, tub trawl, and handline gear. For additional information, please contact Claire Fitz-Gerald at (978) 281-9255, or email at [claire.fitz-gerald@noaa.gov](mailto:claire.fitz-gerald@noaa.gov).

On April 27, 2017, NMFS received a complete EFP application from the Gulf of Maine Research Institute (GMRI) to test an experimental, off-bottom trawl net outfitted with 5.1-inch, or 4.5-inch codend mesh to target haddock and redfish. The EFP would allow researchers to test the experimental net during commercial fishing operations. This project was funded through the 2015 Saltonstall-Kennedy Grant Program. Testing of the off-bottom trawl would occur August-December 2017. For additional information, please contact Emily Keiley at (978) 281-9116 or email at [Emily.Keiley@noaa.gov](mailto:Emily.Keiley@noaa.gov).

On May 23, 2017, NMFS received a request for a Letter of Acknowledgement (LOA) from the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (MA DMF) to test an experimental, off-bottom trawl net. This project was funded through the 2015 Saltonstall-Kennedy Grant Program. Testing of the off-bottom trawl would occur in July and August 2017. For additional information, please contact Emily Keiley at (978) 281-9116 or email at [Emily.Keiley@noaa.gov](mailto:Emily.Keiley@noaa.gov).

On July 7, 2017, NMFS received a request for an LOA from GMRI in support of a study on the age structure of Atlantic cod inside and outside of the Cashes Ledge closed area. This project is funded by the Saltonstall-Kennedy Grant Program. Cod will be collected at 21 sites during a total of four research trips. For additional information, please contact Emily Keiley at (978) 281-9116 or email at [Emily.Keiley@noaa.gov](mailto:Emily.Keiley@noaa.gov).

On July 24, 2017, NMFS received a complete application from the Northeast Fisheries Science Center requesting EFPs for a pair of studies evaluating the catch rates of trawls equipped with cable turtle excluder devices (TEDs) compared to standard trawls (without the TEDs) in both the longfin squid and summer flounder fisheries. These EFPs would allow one commercial longfin squid vessel and two commercial summer flounder vessels to conduct paired comparative studies from August 2017-October 2018; evaluating TED-equipped otter bottom trawls against standard trawls without a TED to determine any change on the target catch. Participating vessels would be exempt from minimum mesh-size gear requirements of their respective fisheries to allow for the TED extension, and general possession limits and minimum fish size requirements specified in 50 CFR part 648, subsections B and D through O, for sampling purposes only. Vessels would be allowed to sell normal/legal catch consistent with their permits during the study, and all undersize or non-permitted would be returned to the water after being recorded. For additional information, please contact Cynthia Hanson at (978) 281-9180, or email at [Cynthia.hanson@noaa.gov](mailto:Cynthia.hanson@noaa.gov).

## **Research Permits and Acknowledgments - Application Review Completed**

On March 31, 2017, NMFS issued an LOA to the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, School for Marine Science and Technology in support of an Atlantic halibut tagging project. Chartered commercial fishing vessels will use longline gear to capture and tag Atlantic halibut to study Atlantic halibut stock structure and life history. The research is taking place from May 1 – October 31, 2017. For additional information, please contact Spencer Talmage at (978) 281-9232 or email at [Spencer.Talmage@noaa.gov](mailto:Spencer.Talmage@noaa.gov).

NMFS issued a LOA to Northeastern University on April 28, 2017, to conduct a cod population dynamics study. A revised LOA for this project was issued on May 31, 2017, to incorporate a small change to the project's research design. For additional information please contact Emily Keiley at (978) 281-9116 or email at [Emily.Keiley@noaa.gov](mailto:Emily.Keiley@noaa.gov).

NMFS issued an authorization of exempted educational activities (EEAA) to the University of New Hampshire (UNH) on June 5, 2017. The EEAA will be conducted to support the Shoals Marine Laboratory's academic program through UNH as part of two courses: Sustainable Marine Fisheries and Marine Immersion. Both courses are intended for students interested in marine conservation, and explore the theory and practice of fisheries sustainability through lectures, field work, and interactions with the fishing community. One day of trawling and two days of gill-netting occurred during the period of June 11-28, 2017, and one day of trawling will occur during the week of August 14-21, 2017. For additional information, please contact Emily Keiley at (978) 281-9116 or email at [Emily.Keiley@noaa.gov](mailto:Emily.Keiley@noaa.gov).

On June 19, 2017, NMFS issued an EFP to one commercial fisherman to conduct an independent project testing the economic viability of using electronic jigging machines to selectively target pollock in the Western Gulf of Maine Closure Area. This EFP authorizes a total of 15 trips in the closure area. The participating vessel is required to carry 100 percent observer coverage on research trips as a condition of the EFP. For additional information, please contact Kyle Molton at (978) 281-9236, or email at [kyle.molton@noaa.gov](mailto:kyle.molton@noaa.gov).

## *Status Report of Greater Atlantic Region Regulatory Actions*

On June 23, 2017, NMFS issued EFPs to three commercial fishermen to conduct independent projects testing the economic viability of using hook gear to selectively target pollock and haddock stocks in the Western Gulf of Maine and Cashes Ledge Closure Areas (excluding Cashes Ledge Habitat Closed Area), while avoiding bycatch of cod. These EFPs authorize a combined total of 200 trips in these closure areas. Participating vessels are required to carry 100 percent observer coverage on research trips as a condition of the EFP. For additional information, please contact Claire Fitz-Gerald at (978)281-9255, or email at [claire.fitz-gerald@noaa.gov](mailto:claire.fitz-gerald@noaa.gov).

On July 21, 2017, NMFS issued a scientific research permit (SRP) to the Northeast Fisheries Science Center in support of a research project to estimate the capture efficiency of the Center's survey bottom trawl. A chartered commercial fishing vessel will conduct survey work using a twin trawl rig in southern New England and mid-Atlantic Bight waters from August 7 – 27, 2017. For additional information, please contact Spencer Talmage at (978) 281-9232 or email at [Spencer.Talmage@noaa.gov](mailto:Spencer.Talmage@noaa.gov).

On July 25, 2017, NMFS issued an extension of an LOA to the Maine Department of Marine Resources in support of a tagging study of adult halibut. The participating commercial fishing vessels will conduct halibut for tagging using longline gear in the Gulf of Maine in through September 30, 2017. For additional information, please contact Kyle Molton at (978) 281-9236 or email at [Kyle.Molton@noaa.gov](mailto:Kyle.Molton@noaa.gov).

On July 20, 2017, NMFS issued an EFP to the Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation (CFRF) for their Southern New England Cooperative Ventless Trap Survey, which they are conducting in cooperation with the University of Rhode Island to better understand the distribution and habitat use of American lobster and Jonah crab in the RI/MA Wind Energy Area in Lobster Management Area 2. This EFP is a cooperative expansion of a Letter of Acknowledgement project (issued on May 10, 2017), in order to allow the participation of CFRF, and will expire on November 30, 2017. For additional information, please contact Cynthia Hanson at (978) 281-9180, or email at [Cynthia.hanson@noaa.gov](mailto:Cynthia.hanson@noaa.gov).

On July 7, 2017, NMFS issued a revision to an EFP originally issued to the Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation (CFRF) on November 21, 2016; extending the project period nine months, and adding the F/V Johnny B. The extension is not an expansion of effort or scope, but an attempt to reach the initial sampling data target that was not reached due to unforeseen financial and scheduling obstacles. The captain of the new additional vessel is already a current fleet participant, and because sampling effort in this project applies to each individual captain and not a particular vessel, this addition will not alter the sampling maximums for the research fleet. The sampling protocol, requested Federal exemptions, and overall project remain the same. The new expiration date of this project is April 30, 2018. For additional information, please contact Cynthia Hanson at (978) 281-9180, or email at [Cynthia.hanson@noaa.gov](mailto:Cynthia.hanson@noaa.gov).

On July 6, 2017, NMFS issued an EFP to the Coonamessett Farm Foundation to conduct a scallop resource survey in the Northern Gulf of Maine Scallop Management Area. The vessel will deploy both the HabCam video survey, as well as the NMFS survey dredge for 10 tows. For additional information, please contact Shannah Jaburek at (978) 282-8456 or email at [Shannah.jaburek@noaa.gov](mailto:Shannah.jaburek@noaa.gov).

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: July 7, 2017.

**Sarah Brabson,**

*NOAA PRA Clearance Officer.*

[FR Doc. 2017-14576 Filed 7-11-17; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3510-22-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

**RIN 0648-XF395**

#### Pacific Whiting; Advisory Panel

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

**ACTION:** Notice; call for nominations.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS is soliciting nominations for appointments to the United States Advisory Panel (AP) established in the Agreement between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of Canada on Pacific Hake/Whiting (Pacific Whiting Treaty). Nominations are being sought to fill one position on the AP for a four year term beginning in 2018.

**DATES:** Nominations must be received by August 11, 2017.

**ADDRESSES:** You may submit nominations by any of the following methods:

- *Email:* [whiting.nominations.wcr@noaa.gov](mailto:whiting.nominations.wcr@noaa.gov).

- *Fax:* 206-526-6736, Attn: Frank Lockhart.

- *Mail:* Barry Thom, Regional Administrator, West Coast Region, NMFS, 7600 Sand Point Way NE., Seattle, WA 98115-0070.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Frank Lockhart, (206) 526-6142 or Miako Ushio, (206) 526-4644.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

#### Pacific Whiting Treaty Committees Background

The Pacific Whiting Act of 2006 (Pacific Whiting Act), 16 U.S.C. 7001-10, implements the 2003 Agreement between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of Canada on Pacific Hake/Whiting. Among other provisions, the Pacific Whiting Act provides for the establishment of an Advisory Panel (AP). The AP makes recommendations to the Joint Management Committee on

bilateral Pacific whiting management issues. AP members must be knowledgeable or experienced in the harvesting, processing, marketing, management, conservation, or research of the offshore Pacific whiting resource. Eight individuals represent the United States on the AP, and nominations for one of those positions (id. at § 7005) is solicited through this notice.

Members appointed to the U.S. sections of the AP will be reimbursed for necessary travel expenses in accordance with Federal Travel Regulations and sections 5701, 5702, 5704 through 5708, and 5731 of Title 5. (Id. at § 7008). NMFS anticipates that 1-2 meetings of the AP will be held annually, and these meetings will be held in the United States or Canada. AP members will need a valid U.S. passport.

The Pacific Whiting Act also states that while performing their appointed duties, members "other than officers or employees of the United States Government, shall not be considered to be Federal employees while performing such service, except for purposes of injury compensation or tort claims liability as provided in chapter 81 of title 5 and chapter 171 of title 28." (Id.)

Information on the Pacific Whiting Treaty, including current committee members can be found at: [www.westcoast.fisheries.noaa.gov/fisheries/management/whiting/pacific\\_whiting\\_treaty.html](http://www.westcoast.fisheries.noaa.gov/fisheries/management/whiting/pacific_whiting_treaty.html).

#### Advisory Panel Qualifications

AP member nominees must be knowledgeable or experienced in the harvesting, processing, marketing, management, conservation, or research of the offshore Pacific whiting resource; and must not be employees of the United States government. Nomination packages for appointments should include:

1. The name of the applicant or nominee, position they are being nominated for and a description of his/her interest in Pacific whiting; and
2. A statement of background and/or description of how the nominee is knowledgeable or experienced in the harvesting, processing, marketing, management, conservation, or research of the offshore Pacific whiting resource. Letters of support for nominees will also be considered.

**Authority:** 16 U.S.C. 7001 *et seq.*

Dated: July 6, 2017.

**Emily H. Menashes,**

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

[FR Doc. 2017-14552 Filed 7-11-17; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3510-22-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

#### Proposed Information Collection; Comment Request; Greater Atlantic Region Vessel Identification Requirements

**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 September 11, 2017.

**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 [pracomments@doc.gov](mailto:pracomments@doc.gov)).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Requests for additional information or copies of the information collection instrument and instructions should be directed to Cynthia Hanson, (978) 281-9180 or [Cynthia.Hanson@noaa.gov](mailto:Cynthia.Hanson@noaa.gov).

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### I. Abstract

This request is for extension of a current information collection.

Regulations at 50 CFR 648.8 and § 697.8 require that owners of vessels over 25 ft (7.6 m) in registered length that have Federal permits to fish in the Greater Atlantic Region display the vessel's name and official number. The name and number must be of a specific size at specified locations: the vessel name must be affixed to the port and starboard sides of the bow and, if possible, on its stern. The official number must be displayed on the port and starboard sides of the deckhouse or hull, and on an appropriate weather deck so as to be clearly visible from enforcement vessels and aircraft. The display of the identifying characters aids in fishery law enforcement.

##### II. Method of Collection

No information is submitted to NMFS as a result of this collection. The vessel's identification information must be affixed to the vessel in the designated

locations, as specified in the regulations.

### III. Data

*OMB Control Number:* 0648–0350.

*Form Number(s):* None.

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

*Affected Public:* Individuals or households; business or other for-profit organizations.

*Estimated Number of Respondents:* 3,665.

*Estimated Time per Response:* 45 minutes to affix vessel information to the required locations.

*Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours:* 2,749.

*Estimated Total Annual Cost to Public:* \$36,650 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: July 7, 2017.

**Sarah Brabson,**

*NOAA PRA Clearance Officer.*

[FR Doc. 2017–14577 Filed 7–11–17; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3510–22–P**

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

**RIN 0648–XF523**

### Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC); Public Meeting

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

**ACTION:** Notice; public meeting.

**SUMMARY:** The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council's (Council's) Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Advisory Panel will hold a public meeting, jointly with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's (ASMFC) Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Advisory Panel.

**DATES:** The meeting will be held on Friday, July 28, 2017, from 10 a.m. until 12:30 p.m.

**ADDRESSES:** The meeting will be held via webinar with a telephone-only connection option. Details on webinar registration and telephone-only connection details will be posted: <http://www.mafmc.org>.

*Council address:* Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, 800 N. State Street, Suite 201, Dover, DE 19901; telephone: (302) 674–2331; [www.mafmc.org](http://www.mafmc.org).

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D., Executive Director, Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, telephone: (302) 526–5255.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Council's Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Advisory Panel (AP) will meet jointly with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's (ASMFC's) Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass AP. The purpose of this meeting is for the Advisory Panels to review and comment on recent stock assessment information, as well as the reports and recommendations of the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) and the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Monitoring Committee regarding previously implemented fishery specifications (*i.e.*, catch and landings limits and management measures) for 2018 for all three species and possible scup specifications for 2019. The Council and ASMFC will consider input from the AP in August when reviewing these specifications.

#### Special Accommodations

The meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aid should be directed to M. Jan Saunders, (302) 526–5251, at least 5 days prior to the meeting date.

Dated: July 7, 2017.

**Tracey L. Thompson,**

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

[FR Doc. 2017–14602 Filed 7–11–17; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3510–22–P**

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

**RIN 0648–XF531**

### Pacific Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

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

**ACTION:** Notice; public meeting.

**SUMMARY:** The Pacific Fishery Management Council's (Pacific Council) Ad Hoc Community Advisory Board (CAB) will hold a two-day meeting that is open to the public.

**DATES:** The CAB meeting will begin Thursday, July 27, 2017 at 8 a.m., Pacific Standard Time, and recess when business for the day is completed. It will continue at 8 a.m. Friday, July 28, adjourning when business for the day is completed.

**ADDRESSES:** The meeting will be held at the Sheraton Portland Airport Hotel, Garden A/B/C Room, 8235 NE. Airport Way, Portland, OR 97220; telephone: (503) 281–2500.

*Council address:* Pacific Council, 7700 NE. Ambassador Place, Suite 101, Portland, OR 97220–1384.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Dr. Jim Seger, Pacific Council; telephone: (503) 820–2416.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The primary purpose of the CAB meeting is to develop preliminary ranges of alternatives for Pacific Council consideration at the September 2017 Pacific Council meeting. The issues to be covered were identified by the Pacific Council at its June 2017 meeting and include: Meeting the at-sea whiting fishery bycatch needs; trawl sablefish area management (gear conflicts); shoreside individual fishing quota (IFQ) accumulation limit; shoreside IFQ choke species management; shoreside IFQ gear switching limitation; and catcher-processor sector accumulation limits on permit ownership and harvesting/processing. Ranges of alternatives are to be developed and finalized for analysis over the course of the September and November Pacific Council meetings. Due to workload limitations, it is unlikely that all of these issues will move forward in 2017.

Although nonemergency issues not contained in the meeting agenda may be discussed, those issues may not be the subject of formal action during these meetings. Action will be restricted to those issues specifically listed in this