

carry observers. These include observer salary and insurance costs. NMFS may also evaluate other potential direct costs, should they arise. Once selected, a fishery will be eligible to be observed for a period of 5 years without further action by NMFS. This will enable NMFS to develop an appropriate sampling protocol to investigate whether, how, when, where, and under what conditions incidental takes are occurring; evaluate whether existing measures are minimizing or preventing takes; and develop ESA management measures that implement the prohibitions against take and that conserve sea turtles.

2016 Annual Determination

Pursuant to 50 CFR 222.402, NOAA's Assistant Administrator for Fisheries (AA), in consultation with Regional Administrators and Fisheries Science Center Directors, annually identifies fisheries for inclusion on the AD based on the extent to which:

- (1) The fishery operates in the same waters and at the same time as sea turtles are present;
- (2) The fishery operates at the same time or prior to elevated sea turtle strandings; or
- (3) The fishery uses a gear or technique that is known or likely to result in incidental take of sea turtles based on documented or reported takes in the same or similar fisheries; and

(4) NMFS intends to monitor the fishery and anticipates that it will have the funds to do so.

NMFS is providing notification that the agency is not identifying additional fisheries to observe on the 2016 AD, pursuant to its authority under the ESA. NMFS is not identifying additional fisheries at this time given lack of dedicated resources to implement new observer programs or expand existing observer programs to focus on sea turtles (50 CFR 222.402(a)(4)). The 14 fisheries identified on the 2015 AD (see Table 1) remain on the AD for a 5-year period and are therefore required to carry observers upon NMFS' request until December 31, 2019.

TABLE 1—STATE AND FEDERAL COMMERCIAL FISHERIES INCLUDED ON THE 2015 ANNUAL DETERMINATION.

Fishery	Years eligible to carry observers
Trawl Fisheries	
Southeastern U.S. Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico shrimp trawl	2015–2019
Gulf of Mexico mixed species fish trawl	2015–2019
Gillnet Fisheries	
California halibut, white seabass and other species set gillnet (>3.5 in mesh)	2015–2019
California yellowtail, barracuda, and white seabass drift gillnet (mesh size >3.5 in. and <14 in.)	2015–2019
Chesapeake Bay inshore gillnet	2015–2019
Long Island inshore gillnet	2015–2019
North Carolina inshore gillnet	2015–2019
Gulf of Mexico gillnet	2015–2019
Trap/pot Fisheries	
Atlantic blue crab trap/pot	2015–2019
Atlantic mixed species trap/pot	2015–2019
Northeast/Mid-Atlantic American lobster trap/pot	2015–2019
Pound Net/Weir/Seine Fisheries	
Mid-Atlantic haul/beach seine	2015–2019
Mid-Atlantic menhaden purse seine	2015–2019
Rhode Island floating trap	2015–2019

Dated: December 21, 2015.

Perry F. Gayaldo,

Deputy Director, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 2015–32425 Filed 12–23–15; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–22–P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648–XE362

New England Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and

Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice; public meeting.

SUMMARY: The New England Fishery Management Council (Council) is scheduling a public meeting of its Herring Advisory Panel to consider actions affecting New England fisheries in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ). Recommendations from this group will be brought to the full Council for formal consideration and action, if appropriate.

DATES: This meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 12, 2016, at 10 a.m.

ADDRESSES: *Meeting address:* The meeting will be held at the DoubleTree by Hilton, 50 Ferncroft Road, Danvers,

MA 01950; phone: (978) 777–2500; fax: (978) 750–7911.

Council address: New England Fishery Management Council, 50 Water Street, Mill 2, Newburyport, MA 01950.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Thomas A. Nies, Executive Director, New England Fishery Management Council; telephone: (978) 465–0492.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Agenda

The Advisory Panel (AP) plans to review Amendment 8 to the Atlantic Herring Fishery Management Plan related to the Acceptable Biological Catch control rule, and the localized depletion in inshore waters. The panel will also discuss the potential for using

state port-side monitoring data to monitor the River herring/Shad catch caps. They will review options for the Atlantic herring fishery in the Omnibus Industry-Funded Monitoring Amendment. They will also discuss 5-year research priorities for Atlantic herring (2017–2022). The panel will also review a future action to consider revising the haddock catch cap accountability measure. They will also discuss other business as necessary.

Although non-emergency issues not contained in this agenda may come before this group for discussion, those issues may not be the subject of formal action during this meeting. Action will be restricted to those issues specifically listed in this notice and any issues arising after publication of this notice that require emergency action under section 305(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, provided the public has been notified of the Council's intent to take final action to address the emergency.

Special Accommodations

This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Thomas A. Nies, Executive Director, at (978) 465–0492, at least 5 days prior to the meeting date.

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

Dated: December 21, 2015.

Tracey L. Thompson,

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

[FR Doc. 2015–32432 Filed 12–23–15; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–22–P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

United States Patent and Trademark Office

[Docket No.: PTO–P–2015–0079]

Extension of the Extended Missing Parts Pilot Program

AGENCY: United States Patent and Trademark Office, Commerce.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) implemented a pilot program (Extended Missing Parts Pilot Program) in which an applicant, under certain conditions, can request a 12-month time period to pay the search fee, the examination fee, any excess claim fees, and the surcharge (for the late submission of the search fee and the examination fee) in a nonprovisional application. The Extended Missing Parts Pilot Program

benefits applicants by permitting additional time to determine if patent protection should be sought—at a relatively low cost—and by permitting applicants to focus efforts on commercialization during this period. The Extended Missing Parts Pilot Program benefits the USPTO and the public by adding publications to the body of prior art, and by removing from the USPTO's workload those nonprovisional applications for which applicants later decide not to pursue examination. The USPTO is extending the Extended Missing Parts Pilot Program until December 31, 2016, to allow for the USPTO to seek public comment, via a subsequent notice to be published in the middle of 2016, on whether the Extended Missing Parts Program offers sufficient benefits to the patent community for it to be made permanent. The requirements of the program have not changed.

DATES: *Duration:* The Extended Missing Parts Pilot Program will run through December 31, 2016. Therefore, any certification and request to participate in the Extended Missing Parts Pilot Program must be filed on or before December 31, 2016. The USPTO may further extend the pilot program (with or without modifications) depending on the feedback received and the continued effectiveness of the pilot program.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Eugenia A. Jones, Senior Legal Advisor, Office of Patent Legal Administration, Office of the Deputy Commissioner for Patent Examination Policy, by telephone at (571) 272–7727, or by mail addressed to: Mail Stop Comments—Patents, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313–1450, marked to the attention of Eugenia A. Jones.

Inquiries regarding this notice may be directed to the Office of Patent Legal Administration, by telephone at (571) 272–7701, or by electronic mail at PatentPractice@uspto.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On December 8, 2010, after considering written comments from the public, the USPTO changed the missing parts examination procedures in certain nonprovisional applications by implementing a pilot program (*i.e.*, Extended Missing Parts Pilot Program). See *Pilot Program for Extended Time Period To Reply to a Notice to File Missing Parts of Nonprovisional Application*, 75 FR 76401 (Dec. 8, 2010), 1362 *Off. Gaz. Pat. Office* 44 (Jan. 4, 2011). The USPTO has previously announced extensions of the Extended Missing Parts Pilot Program through notices published in the **Federal**

Register. See *Extension of the Extended Missing Parts Pilot Program*, 76 FR 78246 (Dec. 16, 2011), 1374 *Off. Gaz. Pat. Office* 113 (Jan. 10, 2012); *Extension of the Extended Missing Parts Pilot Program*, 78 FR 2256 (Jan. 10, 2013), 1387 *Off. Gaz. Pat. Office* 46 (Feb. 5, 2013); *Extension of Extended Missing Parts Pilot Program*, 79 FR 642 (Jan. 6, 2014), 1398 *Off. Gaz. Pat. Office* 197 (Jan. 28, 2014); *Extension of Extended Missing Parts Pilot Program*, 80 FR 1624 (Jan. 13, 2015), 1412 *Off. Gaz. Pat. Office* 211 (Mar. 24, 2015). The program is currently set to expire on December 31, 2015.

Through this notice, the USPTO is further extending the Extended Missing Parts Pilot Program until December 31, 2016. The USPTO may further extend the Extended Missing Parts Pilot Program, or may discontinue the pilot program after December 31, 2016, depending on the results of the program. The requirements of the program, which have not been modified, are reiterated below. Applicants are strongly cautioned to review the pilot program requirements before making a request to participate in the Extended Missing Parts Pilot Program.

The USPTO cautions all applicants that, in order to claim the benefit of a prior provisional application, the statute requires a nonprovisional application filed under 35 U.S.C. 111(a) to be filed within 12 months after the date on which the corresponding provisional application was filed. See 35 U.S.C. 119(e). It is essential that applicants understand that the Extended Missing Parts Pilot Program cannot and does not change this statutory requirement. Title II of the Patent Law Treaties Implementation Act of 2012 (PLTIA) amended the provisions of title 35, United States Code, including 35 U.S.C. 119(e), to implement the Patent Law Treaty (PLT). See Public Law 112–211, §§ 20–203, 126 Stat. 1527, 1533–37 (2012). In the rulemaking to implement the PLT and title II of the PLTIA, the Office provided that an applicant may file a petition under 37 CFR 1.78(b) to restore the benefit of a provisional application filed up to fourteen months earlier. See *Changes To Implement the Patent Law Treaty*, 78 FR 62367, 62368–69 (Oct. 21, 2013) (final rule). Any petition to restore the benefit of a provisional application must include the benefit claim, the petition fee, and a statement that the delay in filing the subsequent application was unintentional. This change was effective on December 18, 2013, and applies to any application filed before, on, or after December 18, 2013. However, if a nonprovisional application is filed