

areas, or any other measure identified by the committee. The committee's recommendations will be presented to the Council at its meeting March 4–6, 2003. Given time, the committee will address other business.

Tuesday, March 4, 2003 at 8:30 a.m.
Habitat Oversight Committee Meeting.

Location: Providence Biltmore, 11 Dorrance Street, Providence, MA 02903; telephone: (401) 421–0700.

The Habitat Oversight Committee will review the advice from the joint advisory panel representative's meeting on habitat that occurred February 6–7, 2003. They will also review the draft Essential Fish Habitat (EFH), Draft Supplementary Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) for Amendment 13 to the Multispecies FMP. The EFH components of Amendment 13 have been pulled out and will be submitted as a separate DSEIS. This document will be presented to the Council at its March 4–6, 2003 Council Meeting, then the EFH DSEIS will be incorporated back into the final Amendment 13 DSEIS, which will be presented to the Council at the July Council meeting. The committee will review the EFH DSEIS for Amendment 13 and identify a preferred alternative if appropriate.

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

These meetings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Paul J. Howard (see ADDRESSES) at least 5 days prior to the meeting dates.

Dated: February 11, 2003.

Theophilus R. Brainerd,

Acting Director/Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.
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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 021003B]

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council; Public Meetings

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

ACTION: Notice of public meetings.

SUMMARY: The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) will hold meetings of its Snapper Grouper Committee, Highly Migratory Species Committee, Habitat Committee, Advisory Panel Selection Committee (closed session) and Executive Committee. There will also be a full Council Session.

DATES: The meetings will be held in March 2003. See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** for specific dates and times.

ADDRESSES: The meetings will be held at the Holiday Inn Beach Resort, 200 South Beachview Drive, Jekyll Island, GA 31527; telephone: (1–800) 753–5955 or (912) 635–3311.

Copies of documents are available from Kim Iverson, Public Information Officer, South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, One Southpark Circle, Suite 306, Charleston, SC 29407–4699.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Kim Iverson, Public Information Officer; telephone: 843–571–4366 or toll free at 866/SAFMC–10; fax: 843–769–4520; email: kim.iverson@safmc.net.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Meeting Dates

1. *Snapper Grouper Committee Meeting: March 3, 2003, 1:30 p.m. until 5 p.m.*

The Snapper Grouper Committee will meet to receive a presentation on the results of the Vermilion Snapper Black Sea Bass Stock Assessment and Review Workshops. In addition, the Committee will receive updates on the status of the NC pilot program for observer work on bycatch, a NOAA Fisheries report on estimating bycatch from logbooks, a progress report on economic data collection via logbooks, and the status of a snapper/grouper electronic logbook pilot study.

2. *Snapper Grouper Committee Meeting: March 4, 2003, 8:30 a.m. until 5 p.m. and continued March 5, 2003, from 8:30 a.m. until 12 noon.*

Following the presentations, the Committee will review draft

Amendment 13 to the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan (FMP) and develop recommendations for the Council. The Committee will also discuss the status of Amendment 14 to the Snapper Grouper FMP involving the use of marine protected areas as a management tool.

3. *Highly Migratory Species Committee Meeting: March 5, 2003, 1:30 p.m. until 2:30 p.m.*

The Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Committee will meet to hear a report on the HMS Advisory Panel meetings and discuss current HMS issues.

4. *Habitat Committee Meeting: March 5, 2003, 2:30 p.m. until 5 p.m.*

The Habitat Committee will meet to consider recommendations from the Habitat and Environmental Protection Advisory Panel and the Coral Advisory Panel and take action regarding those recommendations for consideration by full Council. The Committee will also develop guidance on revisions to current Policy Statements.

5. *Advisory Panel Selection Committee Meeting (CLOSED): March 6, 2003, 8:30 a.m. until 10:30 a.m.*

The Advisory Panel Selection Committee will meet to review current applications for advisory panel positions and develop recommendations.

6. *Executive Committee Meeting: March 6, 2003, 10:30 a.m. until 12 noon.*

The Executive Committee will meet to review and discuss major issues raised at the Council Chairmen/NOAA Fisheries meeting, hear a report on a recent meeting of Council representatives and staff with Dr. William Hogarth, NOAA Assistant Administrator of Fisheries and his staff, and review the status of Shrimp Amendment 6.

7. *Council Session: March 6, 2003, 1:30 p.m. until 5 p.m.*

From 1:30 p.m. 1:45 p.m., the Council will have a Call to Order, introductions and roll call, adoption of the agenda, and approval of the December 2002 meeting minutes.

From 1:45 p.m. 3:45 p.m., the Council will hear recommendations from the Snapper Grouper Committee and take action regarding draft Snapper Grouper Amendment 13.

From 3:45 p.m. 5 p.m., the Council will receive a presentation of proposed regulatory changes in Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary and take action regarding the proposal.

From 5 p.m. 6 p.m., the Council will receive legal briefing on litigation affecting the Council (CLOSED SESSION).

8. *Council Session: March 7, 2003, 8:30 a.m. until 12 Noon.*

From 8:30 a.m. 9 a.m., the Council will hear recommendations from the Advisory Panel Selection Committee and appoint new advisory panel members.

From 9 a.m. 9:15 a.m., the Council will receive a report from the Highly Migratory Species Committee.

From 9:15 a.m. 9:30 a.m., the Council will hear a report from the Habitat Committee.

From 9:30 a.m. 10:30 a.m., the Council will receive a presentation on the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFSS).

From 10:30 a.m. 11:15 a.m., the Council will hear NOAA Fisheries status reports on the Golden/Red Crab/Skate FMP management unit issue, Shrimp Amendment 5 implementation, the Sargassum FMP, the Dolphin Wahoo FMP, the SEDAR Committee Process and implementation of the ACCSP (Atlantic Coast Cooperative Statistics Program) in the Southeast Region. NOAA Fisheries will also give status reports on landings for Atlantic king mackerel, Gulf king mackerel (eastern zone), Atlantic Spanish mackerel, snowy grouper golden tilefish, wreckfish, greater amberjack and south Atlantic octocorals.

From 11:15 a.m. 12 noon, the Council will hear agency and liaison reports, discuss other business and upcoming meetings.

Documents regarding these issues are available from the Council office (see ADDRESSES).

Although non-emergency issues not contained in this agenda may come before this Council for discussion, those issues may not be the subjects of formal Council action during this meeting. Council 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

These meetings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to the Council office (see ADDRESSES) by February 27, 2003.

Dated: February 11, 2003.

Theophilus R. Brainerd,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service
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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 110802B]

Coral, Golden Crab, Shrimp, Spiny Lobster, Red Drum, Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources, and Snapper-Grouper Fisheries of the South Atlantic

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

ACTION: Issuance of an exempted fishing permit.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces the issuance of an exempted fishing permit (EFP) for the South Carolina Aquarium (applicant), located in Charleston, SC. The EFP would authorize the applicant, with certain conditions, to collect for public display annually, for 2 years, an average of 25 specimens each of numerous species of marine invertebrates and marine fish from Federal waters off South Carolina. This EFP is similar to the previous EFP issued to the applicant that expired on December 31, 2002.

ADDRESSES: Copies of the EFP are available from Peter Eldridge, Southeast Regional Office, NMFS, 9721 Executive Center Drive N., St. Petersburg, FL 33702.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Peter Eldridge, 727-570-5305; fax 727-570-5583; e-mail: peter.eldridge@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The EFP is issued under the authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*) and the regulations at 50 CFR 600.745(b).

The South Carolina Aquarium (SCA), located in Charleston, is a public, non-profit, self-supporting institution for the understanding and conservation of South Carolina's natural aquatic habitats, with extensive field study and outreach programs and with free admission to groups of school children.

The applicant intends, over a period of 2 years, to collect annually for public display an average of 25 specimens each of 76 species of marine invertebrates and 221 species of marine fish from the EEZ off South Carolina, using a variety of fishing gears and the fish anesthetic, quinaldine.

The proposed collection involves activities otherwise prohibited by regulations implementing the Fishery Management Plans of the South Atlantic Region for Coral, Coral Reefs, and Live/

Hard Bottom Habitats, Golden Crab, Shrimp, Spiny Lobster, Red Drum, Coastal Migratory Pelagics, and Snapper-Grouper. The EFP authorizes the applicant, consistent with the terms of the EFP, to harvest and possess corals, live rock, golden crab, rock shrimp, red drum, wreckfish, warsaw grouper, speckled hind, spiny lobster, bluefish, cobia, king and Spanish mackerel, groupers and snappers, greater amberjack, hogfish and red porgy species taken from Federal waters off South Carolina. In addition, the EFP authorizes, consistent with the terms of the EFP, the use of quinaldine in a coral area and the possession of species below the minimum size limit and in excess of established bag limits or taken with prohibited gear.

The EFP has a number of conditions concerning the harvest of prohibited species and corals and the gear that can be employed. The EFP requires an annual report to NMFS that lists specimens that have been taken.

The applicant also intends to collect a large number of species that are either not subject to Federal fishery management in the South Atlantic Region or included under a fishery management plan that contains no management measures restricting possession or harvest. The collection of highly migratory species is prohibited in this EFP. The applicant was referred to the NMFS Highly Migratory Species Division for authorization to collect Atlantic highly migratory species, such as sharks and tunas, for public display.

A notice of receipt of the application for this permit was published in the **Federal Register** on November 21, 2002 (67 FR 70216). In addition to announcing the receipt of the application, public comments were requested; no public comments were received. Also, consistent with the requirements of 50 CFR 600.745(b)(3)(i), NMFS provided copies of the EFP application to the State of South Carolina, the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, and the U.S. Coast Guard, along with the following required information: Information on the EFP's effects on target and incidental species; citations of the regulations that, without the EFP, would prohibit the proposed collection activity; and other biological information relevant to the EFP proposal. None of these consulted entities expressed any objections to the issuance of the EFP.

Failure of the permittee to comply with the terms and conditions of the EFP may be grounds for revocation, suspension or modification of this EFP or for civil or criminal sanctions.