

The affirmative finding process requires that the harvesting nation meet several conditions related to compliance with the IDCP. A nation may opt to provide information regarding compliance with the IDCP directly to NMFS on an annual basis or to authorize the IATTC to release the information to NMFS in years when NMFS will review and consider whether to issue an affirmative finding determination without an application from the harvesting nation.

An affirmative finding will be terminated if the Assistant Administrator, in consultation with the Secretary of State, determines that the requirements of 50 CFR 216.24(f) are no longer being met or that a nation is consistently failing to take enforcement actions on violations which diminish the effectiveness of the IDCP. Every 5 years, the government of the harvesting nation, must request an affirmative finding and submit the required documentary evidence directly to the Assistant Administrator.

As a part of the affirmative finding process set forth in 50 CFR 216.24(f), the Assistant Administrator considered documentary evidence submitted by the Republic of El Salvador and obtained from the IATTC and the Department of State and determined that the requirements under the MMPA to receive an affirmative finding have been met.

After consultation with the Department of State, NMFS granted the Republic of El Salvador's affirmative finding allowing the importation into the United States of yellowfin tuna and products derived from yellowfin tuna harvested in the ETP after March 3, 1999, by El Salvadorian-flag purse seine vessels or vessels under El Salvadorian jurisdiction. This finding will remain in effect until March 31, 2004.

In subsequent years 2004 through 2007, the Assistant Administrator will determine on an annual basis whether the Republic of El Salvador is meeting the requirements under section 101(a)(2)(B) and (C) of the MMPA. If necessary, documentary evidence may also be requested from the Republic of El Salvador to determine whether the affirmative finding criteria are being met. If the affirmative finding for the Republic of El Salvador is renewed after NMFS's annual review in the years 2004 through 2007, the Republic of El Salvador must submit a new application in early 2008 for an affirmative finding to be effective for the period April 1, 2008, through March 31, 2009, and the subsequent 4 years.

Dated: December 31, 2003.

**Rebecca Lent,**

*Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, National Marine Fisheries Service.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 122303D]

#### New England Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

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

**ACTION:** Notice of public meeting.

**SUMMARY:** The New England Fishery Management Council (Council) is scheduling a public meeting of its Research Steering Committee in January, 2004. Recommendations from the committee will be brought to the full Council for formal consideration and action, if appropriate.

**DATES:** The meeting will held on Monday, January 26, 2004, at 9:30 a.m.

**ADDRESSES:** The meeting will be held at the Holiday Inn, 31 Hampshire Street, Mansfield, MA; telephone: 508-339-2200.

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

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Paul J. Howard, Executive Director, New England Fishery Management Council; telephone: (978) 465-0492.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The committee will discuss and continue work on a process to review and integrate the results of cooperative research into the management process. It will also work on developing research priorities for 2004 for consideration by the Council and the NMFS Regional Administrator.

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 Paul J. Howard (see **ADDRESSES**) at least 5 days prior to the meeting dates.

Dated: December 31, 2003.

**Richard W. Surdi,**

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

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 122903H]

#### Pacific Fishery Management Council; Public Meetings and Hearings

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

**ACTION:** Notice of availability of reports; public meetings and hearings.

**SUMMARY:** The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) has begun its annual preseason management process for the 2004 ocean salmon fisheries. This document announces the availability of Council documents as well as the dates and locations of Council meetings and public hearings comprising the Council's complete schedule of events for determining the annual proposed and final modifications to ocean salmon fishery management measures. The agendas for the March and April Council meetings will be published in subsequent **Federal Register** documents prior to the actual meetings.

**DATES:** Written comments on the salmon management options must be received by March 30, 2004, at 4:30 p.m. Pacific Time.

**ADDRESSES:** Documents will be available from and written comments should be sent to Mr. Donald Hansen, Chairman, Pacific Fishery Management Council, 7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 200, Portland, OR 97220-1384, telephone: 503-820-2280 (voice) or 503-820-2299 (fax). For specific meeting and hearing locations, see **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Mr. Chuck Tracy, telephone: 503-820-2280.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**