

State and Federal agencies would be notified of each trip, the place and time of landing, the results of onboard screening, and dockside laboratory results. Federal and state agencies are provided a copy of the Declaration of Harvest form from each trip, which details the location of harvest, cage tag numbers, and results of onboard screening.

The applicant has obtained endorsements for the EFP and the sampling protocol from the states of Rhode Island, New Jersey, Delaware, and Massachusetts, the states in which it intends to land and process the product harvested under the EFP. Each state is responsible for regulating the molluscan shellfish industry within its jurisdiction and ensuring the safety of shellfish harvested within or entering its borders. The sampling protocol and the pilot project that would be authorized by this EFP have also since been endorsed by the Executive Board of the ISSC.

Regulations under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act require publication of this notification to provide interested parties the opportunity to comment on applications for proposed exempted fishing permits. The Assistant Regional Administrator has made an initial determination that, based on a preliminary review of the proposed subject research and the criteria provided in section 5.05a-c and section 6.03c.3(a) of NOAA's Administrative Order 216-6, a Categorical Exclusion appears to be justified for this EFP. In accordance with NOAA's Administrative Order 216-6, a Categorical Exclusion, or other appropriate National Environmental Policy Act document, would be completed prior to the issuance of the exempted fishing permit. Further review and consultation may be necessary before a final determination is made to issue the exempted fishing permit.

If approved, the applicant may request minor modifications and extensions to the EFP throughout the year. EFP modifications and extensions may be granted without further notice if they are deemed essential to facilitate completion of the proposed research and have minimal impacts that do not change the scope or impact of the initially approved EFP request. Any fishing activity conducted outside the scope of the exempted fishing activity would be prohibited.

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

Dated: October 18, 2011.

Emily H. Menashes,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XX779

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council; Public Meetings

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

ACTION: Notice of public hearing series.

SUMMARY: The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) will hold a series of public hearings regarding Amendments 18A, 20A, and 24 to the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for the South Atlantic Region. See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**.

Dates and Location: The series of seven public hearings will be held from November 14, 2011 through December 6, 2011. The hearings will be held from 4 p.m. until 7 p.m. with the exception of two hearings. The hearings on November 15, 2011 in Charleston, SC and the hearing on December 6, 2011 in Raleigh, NC will be conducted from 5:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m. Note that in some cases consecutive hearings will be held on the same date. Council staff will present an overview of the amendments and will be available for informal discussions and to answer questions. Members of the public will have an opportunity to go on record at any time during the meeting hours to record their comments on the public hearing topics for consideration by the Council. Local Council representatives will attend the meetings and take public comment. Written comments will be accepted from October 21, 2011 until 5 p.m. on November 21, 2011. See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Amendment 18A is being developed by the Council to address overcapacity in the commercial black sea bass pot fishery and reduce the rate of harvest for both commercial and recreational sectors. The amendment includes actions to limit participation and effort in the black sea bass pot fishery, limit bycatch in the commercial pot fishery, and modify the current system of accountability measures. Management

measures being considered include increases in size limits, decreases in bag limits, a commercial trip limit, and a spawning season closure. The amendment also includes actions to update management parameters based on the 2011 Southeast Data, Assessment and Review (SEDAR) stock assessment for black sea bass, consider modifications to the rebuilding strategy to account for an increasing biomass, and improve the accuracy, timing and quantity of fisheries data.

Amendment 20A addresses the current Individual Transferable Quota (ITQ) program currently in place for the wreckfish fishery. The amendment includes measures to adjust the distribution of wreckfish shares in order to remove inactive effort and allow the commercial sector's Annual Catch Limit (ACL) to be harvested effectively.

Amendment 24 to the Snapper Grouper FMP addresses the implementation of a rebuilding plan for red grouper in the South Atlantic as required by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSFCMA). The rebuilding plan would specify ACLs, annual catch targets and accountability measures for the red grouper fishery. The amendment also establishes sector allocations.

Public Hearing Schedule:

1. November 14, 2011—Avista Resort, 300 N. Ocean Blvd., North Myrtle Beach, SC 29582; *telephone:* (843) 249-2521;

2. November 14, 2011—Hampton Inn & Suites Savannah/Midtown, 20 Johnson Street, Savannah, GA 31405; *telephone:* (912) 721-3700;

3. November 15, 2011—Charleston Marriott Hotel, 170 Lockwood Blvd., Charleston, SC 29403; *telephone:* (843) 723-3000;

4. November 15, 2011—Jacksonville Marriott, 4670 Salisbury Road, Jacksonville, FL 32256; *telephone:* (904) 296-2222;

5. November 16, 2011—Radisson Resort at the Port, 8701 Astronaut Boulevard, Cape Canaveral, FL 32920; *telephone:* (321) 784-0000;

6. November 17, 2011—Key Largo Bay Marriott, 103800 Overseas Hwy., Key Largo, FL 33037; *telephone:* (305) 453-0000;

7. December 6, 2011—Holiday Inn Brownstone, 1707 Hillsborough Street, Raleigh, NC 27605; *Phone:* (919) 828-0811.

ADDRESSES: Written comments should be sent to Bob Mahood, Executive Director, South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, 4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201, North Charleston, SC 29405, or via e-mail to:

SGAmend18APHcomment@safmc.net for Amendment 18A (black sea bass); SGAmend20APHcomment@safmc.net for Amendment 20A (wreckfish); and SGAmend24PHcomment@safmc.net for Amendment 24 (red grouper) to the Snapper Grouper FMP. Written comments will be received from October 21, 2011 until 5 p.m. on November 21, 2011.

Copies of the public hearing documents are available by contacting Kim Iverson, Public Information Officer, South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, 4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201, North Charleston, SC 29405; telephone: (843) 571-4366 or toll free at (866) SAFMC-10. Copies will also be available online at www.safmc.net as they become available.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Kim Iverson, South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, 4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201, North Charleston, SC 29405; telephone: (843) 571-4366; fax: (843) 769-4520; e-mail address: kim.iverson@safmc.net.

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**) 3 days prior to the start of each meeting.

Dated: October 19, 2011.

Tracey L. Thompson,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XA776

Atlantic Highly Migratory Species; Advisory Panel for Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Southeast Data, Assessment, and Review Workshops

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

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: NMFS solicits nominations for the Advisory Panel (AP) for Atlantic Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Southeast Data, Assessment, and Review (SEDAR) Workshops (this AP is also called the "SEDAR Pool"). The SEDAR Pool is comprised of a group of

individuals whom may be selected to consider data and advise NMFS regarding the scientific information, including but not limited to data and models, used in stock assessments for oceanic sharks in the Atlantic Ocean, Gulf of Mexico, and Caribbean Sea. Nominations are being sought for a 3-year appointment (2012-2015). Individuals with definable interests in the recreational and commercial fishing and related industries, environmental community, academia, and non-governmental organizations will be considered for membership on the SEDAR Pool.

DATES: Nominations must be received on or before November 23, 2011.

ADDRESSES: You may submit nominations and request the SEDAR Pool Statement of Organization, Practices, and Procedures by any of the following methods:

- E-mail: SEDAR.pool@noaa.gov.
- Mail: Karyl Brewster-Geisz, Highly Migratory Species Management Division, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Include on the envelope the following identifier: "SEDAR Pool Nomination."
- Fax: 301-713-1917.

Additional information on SEDAR and the SEDAR guidelines can be found at <http://www.sefsc.noaa.gov/sedar/>. The terms of reference for the SEDAR Pool, along with a list of current members, can be found at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/SEDAR/SEDAR.htm>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Delisse Ortiz or Karyl Brewster-Geisz, (301) 425-8503.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Introduction

Section 302(g)(2) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act), 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*, states that each Council shall establish such advisory panels as are necessary or appropriate to assist it in carrying out its functions under the Act. For the purposes of this section in the Magnuson-Stevens Act, NMFS considers the Council provision to be applicable to the HMS Management Division. As such, NMFS has established the SEDAR Pool under this section. The SEDAR Pool currently consists of 30 individuals who can be selected to review data and advise NMFS regarding the scientific information, including but not limited to data and models, used in stock assessments for oceanic sharks in the Atlantic Ocean, Gulf of Mexico, and Caribbean Sea. While the SEDAR Pool

was created specifically for Atlantic oceanic sharks, it may be expanded to include other HMS, as needed.

The primary purpose of the individuals in the SEDAR Pool is to review, at SEDAR workshops, the scientific information, including but not limited to data and models, used in stock assessments that are used to advise NMFS, as a delegate to the Secretary of Commerce (Secretary), about the conservation and management of the Atlantic HMS, specifically but not limited to, Atlantic sharks. Individuals in the SEDAR Pool, if selected, may participate in the various data, assessment, and review workshops during the SEDAR process of any HMS stock assessment. In order to ensure that the peer review is unbiased, individuals who participated in a data and/or assessment workshop for a particular stock assessment will not be allowed to serve as reviewers for the same stock assessment. However, these individuals may be asked to attend the review workshop to answer specific questions from the reviewers concerning the data and/or assessment workshops. Members of the SEDAR Pool may serve as members of other APs concurrent with, or following, their service on the SEDAR Pool.

Procedures and Guidelines

A. Participants

The SEDAR Pool is comprised of individuals representing the commercial and recreational fishing communities for Atlantic HMS, the environmental community active in the conservation and management of Atlantic HMS, and the academic community that have relevant expertise either with sharks or shark-like species and/or stock assessment methodologies for marine fish species. Members of the SEDAR Pool must have demonstrated experience in the fisheries, related industries, research, teaching, writing, conservation, or management of marine organisms. The distribution of representation among the interested parties is not defined or limited.

Additional members of the SEDAR Pool may also include representatives from each of the five Atlantic Regional Fishery Management Councils, each of the 18 constituent states, both the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, and each of the constituent interstate commissions: the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission.

If NMFS requires additional members to ensure a diverse pool of individuals to draw from for data or assessment workshops, NMFS may request