

submitted a complete application for an exempted fishing permit (EFP) on June 17, 2013, to conduct commercial fishing activities that the regulations would otherwise restrict. The EFP would exempt two federally permitted commercial fishing vessels from the requirement to use a raised footrope in the Gulf of Maine Raised Footrope Trawl Exemption Area for the purpose of testing an alternate bottom trawl net for harvesting silver hake. The applicant states that there has been poor performance of the raised footrope trawl in this area. This project would determine if there is a better performing gear that can maintain low bycatch consistent with the exempted gear performance standards.

Fishing operations would occur within the Gulf of Maine Raised Footrope Trawl Exemption Area. The two vessels would complete six days of research fishing with an estimated five 30-minute tows per day per vessel. The two vessels would conduct side-by-side tows to compare the regulated whiting net (control) with a traditional whiting net (alternative). The traditional whiting net is a modified four-seam small mesh shrimp net with a rubber cookie sweep/legs and a 2.5-inch mesh codend. Each net will retain the use of the Nordmøre grate as a bycatch deterrent. The traditional net replaces the raised footrope with a cookie sweep. This project requires exemptions from gear requirements in the Gulf of Maine Regulated Mesh Area and the Gulf of Maine Raised Footrope Trawl Exemption Area. The two research vessels will be similar in length, horsepower, and fishing capacity to maintain consistency in fishing effort. Additionally, the nets will alternate between the vessels. For each comparative tow, the following information will be recorded: position; time; depth; weather; catch data; and biological information on regulated bycatch species. All catch will be sorted by species and total weights recorded.

All catch of stocks allocated to NE multispecies sectors will be deducted from the sector's annual catch entitlement for each NE multispecies stock. Specifically, the sector assumed discard rate will be applied to fishing trips by the vessel participating under this EFP, whether the recorded discard rates from the experimental fishing are higher or lower than the assumed discard rate of the sector. The participating vessels would be required to comply with all other applicable requirements and restrictions specified at 50 CFR part 648, unless specifically exempted in this EFP.

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: August 27, 2013.

Kelly Denit,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XC758

Permanent Advisory Committee to Advise the U.S. Commissioners to the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission; Meeting Announcement

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

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces a meeting of the Permanent Advisory Committee (PAC) to advise the U.S. Commissioners to the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) on October 28–October 29, 2013. Meeting topics are provided under the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section of this notice.

DATES: The meeting of the PAC will be held on October 28, 2013, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. HST (or until business is concluded) and October 29, 2013 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. HST (or until business is concluded).

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the NMFS Honolulu Service Center, located at Pier 38, 1139 N. Nimitz Hwy. Suite 220, Honolulu, HI 96817.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Emily Crigler, NMFS Pacific Islands Regional Office; telephone: 808-944-2289; facsimile: 808-973-2941; email: emily.crigler@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In accordance with the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Convention Implementation Act (16 U.S.C. 6901 *et*

seq.), the Department of Commerce, in consultation with the U.S. Commissioners to the WCPFC, has appointed a Permanent Advisory Committee or PAC to advise the U.S. Commissioners to the WCPFC. The PAC supports the work of the U.S. National Section to the WCPFC in an advisory capacity. The U.S. National Section is made up of the U.S. Commissioners and the Department of State. NMFS Pacific Islands Regional Office provides administrative and technical support to the PAC in cooperation with the Department of State. The next regular annual session of the WCPFC (WCPFC10) is scheduled for December 2–6, 2013, in Cairns, Australia. More information on this meeting and the WCPFC, established under the Convention on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean, can be found on the WCPFCs Web site: <http://wcpfc.int/>.

Meeting Topics

The PAC meeting topics may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (1) Outcomes of the 2012 and 2013 WCPFC Scientific Committee, Northern Committee, Technical and Compliance Committee, and Annual meetings;
- (2) Development of conservation and management measures for bigeye, yellowfin and skipjack tuna and other species for 2014 and beyond;
- (3) Development of a WCPFC compliance monitoring scheme;
- (4) Issues related to the impacts of fishing on non-target, associated, and dependent species, such as sea turtles, marine mammals, seabirds and sharks;
- (5) Input and advice from the PAC on issues that may arise at WCPFC10;
- (6) Potential proposals from other WCPFC members; and
- (7) Other issues as they arise.

Special Accommodations

The meeting location is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Emily Crigler (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**) by October 11, 2013.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 6902

Dated: August 29, 2013.

Kelly Denit,

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

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