

Dated: April 12, 2006.

**Stephen J. Claeys,**

*Acting Assistant Secretary for Impo  
Administration.*

[FR Doc. E6-5948 Filed 4-19-06; 8:45 am]

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 041306F]

#### **Magnuson-Stevens Act Provisions; General Provisions for Domestic Fisheries; Application for Exempted Fishing Permits**

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

**ACTION:** Notice; request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** The Assistant Regional  
Administrator for Sustainable Fisheries,  
Northeast Region, NMFS (Assistant  
Regional Administrator), has made a  
preliminary determination that an  
Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP)  
application submitted by the University  
of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES),  
contains all of the required information  
and warrants further consideration. The  
Assistant Regional Administrator has  
made a preliminary determination that  
the activities authorized under this EFP  
would be consistent with the goals and  
objectives of the Northeast (NE)  
Multispecies and Monkfish Fishery  
Management Plans (FMPs). However,  
further review and consultation may be  
necessary before a final determination is  
made to issue an EFP. Therefore, NMFS  
announces that the Assistant Regional  
Administrator proposes to recommend  
that an EFP be issued that would allow  
one commercial fishing vessel to  
conduct fishing operations that are  
otherwise restricted by the regulations  
governing the fisheries of the  
Northeastern United States. The EFP,  
which would enable researchers to  
study the biology of large monkfish,  
would grant exemptions from the NE  
Multispecies FMP as follows: Western  
Gulf of Maine (GOM) Closure Area;  
GOM Rolling Closure Areas I and II; and  
monkfish effort control measures.

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 EFPs.

**DATES:** Comments must be received on  
or before May 5, 2006.

**ADDRESSES:** Written comments should  
be sent to Patricia A. Kurkul, Regional  
Administrator, NMFS, NE Regional  
Office, 1 Blackburn Drive, Gloucester,  
MA 01930. Mark the outside of the  
envelope "Comments on UMES  
monkfish EFP, DA6-096." Comments  
may also be sent via fax to 978-281-  
9135. Comments may also be submitted  
via e-mail to the following address:  
*DA6-096@noaa.gov*. Include in the  
subject line of the e-mail "Comments on  
UMES monkfish EFP."

#### **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Douglas Potts, Fishery Management  
Specialist, 978-281-9341.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** An  
application for an EFP was submitted on  
March 22, 2006, by Andrea K. Johnson,  
Research Assistant Professor at UMES,  
for a project funded under the New  
England and Mid-Atlantic Fishery  
Management Councils' Monkfish  
Research Set-Aside (RSA) Program. The  
primary goal of this study is to provide  
information on the biology of large  
monkfish that can be used to enhance  
the management of this species.

The project is scheduled to be  
conducted for one year (May 2006-April  
2007) and would collect large monkfish  
from three industry collaborators fishing  
using 57.5 Monkfish Days-At-Sea (DAS)  
awarded to the project through the RSA  
Program. Monkfish gillnet vessels  
fishing off of Maryland, Delaware, New  
York, and Rhode Island would collect  
large monkfish as part of otherwise  
normal fishing activities and do not  
require an EFP. One vessel would fish  
inside the eastern edge of the Western  
GOM Closure Area from August 2006  
through April 2007. The approximate  
location where fishing would take place  
is 42°30' N latitude, 70°00' W longitude.  
This is east of the Stellwagen Bank  
National Marine Sanctuary and would  
require exemption from the gear  
restrictions of the Western GOM Closure  
Area at 50 CFR 648.81(e) as well as from  
the restrictions of Rolling Closure Areas  
I and II at § 648.81(f) that will be in  
effect during March and April 2007. It  
is expected that this location would  
provide access to large monkfish and  
would avoid gear interactions between  
these gillnets and trawls. The applicant  
is also requesting exemption from the  
Monkfish effort control measures at  
§ 648.92(b)(2) in order to create  
sufficient incentive for a commercial  
vessel to participate in this experiment.  
This would exempt the vessel from the  
need to use a NE Multispecies DAS  
concurrent with a Monkfish DAS for  
these trips.

The vessel would make 28 trips using  
gillnets that are 13-inch stretch mesh

with 24 gauge web and are 12 meshes  
deep. Each net is 300 feet long by 3 feet  
high and 150 nets will be used with an  
average soak time of 72 hours. Ten fish  
per week (360 monkfish total) will be  
donated to the research project during  
the months of August 2006-April 2007.  
This project is specifically interested in  
large monkfish, so donated fish will be  
the largest from each trip of at least 90  
cm total length. Additional catch,  
within applicable size and possession  
limits, will be sold to help offset the  
costs of the research. As a consequence  
of the exemption from the need to use  
a NE Multispecies DAS, the vessel will  
not keep any regulated groundfish.  
Since these trips will use very large  
mesh nets, the bycatch of regulated  
groundfish is expected to be minimal.

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: April 13, 2006.

**James P. Burgess,**

*Acting Director, Office of Sustainable  
Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.*  
[FR Doc. E6-5902 Filed 4-19-06; 8:45 am]

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 041306B]

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

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

**ACTION:** Notice of a public meeting.

**SUMMARY:** The New England Fishery  
Management Council (Council) is  
scheduling a public meeting of its Sea  
Scallop Survey Advisory Panel in May,  
2006, 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  
Thursday, May 4, 2006 at 9 a.m.