

The State of Washington has requested that NMFS extend the LOA for an additional 8 years (with a new expiration date of June 30, 2005) citing a need to manage the problem of sea lion predation on winter steelhead beyond the current expiration date of June 30, 1997. WDFW requested an 8-year extension so that it encompasses approximately two complete steelhead life cycles which WDFW believes is the minimum time necessary to determine whether their efforts to recover the steelhead population have succeeded. WDFW is not requesting any modifications to the terms and conditions of the LOA other than the extension to June 30, 2005. WDFW made its request after considering the deliberations of the Pinniped-Fishery Interaction Task Force (Task Force). The Task Force met in September 1996 and submitted a report to NMFS that recommends that the LOA be extended because insufficient time had passed to evaluate the success of management actions at Ballard Locks. The Task Force opinions on the extension ranged from no extension to a period of 8 years (two steelhead cycles) with the majority of the Task Force favoring an extension of 4 years (one steelhead cycle) to June 30, 2001. Copies of the Task Force report and the letter from WDFW requesting the extension are available (see ADDRESSES).

NMFS is proposing to extend the LOA and seeks public comments on extending the LOA for a period of 4 to 8 years. Pending a final decision on the State's request, NMFS has provided an interim extension to the current LOA through September 30, 1997. This interim extension will not result in lethal removal of sea lions because the terms and conditions of the current LOA would allow lethal removal only between January 1 and May 30 of any year. After consideration of public comments, NMFS will decide whether to extend the LOA beyond September 30, 1997, and for what period of time. Notice of the final decision will be published in the **Federal Register**.

Dated: June 13, 1997.

Hilda Diaz-Soltero,

*Acting Director, Office of Protected Resources,
National Marine Fisheries Service.*

[FR Doc. 97-16101 Filed 6-18-97; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[ID: 052797C]

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Experimental Fishing Permit

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

ACTION: Issuance of an Experimental Fishing Permit.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces the issuance of an experimental fishing permit 97-01 (EFP) to the Groundfish Forum. The EFP authorizes the Groundfish Forum to conduct an experiment that would systematically test the effects of an open-top intermediate escape panel on species and size composition of catch in trawls targeting flatfish. Results of the experiment will be used to develop methods for trawl vessels targeting flatfish to avoid bycatch of pollock and Pacific cod. This EFP will provide information not otherwise available through research or commercial fishing operations. The intended effect of this action is to promote the purposes and policies of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

ADDRESSES: Copies of the EFP and the Environmental Assessment (EA) prepared for the EFP are available from Lori J. Gravel, Fisheries Management Division, Alaska Region, NMFS, P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Kent A. Lind, 907-586-7228

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Fishery Management Plan for the Groundfish Fishery of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Area (FMP) authorizes the issuance of EFPs for fishing that would otherwise be prohibited under existing regulations. The procedures for issuing EFPs are set out at 50 CFR 679.6.

On April 15, 1997, NMFS announced in the **Federal Register** the receipt of an application for an EFP from the Groundfish Forum (62 FR 18316). The application requested authorization for Groundfish Forum to test the effects of an open-top intermediate escape panel on species and size composition of catch in trawls targeting flatfish. The purpose of this research is to assist industry in developing gear modifications that will reduce the bycatch of groundfish (primarily pollock

and Pacific cod) in flatfish fisheries off Alaska. This EFP will provide information not otherwise available through research or commercial fishing operations because it is not economically feasible for vessels to participate in an experiment of this extent and rigor during the short commercial fisheries.

A statistical analysis completed by the Groundfish Forum and reviewed by NMFS has determined that 6 vessels fishing for a total of 300 tows will produce a 70 percent certainty of detecting a 10 percent decline in groundfish catch and a 98 percent certainty of detecting a 20 percent decline in groundfish catch. To fully complete the experiment, the Groundfish Forum estimates that 4,590 mt to 4,680 mt of groundfish may be taken by vessels participating in the experiment.

The Groundfish Forum will set up a "request for proposals" (RFP) process whereby companies submit applications to test an open panel placed in the intermediate portion of the trawl that conforms to the general description of the device described by Rose (1995). Under the rules of the experiment, the performance of the experimental gear will be tested against a standard control gear. The control gear will be a net configured for yellowfin sole fishing as per current industry practices.

The RFP will set out a general description of the type of trawl design that will be systematically tested against a control trawl gear. The type of gear design that will be tested against the control will be an "open" panel placed in the intermediary or intermediate (both terms are commonly used) portion of the trawl. The panel is effectively open because no net meshes are in the top portion of the net; only the net straps are present in the top panel portion of the net. The device to be tested was first developed by NMFS gear researchers (Rose 1995). The open panel to be tested in this experiment must be at least 16 ft in length (stretched mesh length) and occupy at least 40 percent of the intermediate portion of the test trawl net (stretched mesh basis).

Placement and shape of the panel will be determined by the company making application to participate in the experiment. Other aspects of the net design for the test gear, as well as the control gear, will have to conform to standards so that the effects of the open panel can be discerned by the experiment. Towing speed, duration of tows, and other aspects of the tows made with experimental and control nets will be restricted for purposes of isolating the effects of the open panel.

Guidelines for applications to participate in the experiment will be provided by the Groundfish Forum. Guidelines will include a description of the test and control gear as well as a statement of the rules that must be followed for the experiment. This information will be conveyed to potential applicants through a short publication written and distributed by the Groundfish Forum and reviewed by NMFS personnel associated with the experiment.

The Regional Administrator has approved the EFP application and has issued EFP 97-01 to the Groundfish Forum. The EFP authorizes the Groundfish Forum to solicit vessel participants through the RFP process and authorizes the harvest of 4,700 mt of groundfish during the course of the experiment from July 25, 1997, through August 30, 1997, of which no more than 50 percent, or 2,350 mt, may be species other than yellowfin sole. Groundfish and PSC catch associated with this experiment will not be deducted from total allowable catch and PSC amounts specified for the 1997 groundfish fisheries.

The Regional Administrator may terminate the experiment if prohibited species catch (PSC) exceeds the high-end estimates of the Groundfish Forum: 43.9 mt of Pacific halibut, 30,900 *Chionoecetes bairdi* crab, and 160,700 *C. opilio* crab. Failure of the permittee to comply with the terms and conditions of the EFP may be grounds for revocation, suspension, or modification of the EFP under 15 CFR 600.745(b)(8) with respect to any or all persons and vessels conducting activities under the EFP. Failure to comply with applicable laws may also result in sanctions imposed under those laws.

Classification

NMFS prepared an EA for this EFP. The Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA, concluded that there will be no significant impact on the human environment as a result of fishing under this EFP. A copy of the EA is available from NMFS (see ADDRESSES). The Regional Administrator determined that fishing activities conducted pursuant to this EFP will not affect endangered and threatened species or critical habitat under the Endangered Species Act.

References

Rose, C.S. 1995. "Behavior of North Pacific groundfish encountering trawls: applications to reduce bycatch." in Solving Bycatch: Considerations for

Today and Tomorrow. Univ. of Alaska Sea Grant Report 96-03, pp. 235-242.

This action is exempt from review under E.O. 12866.

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

Dated: June 13, 1997.

Gary Matlock,

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

[FR Doc. 97-16009 Filed 6-18-97; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Department of the Navy, DoD

Notice of Closed Meeting of the Board of Visitors to the United States Naval Academy

SUMMARY: Pursuant to the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App. 2), notice is hereby given that the Board of Visitors to the United States Naval Academy will meet on June 23, 1997, at the United States Naval Academy, Alumni Hall, at 8:30 a.m. This meeting will be closed to the public.

The purpose of the meeting is to make such inquiry as the Board shall deem necessary into the state of morale and discipline, the curriculum, instruction, physical equipment, fiscal affairs, and academic methods of the Naval Academy. During this meeting inquiries will relate to the internal personnel rules and practices of the Academy, may involve on-going criminal investigations, and include discussions of personal information the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy. Accordingly, the Under Secretary of the Navy has determined in writing that the meeting shall be closed to the public because the meeting will be concerned with matters as outlined in section 552(b) (2), (5), (6), (7) and (9) of Title 5, United States Code. Due to a delay in Administrative Processing the normal 15 days notice requirement could not be met.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONCERNING THIS MEETING CONTACT: Lieutenant Commander Adam S. Levitt, U.S. Navy, Secretary to the Board of Visitors, Office of the Superintendent, United States Naval Academy, Annapolis, MD 21402-5000, telephone number (410) 293-1503.

Dated: June 11, 1997.

Michael D. Sutton,

LT, JAGC, USN, Alternate Federal Register Liaison Officer.

[FR Doc. 97-16056 Filed 6-18-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3810-FF-P

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Chicago Operations Office; Office of Industrial Technologies (OIT); Notice of Solicitation for the Glass Industry Initiative: Correction

AGENCY: (DOE).

ACTION: Notice of solicitation availability: Correction

SUMMARY: The Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Industrial Technologies published a document in the *Federal Register*, June 6, 1997, concerning receiving applications for innovative research and development (R&D) in support of the "Glass Industry Initiative". The document contained an incorrect internet address.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Barbara Lewandowski at (630) 252-2069.

CORRECTION: In the *Federal Register* of June 6, 1997, in FR Doc: 97-14814, on page number 31088, in the first column, correct the dates and addresses caption to read:

DATES AND ADDRESSES: The Internet address for the DOE Chicago Operations Office's Acquisition and Assistance Group should be changed to: <http://www.ch.doe/business/acq.htm>. The link to the Glass Industry Initiative is located near the bottom of the Acquisition and Assistance page.

Issued in Chicago, Illinois on June 12, 1997.

J.D. Greenwood,

Acquisition and Assistance Group Manager.

[FR Doc. 97-16082 Filed 6-18-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6450-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

[Docket No. ER97-1686-000]

Cataula Generating Company, L.P.; Notice of Issuance of Order

June 13, 1997.

Cataula Generating Company, L.P. (Cataula) filed an application for authorization to sell power at market-based rates, and for certain waivers and authorizations. In particular, Cataula requested that the Commission grant blanket approval under 18 CFR Part 34 of all future issuances of securities and assumptions of liabilities by Cataula. On May 29, 1997, the Commission issued an Order Accepting For Filing Proposed Market-Based Rates (Order), in the above-docketed proceeding.

The Commission's May 29, 1997 Order granted the request for blanket