



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Silver Spring, MD 20910

NMFS Announces the Extension of the Comment Period and Change of Public Hearing Date for Management of Atlantic Swordfish Fisheries

On November 18, 2008, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) published a proposed rule to adjust the 2008 swordfish quotas and modify vessel chartering regulations (73 FR 68398). The rule also provided details for two public hearings to discuss and collect comments on these issues. Based on the proposed rule, the comment period was scheduled to conclude on December 18, 2008, and a public hearing in Gloucester, MA, was scheduled for December 15, 2008, from 2:30 – 4:30 p.m.

Due to requests from highly migratory species (HMS) fishery constituents, NMFS is extending the proposed rule comment period and changing the public hearing date to provide additional time and opportunity for the public and other interested parties to comment on the 2008 swordfish specifications and the modifications to the vessel chartering regulations. These comments will assist NMFS in determining the best way forward for the final rulemaking and managing HMS fisheries, consistent with the Magnuson-Stevens Act and the 2006 Consolidated HMS FMP.

The comment period for the proposed rule has been extended to 5 p.m. on January 16, 2009. The Gloucester public hearing is now scheduled from 3-5 p.m. on January 15, 2009. The hearing location will be at National Marine Fisheries Service, Northeast Regional Office, 55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930.

Written comments, identified by "0648-AW61," may be submitted electronically via the Federal eRulemaking Portal <http://www.regulations.gov>, or sent by fax or mail to the contact information included below. All comments received are a part of the public record and will generally be posted to <http://www.regulations.gov> without change. All Personal Identifying Information (e.g., name, address, etc.) voluntarily submitted by the commenter may be publicly accessible. Do not submit Confidential Business Information or otherwise sensitive or protected information. NMFS will accept anonymous comments (enter N/A in the required fields, if you wish to remain anonymous). You may submit attachments to electronic comments in Microsoft Word, Excel, WordPerfect, or Adobe PDF file formats only.

This notice is a courtesy to the HMS fishery participants to help keep you informed about your fishery. Official notice of Federal actions is made through filing such notice with the Office of Federal Register. For further information on this proposed rule and its requirements, contact LeAnn S. Hogan or Karyl Brewster-Geisz at 301-713-2347. Copies of the proposed rule and supporting documents are available upon request from the Highly Migratory Species Management Division, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910 (phone: 301-713-2347, fax: 301-713-1917). The information is also be posted on the HMS website at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/>.

DEC 11 2008

Date

Emily Menashe

for Alan Risenhoover
Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries

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