

Comments and materials received, as well as supporting documentation used in preparation of this proposed rule, will be available for public inspection, by appointment, during normal business hours at the above address.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** John A. Fridell, Fish and Wildlife Biologist (see **ADDRESSES** section).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** On February 12, 2001, we published a proposed rule in the **Federal Register** announcing the reopening of the public comment period and notice of availability of draft economic analysis for the proposed critical habitat determination for the spruce-fir moss spider. The **DATES** caption stated that comments should be submitted on or before April 13, 2001. The correct date for accepting comments from all interested parties is on or before March 14, 2001.

Accordingly, make the following correction to FR Doc. 01-2270 published at 66 FR 9806, on February 12, 2001:

On page 9807, in column one, correct the **DATES** caption to read as follows:

**DATES:** Interested parties must submit comments on or before March 14, 2001.

Dated: February 14, 2001.

**Sam D. Hamilton,**

*Regional Director, Fish and Wildlife Service.*

[FR Doc. 01-4718 Filed 2-26-01; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4310-55-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

#### 50 CFR Part 600

[I.D. 021501A]

#### Magnuson-Stevens Act Provisions; General Provisions for Domestic Fisheries; Application for Exempted Fishing Permits (EFPs)

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

**ACTION:** Notification of a proposal for EFPs to conduct experimental fishing; request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS announces that the Administrator, Northeast Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), has made a preliminary determination to issue an EFP that would allow one vessel to conduct fishing operations otherwise restricted by the regulations governing the fisheries of the Northeastern United

States. The Haskin Shellfish Research Laboratory submitted a complete application for the issuance of an EFP to one commercial fishing vessel. The EFP would allow one federally permitted vessel to conduct side-by-side tows with the R/V *Albatross* using a 6-cm codend mesh. No species will be targeted by the study, since the vessel will be following the random survey protocol used by the R/V *Albatross*. However, the nets will be fished to maximize the catch of summer flounder, scup and black sea bass on Leg I, and silver hake on Leg II. The purpose of this study is to provide information on the relative catchability of the two platforms and gears fished during the NMFS Spring Trawl Survey.

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 on this notice must be received at the appropriate address or fax number (see **ADDRESSES**) on or before March 14, 2001.

**ADDRESSES:** Written comments should be sent to Patricia Kurkul, Regional Administrator, NMFS, Northeast Regional Office, 1 Blackburn Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930. Mark the outside of the envelope "Comments on EFP Proposal." Comments may also be sent via facsimile (fax) to (978) 281-9135. Comments will not be accepted if submitted via e-mail or Internet.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Allison Ferreira, Fishery Management Specialist, 978-281-9103.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Haskin Shellfish Research Laboratory submitted an industry cooperative proposal on February 2, 2001, for one EFP to conduct side-by-side tows between the R/V ALBATROSS and a fishing vessel during the NMFS Spring Trawl Survey. The study addresses the concern that the spring survey may not adequately assess the proportion of large fish in the population.

The study will occur on Legs I and II of the NMFS Spring Trawl Survey. Leg I of the spring survey is scheduled to begin on February 26, 2001. The study will take place during the first 4 to 5 days of the cruise when the R/V *Albatross* will occupy about 34 stations on the outer shelf and the shelf edge from Hudson Canyon to just north of Cape Hatteras. Some of these stations may occur inside the Southern Gear Restricted Area (GRA). Leg II is scheduled to begin on March 15, 2001. On this Leg, the study will take place when the R/V *Albatross* occupies

stations south of Long Island and Massachusetts, on the outer half of the shelf. This part of the study will occupy 19 stations and last about 3 days. Because the spring survey is conducted 24 hours a day, the industry vessel will have a minimum of four science personnel working two 12-hour shifts of two individuals each.

This study involves Haskin Shellfish Research Laboratory, with funding provided by the NFI Scientific Monitoring Committee. The objective of the study is to conduct side-by-side tows between an industry vessel and the R/V *Albatross* to provide information on the relative catchability of the two platforms and gears fished during the spring survey. The potential outcomes of the study include: (1) An improved assessment of the population size frequency for many commercial species, (2) a boundary condition on the value used as an estimation of catchability in fisheries models, (3) improved estimates of the size-dependency of catchability for the survey gear, (4) improved estimates of spawning stock biomass (SSB) from understanding the bias in catchability in the survey, (5) an increased number of samples for length-weight and length-at-age studies for key species, and (6) potential groundwork for using industry vessels to increase the number of stations occupied in the survey for those species presently sampled with inadequate intensity.

In order to accomplish the objectives of this study, a trawl with a 6-cm codend mesh will be towed in unison and parallel to the survey trawls being conducted by the R/V *Albatross*. In areas where there is a large depth gradient, the industry vessel will tow aft of the R/V *Albatross*. To keep the survey program on schedule, tow times, not tow distances, will remain the same between the two vessels, since it is likely that the towing speed for the R/V *Albatross* will exceed that of the industry vessel.

Since the primary objective of the study is to improve size frequency information, the project aims to take length measurements of all fish caught using standard observer protocols. However, species will be measured in order of importance (i.e., summer flounder, scup, squid, black sea bass, and whiting), or subsampled by size, if the limited number of crews are unable to measure all fish. Individual weight measurements and samples for aging will not be taken, but NMFS may establish certain target species for which weight measurements and aging samples should be taken. These fish will be segregated and transferred to the R/V *Albatross*, when appropriate.

Any fish below the minimum size limits or in excess of a quota will not be retained, except for scientific purposes. However, the applicant intends to retain for sale those fish meeting the minimum size and quota requirements. In addition, the applicant wants to land and sell fish caught in excess of any applicable landing limit, although it is believed that landings limits will likely not be exceeded due to the short duration of the tows.

An EFP would be issued to one participating federally permitted vessel to exempt it from minimum mesh-size requirements, GRA restrictions, landing limits, and possession limits. This EFP would also authorize the vessel to land and sell any fish that conform with minimum-size and quota restrictions.

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

Dated: February 20, 2001.

**Richard W. Surdi,**

*Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.*  
[FR Doc. 01-4692 Filed 2-26-01; 8:45 am]

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

#### 50 CFR Part 600

[I.D. 021401B]

#### Magnuson-Stevens Act Provisions; General Provisions for Domestic Fisheries; Applications for Exempted Fishing Permits (EFPs)

**AGENCY:** National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and

Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

**ACTION:** Notification of a proposal for EFPs to conduct experimental fishing; request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS announces that the Administrator, Northeast Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator), has made a preliminary determination to approve an application for an EFP that would allow up to 12 vessels to conduct fishing operations otherwise restricted by regulations governing the fisheries of the Northeastern United States. The Gulf of Maine Aquarium Development Corporation and Maine Department of Marine Resources have submitted an application for an EFP that warrants further consideration. The experimental fishery to be conducted under the EFP would investigate the bycatch of multispecies and catch of northern shrimp in Gulf of Maine waters that are not currently open to this fishery. The goal of the research is to determine whether a shrimp fishery can be conducted southeast of the Loran 25600 line within acceptable multispecies bycatch limits in order to provide additional economic opportunity to the shrimp fleet and alleviate fishing pressure on shrimp in nearshore waters. This notice is intended to provide interested parties the opportunity to comment on the proposed experimental fishery.

**DATES:** Comments must be received by March 14, 2001.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments should be sent to Patricia Kurkul, Regional Administrator, NMFS, Northeast Regional Office, 1 Blackburn Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930. Mark on the outside of the envelope

“Comments on Proposed Experimental Fishery.” Comments also may be sent via facsimilar (fax) to 978-281-9135. Comments will not be accepted if submitted via e-mail or Internet.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Tom Warren, Fishery Management Specialist, 978-281-9347.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The regulations that govern exempted experimental fishing, at 50 CFR 600.745, allow the Regional Administrator to authorize for certain purposes the targeting or incidental harvest of managed species that would otherwise be prohibited. An EFP to authorize such activity may be issued, provided that there is adequate opportunity for the public to comment on the EFP application, and that the conservation goals and objectives of the Fishery Management Plan are not compromised.

The Gulf of Maine Aquarium Development Corporation of Portland, Maine (ME), and the Maine Department of Marine Resources of Boothbay Harbor, ME submitted to NMFS on November 2, 2000, an application for an EFP to conduct research in the northern shrimp fishery in the Gulf of Maine. The research would target shrimp southeast of the area in which fishing is currently allowed, with the objective of determining whether a shrimp fishery can be conducted within acceptable multispecies bycatch limits. The underlying goal of the research is to provide additional economic opportunity to the northern shrimp fleet and alleviate fishing pressure on shrimp in nearshore waters.