

meeting will be transcribed to preserve an accurate record of the discussion.

### Meeting Information

*November 2, 1999—Seattle, Washington*

The Seattle listening session will be held at the U.S. Coast Guard Integrated Support Command Seattle located at 1519 Alaskan Way South, Seattle, Washington 98134. The listening session facility is located in the Healy Training Room in Building 7 of the Pier 36 Complex. The listening session is scheduled to run from 9:00am until 12:00 noon; following a break for lunch, the afternoon portion will reconvene at 1:30pm and conclude at 4:30pm.

Since access to the Coast Guard base is controlled for security, all visitors must show government-issued photo identification (e.g., driver's license, local/State/Federal agency identification, etc.) and sign-in with the security officer located at the entrance to the base. There is no parking available on-site, and visitors should look for parking spaces along Alaskan Way and under the Highway 99 viaduct.

*November 9, 1999—Des Plaines, Illinois*

The Chicago listening session will be held at the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Great Lakes Region Headquarters at 2300 East Devon Avenue, Des Plaines, Illinois 60018. The listening session facility is located in the Michigan Conference Room of the New Conference Center in the O'Hare Lake Office Center. The listening session is scheduled to run from 9:00 am until 12:00 noon; following a break for lunch, the afternoon portion will reconvene at 1:30pm and conclude at 4:30pm.

Since access to the FAA facility is controlled for security, all visitors must show government-issued photo identification (e.g., driver's license, local/State/Federal agency identification, etc.), sign-in with the security officer located at the entrance to the building, and wear a visitor's badge at all times while in the facility. There is parking available on-site.

*November 15, 1999—Jamaica, New York*

The New York City listening session will be held at the Federal Aviation Administration Eastern Region Headquarters at JFK International Airport in Jamaica, New York 11430. The listening session facility is located in Room 223 of Building 111, directly off the Van Wyck Expressway. The listening session is scheduled to run from 9:00am until 12:00 noon; following a break for lunch, the afternoon portion will reconvene at 1:30pm and conclude at 4:30 pm.

Since access to the FAA facility is controlled for security, all visitors must show government-issued photo identification (e.g., driver's license, local/State/Federal agency identification, etc.), sign-in with the security officer located at the entrance to the building, and wear a visitor's badge at all times while in the facility. As parking at Building 111 is limited, public transportation is recommended. The Green Bus Line "Q10" bus stops directly in front of, and behind, the building. Connections to the "Q10" can be made from the New York City "A", "E", and "F" subway lines.

**Authority:** 49 U.S.C. 504, 31133, 31136, and 31502; and 49 CFR 1.48.

Issued on October 13, 1999 at Washington, DC.

**William M. Wood,**

*Senior Transportation Specialist, Department of Transportation.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

#### 50 CFR Part 660

[I.D. 101399A]

#### Pelagics Fisheries of the Western Pacific Region

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

**ACTION:** Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS); Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA); scoping meetings; request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** On October 6, 1999, NMFS announced its intent to prepare an EIS on Federal management of the fishery for pelagic species in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) waters of the Western Pacific Region. The scope of the EIS analysis will include all activities related to the conduct of the fishery authorized and managed under the Fishery Management Plan for the Pelagic Fisheries of the Western Pacific Region (FMP) and all amendments thereto. Additionally, NMFS announced its intention to prepare an EA on the fishery for pelagic species in the EEZ waters of the Western Pacific Region. The scope of the analysis of the EA will include all activities related to the conduct of the fishery for the 2-year period NMFS anticipates is necessary to

prepare the EIS. Both the EIS and EA will examine the impacts of pelagics harvest on, among other things, sea turtles and seabirds.

NMFS will hold concurrent scoping meetings to provide for public input into the range of actions, alternatives, and impacts that the EIS and EA should consider. Scoping for the EIS and EA commenced with publication of the document published on October 6, 1999. In addition to holding the scoping meetings, NMFS is accepting written comments on the range of actions, alternatives, and impacts it should be considering for this EIS, as well as comments on the scope of the EA.

**DATES:** Written comments will be accepted through December 6, 1999. See ADDRESSES for location to mail written comments. See SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION for meeting times and special accommodations.

**ADDRESSES:** Written comments and requests to be included on a mailing list of persons interested in the EIS should be sent to Marilyn Luipold, Pacific Islands Area Office, NMFS, 1601 Kapiolani Blvd., Suite 1110, Honolulu, HI 96814-4700.

See SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION for meeting locations and special accommodations.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Marilyn Luipold, 808-973-2937 or 2935 extension 204.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, the United States has exclusive fishery management authority over all living marine resources within the EEZ between the seaward boundary of each state or U.S. island possession seaward to 200 nautical miles from the baseline used to measure the territorial sea. The management of these marine resources is vested in the Secretary of Commerce and in eight regional fishery management councils. The Western Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) has the responsibility to prepare FMPs for the marine resources that require conservation and management in the Western Pacific Region. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires preparation of EISs for major Federal actions significantly impacting the quality of the human environment (40 CFR 1502.9(a)).

The FMP was developed by the Council, and regulations implementing management measures were published on February 17, 1987 (52 FR 5983). An EA was prepared for the action implementing the FMP. The FMP has been amended seven times, and NEPA

environmental documents (environmental assessments, categorical exclusions, findings of no significant impact, and an EIS) have been prepared for each FMP and regulatory amendment. However, many of these earlier documents have become outdated and/or focused on individual management actions, making it difficult to obtain a comprehensive view of issues and management options for the fishery as it exists today. NMFS is undertaking preparation of a comprehensive EIS in order to analyze the fishery as it is currently conducted, to address any and all impacts that might have been overlooked in earlier analyses, and to improve management of the fishery. The Federal action under review is defined as, among other things, all activities authorized and managed under the FMP, as amended.

The EIS will present an overall picture of the environmental effects of fishing as conducted under the FMP, rather than focusing narrowly on one management action, and will include a range of reasonable management alternatives and an analysis of their impacts in order to define issues and provide a clear basis for choice among options by the public, the Council, and NMFS. NMFS intends to assess the biological and socio-economic impacts that result from regulation of the pelagic fisheries of the Western Pacific Region, including license limitation, as well as present and potential controls on effort, harvest levels, location, timing, and methods of fishing. The effects on associated species, including interactions with protected species, will be assessed. NMFS intends to evaluate the significant changes that have occurred in the pelagic fisheries, including the significant cumulative effects of changes in fishing activities, socio-economics, the environment, and management. The assessment will include analysis of the cumulative or incremental impacts of actions and alternatives. Impacts associated with status quo management (i.e., continuation of fishing as currently conducted) will be presented and compared to situations simulating limits on fishing areas and/or gears over all or parts of the management area. Possible alternatives to the current conduct of the fishery include a range of area and/or seasonal closures for the longline fishery, gear restrictions and/or modifications, including prohibitions on the use of longline gear in some or all of the management area, and adjustments to requirements for handling incidental hookings and takings of protected species. The

impacts of EEZ fishing activity and harvest on the marine environment will be assessed under representative alternative management scenarios that will ensure consideration of impacts that may reach beyond the EEZ. As the number of possible alternatives is virtually infinite, the EIS will not consider detailed alternatives for every aspect of the FMP. Therefore, a principal objective of the scoping and public input process is to identify a reasonable set of management alternatives that, with adequate analysis, will sharply define critical issues and provide a clear basis for choice among the alternatives.

#### Issues

The environmental consequences section of the EIS will display the impacts of pelagics harvest accruing with present management regulations and under a range of representative alternative management regulations on Western Pacific ecosystem issues. These issues include: Essential fish habitat (EFH), target and non-target species of fish (including tunas, swordfish, and sharks), fish that are discarded, marine mammals (Hawaiian monk seals and cetaceans), sea turtles, and seabirds present in the Western Pacific ecosystem. In addition, the environmental consequences section will contain a summary, interpretation, and predictions for socio-economic issues associated with conduct of the fishery on the following groups of individuals: (1) Those who participate in harvesting the fishery resources and other living marine resources, (2) those who process and market the fish and fishery products, (3) those who are involved in allied support industries, (4) those who consume fishery products, (5) those who rely on living marine resources in the management area either for subsistence needs or for recreational benefits, (6) those who benefit from non-consumptive uses of living marine resources, (7) those involved in managing and monitoring fisheries, and (8) fishing communities.

#### EA Issues

In the EA, NMFS intends to evaluate whether the conduct of the current fisheries over the next 2 years will have significant environmental impacts. The Federal action under review in the EA is defined as all activities authorized and managed under the FMP, as amended, for the 2-year period anticipated to be necessary for preparation of the EIS. The EA will present an overall picture of the environmental effects over the next 2 years of fishing as conducted under the

FMP. Efforts will be made to quantify and explain the intensity of projected impacts on EFH, target and non-target species of fish (including tunas, swordfish, and sharks), fish that are discarded, marine mammals (Hawaiian monk seals and cetaceans), sea turtles, and seabirds present in the Western Pacific ecosystem. Additionally, the EA will evaluate socio-economic impacts associated with the fishery on groups of individuals, including fishing communities, harvesters, processors and marketers, consumers, subsistence and recreational users of living marine resources in the management area, non-consumptive users, and individuals involved in allied support industries and management and monitoring of the fisheries. Although the focus of the EA will be analysis of impacts associated with continuation of fishing as currently conducted, reasonable alternatives for application in the 2-year period, including area and/or seasonal closures for the longline fishery, gear restrictions and/or modifications including prohibitions on the use of longline gear in part or all of the management area, and adjustments to requirements for handling incidental hookings and takings of protected species, will be addressed.

#### Public Involvement

Scoping for the EIS and EA began with publication of the document on October 6, 1999, at 64 FR 54272. Informational presentations of the project will be made at scoping meetings held in the Hawaiian Islands on Oahu, Kauai, Maui, and Hawaii. at the following times and locations:

#### Dates and Times

1. Lihue, Kauai, HI—October 25, 1999, 6 - 8 p.m., Outrigger Kauai Beach Hotel, 4331 Kauai Beach Dr., Lihue, HI 96766.

2. Kona, Hawaii, HI—October 27, 1999, 6 - 8 p.m., Hotel King Kamehameha, 75-5660 Palani Rd., Kailua Kona, HI 96740 3. Hilo, Hawaii, HI—October 28, 1999, 6 - 8 p.m., Hawaii Naniloa Resort, 93 Banyan Dr., Hilo, HI 96720

4. Kihei, Maui, HI—November 4, 1999, at 6 - 8 p.m., Maui Coast Hotel, 2259 South Kihei Rd., Kihei, HI 96753.

5. Haleiwa, Oahu, HI—November 8, 1999, 6 - 8 p.m., Haleiwa Alii Beach Park, 66167 Haleiwa Rd., Haleiwa, HI 96712.

6. Wai'anai, Oahu, HI -- November 30, 1999, 6 - 8 p.m., Wai'anai Public Library, 85625 Farrington Hwy., Wai'anai, HI 96792 Arrangements are being made for meetings to be held on or about November 15, 1999, in Pago Pago,

American Samoa; November 17, 1999, in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands; and November 18, 1999, in Tumon Bay, Guam. Specific times and locations will be announced in a separate **Federal Register** document. The Responsible Program Manager for this EIS is Rodney R. McInnis, Acting Southwest Regional Administrator, NMFS.

#### Special Accommodations

Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Marilyn Luipold, (see **ADDRESSES**),

808-973-2937 (voice) or 808-973-2941 (fax), at least 5 days before the meeting date.

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

Dated: October 14, 1999.

**Bruce C. Morehead,**

*Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.*  
[FR Doc. 99-27354 Filed 10-15-99; 3:22 pm]

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

#### 50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 990304062-9062-01; I.D. 101499A]

#### Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pollock in Statistical Area 620 of the Gulf of Alaska

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

**ACTION:** Inseason adjustment; request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS issues an inseason adjustment opening the D fishing season for pollock in Statistical Area 620 of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA) for 36 hours. This adjustment is necessary to manage the D seasonal allowance of the pollock total allowable catch (TAC) in Statistical Area 620 of the GOA.

**DATES:** Effective 1200 hrs, A.l.t., October 14, 1999, until 2400 hrs, A.l.t., October

15, 1999. Comments must be received at the following address no later than 4:30 p.m., A.l.t., October 29, 1999.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments may be mailed to Sue Salvesson, Assistant Regional Administrator, Sustainable Fisheries Division, Alaska Region, NMFS, P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802-1668, Attn: Lori Gravel. Hand delivery or courier delivery of comments may be sent to the Federal Building, 709 West 9th Street, Room 453, Juneau, AK 99801.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Mary Furuness, 907-586-7228.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** NMFS manages the groundfish fishery in the GOA exclusive economic zone according to the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Gulf of Alaska (FMP) prepared by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council under authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Regulations governing fishing by U.S. vessels in accordance with the FMP appear at subpart H of 50 CFR part 600 and 50 CFR part 679.

NMFS issued a prohibition on directed fishing for pollock effective October 12, 1999, for Statistical Area 620, in accordance with § 679.20(d)(1)(iii), which was filed with the Office of the Federal Register on October 12, 1999.

As of October 13, 1999, 3,500 metric tons (mt) of pollock remain in the D seasonal allowance of the pollock TAC in Statistical Area 620 of the GOA. Section 679.23(b) specifies that the time of all openings and closures of fishing seasons other than the beginning and end of the calendar fishing year is 1200 hrs, A.l.t. Current information shows the catching capacity of vessels catching pollock for processing by the inshore component in Statistical Area 620 of the GOA is in excess of 3,000 mt per day. The Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS, has determined that the D seasonal allowance of the pollock TAC could be exceeded if a 48-hour fishery were allowed to occur. NMFS intends that the seasonal allowance not be exceeded and, therefore, will not allow a 48-hour directed fishery. NMFS, in accordance with § 679.25(a)(1)(i), is

adjusting the D fishing season for pollock in Statistical Area 620 of the GOA by closing the fishery at 2400 hrs, A.l.t., October 15, 1999, at which time directed fishing for pollock will be prohibited. This action has the effect of opening the fishery for 36 hours. NMFS is taking this action to allow a controlled fishery to occur, thereby preventing the overharvest of the D seasonal allowance of the pollock TAC designated in accordance with the Emergency Interim Rule establishing Steller sea lion protection measures for pollock off Alaska. In accordance with § 679.25(a)(2)(iii), NMFS has determined that prohibiting directed fishing at 2400 hrs, A.l.t., October 15, 1999, after a 36 hour opening is the least restrictive management adjustment to achieve the D seasonal allowance of the pollock TAC and will allow other fisheries to continue in noncritical areas and time periods. Pursuant to § 679.25(b)(2), NMFS has considered data regarding catch per unit of effort and rate of harvest in making this adjustment.

#### Classification

The Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA, finds for good cause that providing prior notice and public comment or delaying the effective date of this action is impracticable and contrary to the public interest. Without this inseason adjustment, NMFS could not allow the D seasonal allowance of the pollock TAC in Statistical Area 620 of the GOA to be harvested in an expedient manner and in accordance with the regulatory schedule. Under § 679.25(c)(2), interested persons are invited to submit written comments on this action to the above address until October 29, 1999.

This action is required by §§ 679.20 and 679.25 and is exempt from review under E.O. 12866.

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

Dated: October 14, 1999.

**Richard W. Surdi,**

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