

during the times specified in paragraphs (g)(4)(i)(B) and (g)(4)(ii)(B) of this section. Copies of a chart depicting these areas are available from the Regional Administrator upon request.

(i) *SAM West. (A) Area.* SAM West consists of all waters bounded by straight lines connecting the following points in the order stated:

SAM WEST

Point	N. Lat.	W. Long.
SAM1	42° 04.8'	70° 10'
SAM2	42° 12'	70° 15'
SAM3	42° 30'	70° 15'
SAM4	42° 30'	69° 24'
SAM5	41° 48.9'	69° 24'
SAM6	41° 45'	69° 33'
SAM7	41° 45'	69° 55.8'

(B) *Gear requirements.* Unless otherwise authorized by the Assistant Administrator, in accordance with paragraph (g)(2) of this section, from March 1 through April 30, no person may fish with anchored gillnet or lobster gear unless that person's gear complies with the following gear characteristics:

(1) *Anchored gillnet gear.* (i) Ground line--All ground lines are made entirely of sinking or neutrally buoyant line.

(ii) Buoy weak links--All buoy lines are attached to the buoy with a weak link having a maximum breaking strength of up to 1,100 lb (498.9 kg). Weak links may include swivels, plastic weak links, rope of appropriate diameter, hog rings, rope stapled to a buoy stick, or other materials or devices approved in writing by the Assistant Administrator.

(iii) Buoy line weak link--All buoy lines are attached to the buoy, high flyer, and buoy line leading to the net panels with a weak link having a maximum breaking strength of up to 3,780 lb (1,714.6 kg).

(iv) Net panel weak link--Each net panel must have a total of five weak links. The breaking strength of these weak links must not exceed 1,100 lb (498.9 kg). The weak link requirements apply to all variations in panel size. Three of the five weak links must be located on the floatline. One floatline weak link must be placed at the center of the net panel, and two weak links must be placed as close as possible to each of the bridle ends of the net panel. The remaining two of the five weak links must be placed in the center of each of the up and down lines at either end of each panel.

(v) Buoy line--No more than one buoy line per net string may be used, and it must be deployed at the northern or

western end of the gillnet string depending on the direction of the set.

(vi) Gillnet anchor--All anchored gillnets, regardless of the number of net panels, must be securely anchored with a holding power of at least a 22 lb (9.9 kg) Danforth-style anchor at each end of the net string.

(2) *Lobster Trap gear.* (i) Sinking ground line--All ground lines must be made entirely of sinking or neutrally buoyant line.

(ii) Offshore Lobster buoy weak links--All buoy lines must be attached to the buoy with a weak link having a maximum breaking strength of up to 1,500 lb (680.4 kg). Weak links may include swivels, plastic weak links, rope of appropriate diameter, hog rings, rope stapled to a buoy stick, or other materials or devices approved in writing by the Assistant Administrator.

(iii) Offshore Lobster buoy line weak link--All buoy lines must be attached to the buoy, high flyer, and buoy line leading to the lobster trap with a weak link having a maximum breaking strength of up to 3,780 lb (1,714.6 kg).

(iv) Buoy line--No more than one buoy line per trawl is allowed. The buoy line must be attached to the northern or western end of the trawl string depending on the direction of the set. These requirements supersede the requirements found at § 697.21, which require one radar reflector at each end of a trawl with more than three traps.

(ii) *SAM East. (A) Area.* SAM East consists of all waters bounded by straight lines connecting the following points in the order stated:

SAM EAST

Point	N. Lat.	W. Long.
SAM5	41° 48.9'	69° 24'
SAM4	42° 30'	69° 24'
SAM8	42° 30'	67° 26'
SAM9	42° 30'	66° 50'
SAM10	41° 45'	66° 50'
SAM11	41° 45'	68° 17'
SAM12	42° 10'	68° 31'

(B) *Gear requirements.* Unless otherwise authorized by the Assistant Administrator, in accordance with paragraph (g)(2) of this section, from May 1 through July 31, no person may fish with anchored gillnet or lobster gear unless that person's gear complies with the gear characteristics found at paragraph (g)(4)(i)(B) of this section.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 648

[I.D. 111601C]

New England Fishery Management Council; Public Hearings

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

ACTION: Notification of public hearings; request for comments.

SUMMARY: The New England Fishery Management Council (Council) will hold a series of public hearings to solicit comments on proposals to be included in the Deep-sea Red Crab Fishery Management Plan (FMP).

DATES: Written comments on the proposals will be accepted from November 30, 2001, through January 7, 2002. The public hearings will be held on December 14, 2001, and December 17, 2001. See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** for specific locations and times.

ADDRESSES: To obtain copies of the public hearing document or to submit comments, contact Paul J. Howard, Executive Director, New England Fishery Management Council, 50 Water Street, Mill 2, Newburyport, MA 01950. Identify correspondence as "Comments on Red Crab Management." Comments may also be sent via facsimile (fax) to (978) 465-3116. Comments will not be accepted if submitted via e-mail or the Internet. Hearings will be held in Massachusetts. Requests for special accommodations should be addressed to the New England Fishery Management Council, 50 Water Street, Mill 2, Newburyport, MA 01950; telephone: (978) 465-0492. For the specific locations of the public hearings, see **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Paul J. Howard, (978) 465-0492.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Council proposes to take action to implement a management program for the deep-sea red crab (*Chaceon quinque-dens*) fishery and to address the requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, as amended by the Sustainable Fisheries Act of 1996. The Council will consider comments from fishermen, interested parties, and the general public on the proposals and alternatives described in the public hearing document for the Red Crab FMP. Once

it has considered public comments, the Council will approve final management measures and prepare a submission package for NMFS. There will be an additional opportunity for public comment when the Notice of Availability for the Fishery Management Plan and the proposed rule for this action are published in the **Federal Register**.

Major elements of the proposals in this public hearing document include: (1) Management options that include restrictions on the retention of female crabs, possession limits, restrictions on the processing of red crabs at sea, limits on the number of traps employed by each vessel, gear restrictions, a prohibition on all non-trap/pot gear in the directed red crab fishery, and an allocation of a maximum number of days-at-sea (DAS) for all vessels authorized to participate in the directed red crab fishery; (2) development of a controlled access program for the directed red crab fishery that relies on documented landings of red crab prior to the red crab control date (March 1, 2000, 65 FR 11029); (3) identification of

the management unit for red crab; (4) specification of the red crab fishing year; (5) specification of optimum yield (OY) from the fishery; (6) selection of a new overfishing definition for red crab; (7) designation of essential fish habitat (EFH) for each life history stage of the species; (8) permits and reporting will be required of all vessels and dealers participating in the red crab fishery; (9) development of a monitoring and adjustment mechanism for this plan including an annual specifications process and a framework adjustment process; (10) an incidental catch possession limit for all vessels not authorized to participate in the directed red crab fishery; and (11) additional measures which the Council may consider implementing at a future date. The Council will consider all comments received on these proposals from November 30, 2001, until the end of the comment period on January 7, 2002.

Public Hearing Dates

The dates, times, locations, and telephone numbers of the hearings are as follows:

Friday, December 14, 2001, 2:00 p.m.—Sawyer Free Library, 2 Dale Ave, Gloucester, MA 01930; telephone: (978) 281-9763; and

Monday, December 17, 2001, 3:00 p.m.—University of Massachusetts School of Marine Science and Technology (SMST), 706 Rodney French Boulevard, New Bedford, MA 02744; telephone (508) 910-6353.

Special Accommodations

These hearings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Paul J. Howard (see **ADDRESSES**) at least 5 days prior to the meeting dates.

Dated: November 20, 2001.

Jonathan M. Kurland,

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