anadromous, and potamodromous cutthroat trout; (5) information that may aid in distinguishing native, naturally spawned cutthroat trout from nonnative stocks or rainbow trout/cutthroat trout hybrids; and (6) efforts being made to protect naturally spawned populations of sea-run cutthroat trout in Washington, Oregon, and California.

NMFS also requests quantitative evaluations describing the quality and extent of freshwater and marine habitats for juvenile and adult cutthroat trout, as well as information on areas that may qualify as critical habitat in Washington, Oregon, and California. Areas that include the physical and biological features essential to the recovery of the species should be identified. Essential features include, but are not limited to the following: (1) habitat for individual and population growth, and for normal behavior; (2) food, water, air, light, minerals, or other nutritional or physiological requirements; (3) cover or shelter; (4) sites for reproduction and rearing of offspring; and (5) habitats that are protected from disturbance or are representative of the historic geographical and ecological distributions of the species.

For areas potentially qualifying as critical habitat, NMFS requests information describing (1) the activities that affect the area or could be affected by the designation, and (2) the economic costs and benefits of additional requirements of management measures likely to result from the designation.

The economic cost to be considered in the critical habitat designation under the ESA is the probable economic impact ''of the [critical habitat] designation upon proposed or ongoing activities'' (50 CFR 424.19). NMFS must consider the incremental costs specifically resulting from a critical habitat designation that are above the economic effects attributable to listing the species. Economic effects attributable to listing include actions resulting from section 7 consultations under the ESA to avoid jeopardy to the species and from the taking prohibitions under section 9 of the ESA. Comments concerning economic impacts should distinguish the costs of listing from the incremental costs that can be directly attributed to the designation of specific areas as critical habitat.

On July 1, 1994, NMFS, jointly with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, published a series of policies regarding listings under the ESA, including a policy for peer review of scientific data (59 FR 34270). The intent of the peer review policy is to ensure that listings are based on the best scientific and commercial data available. NMFS now solicits the names of recognized experts in the field that could take part in the peer review process for this status review. Independent peer reviewers will be selected from the academic and scientific community, Tribal and other native American groups, Federal and state agencies, the private sector, and public interest groups.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*

Dated: March 18, 1998.

Patricia Montanio,

Deputy Director, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 98–7464 Filed 3–20–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–22–F

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 660

[I.D. 031298A]

Fisheries Off West Coast States and in the Western Pacific; Northern Anchovy Fishery; Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement

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

ACTION: Notice of intent (NOI) to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS); request for written comments.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces its intent to prepare an EIS to assess the impact on the natural and human environment of amending the Northern Anchovy Fishery Management Plan (FMP) to include the management of other coastal pelagic species. This NOI requests written comments on issues that NMFS should consider in preparing the EIS. The EIS will examine alternatives available to NMFS to manage coastal pelagic species, including northern anchovy, Pacific sardine, Pacific mackerel, jack mackerel, and market squid to allow a productive fishery while preventing overfishing and recognizing the value to the ecosystem of coastal pelagic species as forage for other fish, marine mammals, and birds.

DATES: Comments must be submitted by April 22, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Comments should be sent to William T. Hogarth, Ph.D., Administrator, Southwest Region, NMFS, 501 West Ocean Boulevard, Suite 4200, Long Beach, CA 90802.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: James J. Morgan or Svein Fougner, (562) 980–4030.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: At its June 23–25, 1997, meeting, the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) directed its Coastal Pelagics Development Team (Team) to begin work on an amendment to the northern anchovy FMP to (1) add Pacific sardine, Pacific mackerel, jack mackerel, and market squid; (2) develop management strategies for these species that meet the requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act); and (3) present options for limited access to the fisheries. A previous amendment was disapproved by NMFS in 1996; however, the Council pointed out that recent events increased the need for Federal management. The biomass of Pacific sardine continues to grow by approximately 30 percent per year, with commercial fisheries operating off Mexico, United States, and Canada. In the 1930s, the fishery for Pacific sardine was the largest in the western hemisphere, but the resource declined precipitously in the 1950s. With changing environmental conditions off the coast of California, abundance is now increasing. A major issue of the FMP will be how to responsibly manage these resources in accordance with the provisions of the Magnuson-Stevens Act while recognizing their importance as forage for other species, given that coastal pelagic species fluctuate widely even in the absence of a fishery.

A series of public meetings of the Team and Coastal Pelagics Advisory Subpanel (Subpanel) were held in 1997 to determine how to approach limited entry and harvest strategy (62 FR 38068, July 16, 1997). The Council reviewed progress of the FMP amendment, at its September 9–12, 1997, meeting, and additional meetings of the Team and Subpanel were held in the latter part of 1997 and early 1998 (62 FR 58941, October 31, 1997). An advance notice of proposed rulemaking notifying the public that the Council was preparing an amendment to the FMP and was considering a control date for the development of options for limited entry was published in the **Federal Register** on December 17, 1997 (62 FR 66049). Additional public meetings will be announced in the **Federal Register**. The draft FMP amendment is expected to be completed by June 1998, with the Council making final decisions on the document in September 1998.

NMFS has determined that the preparation of an EIS is appropriate because of the potentially significant impact of regulations on the human environment. At this stage of development, the general effect of Federal regulations will be to limit the

vessels that can participate in the fishery, to prevent overfishing; and to set harvest limits for resources that greatly extend their range at high biomass levels and contract their range dramatically when biomass levels are low.

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

Dated: March 17, 1998.

Bruce C. Morehead,

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

[FR Doc. 98–7460 Filed 3–20–98; 8:45 am]

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