

Dated: April 21, 1997.

**Nancy Foster,**

*Deputy Assistant Administrator for Fisheries,  
National Marine Fisheries Service.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 042197F]

#### Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Atlantic Surf Clam and Ocean Quahog Fisheries

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

**ACTION:** Notice of solicitation of interest.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS is soliciting participation by surf clam and ocean quahog industry members in a study to calibrate the surf clam dredge employed by the NOAA R/V DELAWARE II to conduct surf clam and ocean quahog abundance surveys. The study will involve the use of three surf clam dredge vessels working in conjunction with the R/V DELAWARE II on or about May 12-23, 1997, in a circumscribed area off Northern New Jersey.

**DATES:** Prospective participants must apply by telephone to Dr. Steven Murawski on or before May 2, 1997 (see below).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Dr. Steve Murawski, Chief, Population Dynamics Branch, Northeast Fisheries Science Center, (508) 495-2303.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The NMFS Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC) last conducted a research vessel survey of the surf clam and ocean quahog resource in 1994. The catch of surf clams and ocean quahogs during the 1994 survey greatly exceeded the amounts caught in prior surveys. These results proved inexplicable as an examination of the various aspects and components of the survey dredging operation identified no apparent discrepancies between the 1994 survey methodology and that of previous surveys. Developing a methodology to explain these results has been a high research priority of the Invertebrate Subcommittee (Subcommittee) of the Northeast Regional Stock Assessment Review Committee. Many industry members are also anxious to have an explanation of the 1994 survey results, since these results could have implications for the level of the quotas that are set each year.

One of the Subcommittee members, Dr. Eric Powell, Rutgers University, presented three research proposals to the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) at its April 1997 meeting. The Council supported a dredge calibration study as its top priority. Since then, some industry members have offered the use of their vessels to aid the NEFSC with the research survey. The information collected will be a first step in attempting to explain the 1994 survey results. NMFS wishes to take advantage of the industry's offer of assistance and is requesting expressions of interest from industry members to participate in a dredge calibration study to take place on or about May 12-23, 1997. Three commercial surf clam dredge vessels are needed for the study.

The study will occur at three sites within a circumscribed area off Northern New Jersey where clam dredging will take place. The R/V DELAWARE II will make initial tows at each site and mark the study locations with buoys and differential Global Positioning System. The commercial vessels selected for the study will then commence fishing, one vessel at each site, to re-sample the study area initially sampled by DELAWARE II. The vessels will conduct fairly normal dredging operations within the sites. The participants must carry a scientific observer for the day(s) on which they participate in the study. Each tow must be conducted at a specified speed and for a specified distance. NMFS personnel will designate the starting point for each tow. The industry participants must be willing to continue fishing the sites until the NMFS observer determines that a statistically significant decline in catch per tow has occurred. This will require making multiple passes over the entire experimental area at each site. For each tow, the observer will estimate the total volume of surf clams caught and, prior to their deposit in cages will collect a subsample of the catch to measure length for estimating age frequency composition. Measurements by the observer will be recorded in the vessel's logbook in place of the normal estimates recorded by the vessel operator. Industry members will tag these cages as required by the regulations. Any amounts of surf clams that will not be retained must be discarded outside the experimental area.

To apply, applicants must telephone Dr. Steve Murawski at (508) 495-2303 on or before May 2, 1997. Vessels will be selected based on their suitability for the study. Preference will be given to single dredge vessels, as double dredge

vessels unnecessarily complicate the calibration process. The size and configuration of the vessel will also be considered in selecting the participating vessels. Preference will be given to those vessels whose size and configuration allow the observer to function without impeding the normal fishing operation of the vessel. NEFSC will select the vessels to participate and notify all of the prospective participants of the selections.

Dated: April 22, 1997.

**Gary C. Matlock,**

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

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## COMMODITY FUTURES TRADING COMMISSION

### Applications of the Chicago Board of Trade for Designation as a Contract Market in Futures and Options on Medium Term Inflation Index U.S. Treasury Notes and Inflation Index U.S. Treasury Bonds

**AGENCY:** Commodity Futures Trading Commission.

**ACTION:** Notice of availability of the terms and conditions of proposed commodity futures and option contracts.

**SUMMARY:** The Chicago Board of Trade (CBT or Exchange) has applied for designation as a contract market in futures and options on medium term inflation index U.S. Treasury notes and inflation index U.S. Treasury bonds. The Acting Director of the Division of Economic Analysis (Division) of the Commission, acting pursuant to the authority delegated by Commission Regulation 140.96, has determined that publication of the proposals for comment is in the public interest, will assist the Commission in considering the views of interested persons, and is consistent with the purpose of the Commodity Exchange Act.

**DATES:** Comments must be received on or before May 12, 1997.

**ADDRESSES:** Interested persons should submit their views and comments to Jean A. Webb, Secretary, Commodity Futures Trading Commission, Three Lafayette Centre, 21st Street NW, Washington, DC 20581. In addition, comments may be sent by facsimile transmission to facsimile number (202) 418-5521, or by electronic mail to secretary@cftc.gov. Reference should be made to the CBT futures and options on medium term inflation index U.S.