

9. November 4, 1998—Sheraton, 250 Market Street, Portsmouth, NH.

The hearings will be tape recorded with the tapes filed as the official transcript of the hearings.

Special Accommodations

These hearings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Joanna Davis at the Mid-Atlantic Council office at least 5 days prior to the hearing date.

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

Dated: October 7, 1998.

Gary C. Matlock,

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

[FR Doc. 98-27582 Filed 10-14-98; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 648

[I.D. 100698B]

New England Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

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

ACTION: Public meeting.

SUMMARY: The New England Fishery Management Council (Council) will hold a 2-day public meeting to consider actions affecting New England fisheries in the exclusive economic zone. The full Council meeting will begin at 1:30 p.m., following a meeting of the Council's Herring Committee on October 28.

DATES: The meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 28, 1998, at 9:30 a.m. and on Thursday, October 29, 1998, at 8:30 a.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Holiday Inn Hotel and Convention Center, 88 Spring Street, Portland, ME 04101; telephone (207) 775-2311. Requests for special accommodations should be addressed to the New England Fishery Management Council, 5 Broadway, Saugus, MA 01906-1036; telephone: (781) 231-0422.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Paul J. Howard, Executive Director, New England Fishery Management Council, (781) 231-0422.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Wednesday, October 28, 1998

At 9:30 a.m., the Council will convene a meeting of its Herring Committee to continue discussions and select final management measures for the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for the Atlantic Herring Fishery. Management measures under discussion will include, but not be limited to, restrictions for large domestic processing vessels (such as size limits or sector allocations) and vessel tracking system (VTS) requirements. The full Council meeting will begin in the afternoon at 1:30 p.m. when Council Executive Director Paul Howard presents the details of an annual FMP review and adjustment process for each Council plan and public participation procedures. The Herring Committee Report will follow, during which the committee chairman will ask the Council for approval of the outstanding Herring FMP management measures (including recommended measures for large domestic processing vessels and VTS requirements) after a review of public comments and committee and advisory panel recommendations. The Council is also expected to review and approve FMP documents (description of measures, draft regulatory text and summary of impacts).

Thursday, October 29, 1998

The meeting will begin with reports on recent activities from the Council Chairman, Executive Director, the NMFS Acting Regional Administrator, Northeast Fisheries Science Center and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council liaisons, and representatives of the Coast Guard, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Whiting Committee will ask for approval of measures for Amendment 12 (whiting) to the Northeast Multispecies FMP after a review of the public and advisory panel comments and committee recommendations. Major elements of the management program include new overfishing definitions and the specification of optimum yield as required by the Sustainable Fisheries Act, a moratorium on commercial whiting permits, a Cultivator Shoal season change, management alternatives for the northern, southern, and Cultivator Shoal management areas including minimum mesh sizes and possession limits, restrictions on the transfer of whiting and red hake at sea, and a final essential fish habitat designation for offshore hake. The Groundfish Committee will seek approval of initial action on a framework adjustment to the Northeast

Multispecies FMP (Framework 26) that calls for measures to protect cod prior to May 1, the start of the 1999 fishing year. Measures under consideration include expanding the existing Gulf of Maine groundfish closures in time and area and, possibly, expanding them to waters east of Cape Cod; prohibiting the use of "crucifiers," a device used in the hook fishery to sort fish by size; and prohibiting the landing of overages of the Gulf of Maine cod trip limit (eliminating the "running clock"). The meeting will conclude with a presentation of the Draft Highly Migratory Species FMP. NMFS staff from the Highly Migratory Species Division will summarize the proposed FMP and take questions and comments. Any other outstanding Council business also will be discussed at this time.

Although other issues not contained in this agenda may come before this Council for discussion, in accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, those issues may not be the subject of formal Council action during this meeting. Council action will be restricted to those issues specifically listed in this document.

Special Accommodations

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

Dated: October 8, 1998.

Bruce C. Morehead,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Parts 648 and 649

[I.D. 100798B]

RIN 0648-AL36

Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; American Lobster Fishery; Fishery Management Plan (FMP) Amendments to Achieve Regulatory Consistency on Permit Related Provisions for Vessels Issued Limited Access Federal Fishery Permits

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