ACTION: Proposed Collection; comments request

SUMMARY: The Department of Commerce, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, invites the general public and other Federal agencies to take this opportunity to comment on proposed and/or continuing information collections, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Public Law 104-13 (44 U.S.C. 3506(c)(2)(A)).

DATES: Written comments must be submitted on or before April 17, 2000.

ADDRESSES: Direct all written comments to Linda Engelmeier, Departmental Forms Clearance Officer, Department of Commerce, Room 5327, 14th and Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington DC 20230 (or via Internet at LEngelme@doc.gov).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Requests for additional information or copies of the information collection instrument(s) and instructions should be directed to William L. Robinson, NMFS, 7600 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle WA 98112, 206-526-6140.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Abstract

These data collections deal with Federal reporting requirements for processing vessels and affect participants in the groundfish fishery off Washington, Oregon, and California (WOC). The data collections involve: (1) vessel start/stop reports; (2) catch or receipt reports and logbooks; and (3) product transfer/offloading reports and logbooks. The data collections apply to groundfish processing vessels over 125′ (38.5 meters) in length and catcher vessels delivering to them.

Vessel reports indicate when a vessel has started and stopped operations, and are needed to ensure catch/receipt reports have been received, for observer deployment, and for monitoring the fishery.

Logbooks are the basis for reports submitted to NMFS. The logbooks for processing vessels are used to keep daily and cumulative totals of the catch (or fish received from a catcher vessel), species, disposition, and numbers and species of prohibited species (salmon, halibut, Dungeness crab). Reports of species and amounts caught are submitted on a weekly or daily basis, depending on the duration of the season. Logbooks also are kept by fishing vessels to record specific haul or set information. Logbooks also are used to record transfers or offloading of fish or fish products which facilitates enforcement.

II. Method of Collection

These are written data collections that are prepared and submitted by the vessel owner or operator to the National Marine Fisheries Service, Northwest Regional Office, by mail, fax, electronic mail, or in person.

III. Data

OMB Number: 0648-0271.

Form Number: None.

Type of Review: Regular Submission.

Affected Public: Business or other for-profit (owners and operators of vessels that fish for or process groundfish in ocean waters 0–200 nautical miles off Washington, Oregon, and California).

Estimated Number of Respondents: 86.

Estimated Time Per Response: The expected daily average for vessel start/stop reports is about 1.25 minutes; for entering information in catch/receipt logbooks is 13 minutes for catcher vessels and motherships and 26 minutes for catcher-processors; for weekly reports of fish caught or received is 4.3 minutes per day; for product transfer logs is 20 minutes.

Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours: 1,724.

Estimated Total Annual Cost to Public: $10,306 (averaging about $422 per vessel).

IV. Request for Comments

Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden (including hours and cost) of the proposed collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized and/or included in the request for OMB approval of this information collection; they also will become a matter of public record.

Dated: February 9, 2000.

Linda Engelmeier,

Departmental Forms Clearance Officer, Office of the Chief Information Officer.

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BILLING CODE 3510–22–F

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

National Marine Sanctuaries System (NMS)

AGENCY: Marine Sanctuaries Division (MSD, Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (OCRM), National Ocean Service (NOS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce (DOC).

ACTION: Notice of Intent to Prepare a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement.

SUMMARY: The Marine Sanctuaries Division (MSD) of the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management intends to prepare a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS). The PEIS will describe and address physical injury to, loss of and destruction of coral and biotic reef communities that result from anthropogenic activities, such as vessel groundings and anchoring within the National Marine Sanctuaries. The PEIS will also describe and characterize the different approaches and methodologies that may be implemented to restore, replace or acquire the equivalent of such injured, destroyed or lost resources.

MSD is publishing this notice in the **Federal Register** in order to advise other agencies and the public of its intent to prepare a PEIS and to obtain suggestions and information on the scope of issues to include in the document.

DATES: Written comments from all interested parties must be received on or before March 22, 2000. A scoping meeting will be held in the spring of 2000, and a Draft PEIS is expected by fall/winter of 2000. The Final PEIS is expected to be completed by the winter of 2001.

ADDRESSES: Written comments and requests for information should be sent to Lisa Symons, NOAA/Marine Sanctuaries Division, 1305 East-West Highway, #11535, Silver Spring, MD 20910, phone (310) 713–3145, ext: 108, email Lisa.Symons@noaa.gov.

Comments and materials received in response to this notice will be available for public inspection, by appointment, at the aforementioned address.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The National Marine Sanctuary System was established under the National Marine Sanctuaries Act (NMSA; also known as title III of the Marine Protection, Research and Sanctuaries Act), 16 U.S.C. 1431 *et seq.* The NMSA authorizes the Secretary of Commerce to

identify and designate certain areas of the marine environment which are of special national significance as National Marine Sanctuaries, and provides authority for comprehensive and coordinated conservation and management of these marine areas, and activities affecting them, in a manner that complements existing regulatory authorities. Further, section 312 of the NMSA provides that any person who destroys, causes the loss of, or injures any sanctuary resource is liable to the United States for response costs and damages. Monies received are used to reimburse the Secretary for response actions and damage assessments and to fund the restoration, replacement, or acquisition of the equivalent of injured, destroyed, or lost Sanctuary resources.

As a part of its mission to protect and manage the ecological, historical, educational, recreational, and aesthetic qualities of the National Marine Sanctuaries, MSD will prepare a Reef Restoration PEIS. It is MSD's intent to prepare this PEIS such that a tiered process can be used in the preparation of future environmental documents concerning restoration actions within National Marine Sanctuaries. The PEIS, among other things, will set forth methodologies and guidelines for restoration actions arising out of injuries to sanctuary resources. Accordingly, the PEIS will facilitate the development of both subsequent environmental assessments (EAs) and individual restoration plans designed to restore sanctuary resources.

MSD intends to hold a public scoping meeting prior to the preparation of the Draft PEIS for those persons and/or organizations interested in the development of the Draft PEIS. MSD will also hold a public meeting, which will be held concurrent with the public comment period to accept comments on the Draft PEIS. Notice of these meetings will be published in the **Federal Register**. All substantive comments provided, both written and oral, at the public meeting, will be considered in the preparation of the Final PEIS and will become part of the public record (i.e., names, addresses, letters of comment, comment provided during public meetings).

Comments and suggestions are invited from all interested parties to ensure that the full range of issues related to this proposed action and all significant issues are identified. Comments and/or questions concerning the preparation of this PEIS should be directed to the MSD at the address or phone listed above.

Dated: February 11, 2000.

Capt. Ted Lillestolen,

Deputy Assistant Administrator for Ocean Services and Coastal Zone Management.

[FR Doc. 00–3771 Filed 2–16–00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–08–M

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 012100B]

Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act Provisions; Essential Fish Habitat General Concurrence

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

ACTION: Notice of availability; request for comments.

SUMMARY: NMFS requests public comments on a proposed essential fish habitat (EFH) General Concurrence with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District (COE). The proposed General Concurrence was prepared by NMFS to provide for expedited review of certain COE regulatory actions that may no more than minimally adversely affect EFH, and for which no further consultation is generally required.

DATES: Comments must be received at the appropriate address or fax number (See **ADDRESSES**) no later than 5:00 p.m. eastern standard time on March 3, 2000.

ADDRESSES: Comments should be submitted to Lou Chiarella, NMFS Northeast Region EFH Coordinator, One Blackburn Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930, telephone 978–281–9277, e-mail *lou.chiarella@noaa.gov*. Comments may be submitted via facsimile (fax) to 978–281–9301. Comments will not be accepted if submitted via e-mail or internet. Copies of the proposed General Concurrence may be obtained from the same address. The proposed General Concurrence is also accessible via the internet at http://www.nero.nmfs.gov/ro/doc/hcd/htm.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Lou Chiarella, NMFS Northeast Region EFH Coordinator, 978–281–9277, e-mail *lou.chiarella@noaa.gov*.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act) (16 U.S.C. 1855(b)(2)) requires Federal agencies to consult with the Secretary of Commerce regarding any action or proposed action authorized, funded, or undertaken by the agency that may adversely affect EFH. EFH has been identified by regional fishery management councils pursuant to section 303(a)(7) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act (16 U.S.C. 1853(a)(7)). EFH is defined as ''those waters and substrate necessary to fish for spawning, breeding, feeding or growth to maturity.'' Consultations are governed by the EFH regulations at 50 CFR 600.920. The regulations identify five options for carrying out EFH consultations: use of existing environmental review procedures, General Concurrence, programmatic consultation, abbreviated consultation, and expanded consultation.

General Concurrences are developed by NMFS in coordination with a Federal agency to identify specific types of Federal actions that may adversely affect EFH, but for which no further consultation is generally required because NMFS has determined that the actions will likely result in no more than minimal adverse effects to EFH individually and cumulatively.

For actions to qualify for a General Concurrence, the EFH regulations at 50 CFR 600.920(f)(2) require that the actions meet all of the following criteria: (1) the actions must be similar in nature and similar in their impact on EFH; (2) the actions must not cause greater than minimal adverse effects on EFH when implemented individually; and (3) the actions must not cause greater than minimal cumulative adverse effects on EFH. NMFS prepared the proposed General Concurrence with the COE for activities governed by state programmatic general permits (PGPs) in New England.

State PGPs are COE permits developed pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1344), Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act (33 U.S.C. 403) and/or Section 103 of the Marine Protection, Research and Sanctuaries Act (33 U.S.C. 1413) for activities that result in minimal environmental impacts. PGPs are issued by the COE for a term of 5 years. PGPs for the New England states include two categories of activities. Category I activities are those with minimal impacts that do not require further authorization by the COE. Since no COE authorization is needed after issuance of the PGP, no Federal action occurs that would trigger the requirement for an EFH consultation for individual Category I activities. Examples of Category I activities covered by these PGPs include certain temporary buoys, Coast Guard approved aids to navigation, and single boat moorings not associated with any boating facility. Category II activities require COE review