property, loans, grants, benefits, and contracts (5 U.S.C. 553(a)(2)). Because notice and opportunity for comment are not required pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553 or any other law, the analytical requirements of the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.*) are inapplicable. Therefore, a regulatory flexibility analysis has not been prepared.

Dated: June 24, 2004.

Helen Hurcombe,

Director Acquisition and Grants Office, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

[FR Doc. 04–14844 Filed 6–29–04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–12–P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 062304B]

North Pacific Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

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

ACTION: Notice of a public committee meeting.

SUMMARY: The North Pacific Fishery Management Council's (Council) Steller Sea Lion Mitigation Committee will meet in Seattle, WA.

DATES: The meeting will be held on July 19, from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., July 20 and July 21, 2004, from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Alaska Fisheries Science Center, 7600 Sand Point Way NE, Building 4, Room 2039, Seattle, WA.

Council address: North Pacific Fishery Management Council, 605 W. 4th Ave., Suite 306, Anchorage, AK 99501–2252.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Bill Wilson, Council; telephone: 907–271–2809.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The meeting will begin at 1 pm on Monday, July 19. The committee will discuss the following issues and develop recommendations for the Council to consider in October:

(1) Aleutian Islands Steller Sea Lion (SSL) Protection Measures, (2) Development of Analytical Tools for Evaluating Fishery/SSL Interactions, (3) Vessel Monitoring System requirements in Alaskan Groundfish Fisheries.

Although non-emergency issues not contained in this agenda may come before this group for discussion, those issues may not be the subject of formal action during this meeting. Action will be restricted to those issues specifically identified in this notice and any issues arising after publication of this notice that require emergency action under section 305(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, provided the public has been notified of the Council's intent to take final action to address the emergency.

Special Accommodations

This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Gail Bendixen, 907–271–2809, at least 5 working days prior to the meeting date.

Dated: June 25, 2004.

Alan D. Risenhoover,

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

[FR Doc. E4–1447 Filed 6–29–04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–22–S

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 061604D]

Atlantic Highly Migratory Species; Exempted Fishing Permits

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

ACTION: Notice of receipt of a request for exempted fishing permits; request for comments.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces the receipt of a request for exempted fishing permits (EFPs) for tuna purse seine vessels to transfer purse seine caught bluefin tuna (BFT) to a towed cage for the purposes of examining premature shedding of pop-up satellite tags, investigating alternative harvesting methods, and gathering information on how delayed landing of purse seine captured BFT impacts market prices. NMFS invites comments from interested parties on potential concerns should these EFPs be issued.

DATES: Written comments on the proposed exempted fishing activity must be received no later than July 12, 2004.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments by any of the following methods:

- Email: *ID061604D@noaa.gov*. Include in the subject line the following identifier: I.D. 061604D.
- Mail: Christopher Rogers, Chief, Highly Migratory Species Management Division (F/SF1), NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910.
- Fax: (301)713–1917.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Heather Stirratt, phone: 301–713–2347; fax: 301–713–1917.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: EFPs are requested and issued under the authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*) and/or the Atlantic Tunas Convention Act (16 U.S.C. 971 *et seq.*). Regulations at 50 CFR 600.745 and 50 CFR 635.32 govern scientific research activity, exempted fishing, and exempted educational activity with respect to Atlantic HMS.

Several operators of permitted Atlantic tuna purse seine vessels, a transfer vessel, and a holding vessel have requested exemptions from certain regulations applicable to the harvest and landing of BFT in order to conduct research on BFT in the Gulf of Maine area. Specifically, the permitted purse seine vessels propose to transfer BFT that they catch to a cage towed by the holding vessel, and tag the BFT with pop-up tags to investigate premature tag shedding. During the course of the tagging study, approximately 20 BFT may be harvested per day to investigate characteristics of tagging sites and tag retention, and to investigate the economic impact of delayed landings in the purse seine fishery. BFT would be harvested from the cage using experimental gears including a diver and/or electric speargun and would be transported to port via a transfer vessel. The holding and transfer vessels may not have Atlantic tunas permits, thus landings and other reporting procedures may need to be altered to account for the delayed harvesting operations. The applicants state that delayed landing of the harvested fish could enhance marketing opportunities and prices by coordinating landings with strong market activity. According to the applicants, these operations may benefit all U.S. commercial BFT fishing categories by improving scientific data available for BFT management and avoiding the market gluts experienced in recent years.

The applicants also request an exemption to allow permitted Atlantic tunas purse seine vessels participating in the experiment to exceed the 15–percent tolerance level for incidental catch of bluefin tuna between 73 and 81 inches (185 and 206 cm). In their request, the applicants state that the current 15 percent tolerance for fish below 81 inches (206 cm) could be a restrictive factor limiting the success of the experiment. The applicants note that