SUMMARY: NMFS is extending the date by which public comments are due concerning proposed regulations to implement a catch sharing plan for the guided sport and commercial fisheries for Pacific halibut in waters of International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) Regulatory Areas 2C (Southeast Alaska) and 3A (Central Gulf of Alaska). NMFS published the proposed rule on July 22, 2011 and announced that the public comment period would end on September 6, 2011. With this notice, NMFS is extending the comment period to September 21, 2011.

DATES: The deadline for receipt of comments on the proposed rule published on July 22, 2011 (76 FR 44156), is extended from September 6, 2011, to September 21, 2011.


SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

On July 22, 2011, NMFS published regulations at 76 FR 44156, that would implement a catch sharing plan for the guided sport and commercial fisheries for Pacific halibut in waters of IPHC Regulatory Areas 2C (Southeast Alaska) and 3A (Central Gulf of Alaska). The proposed catch sharing plan will change the annual process of allocating halibut between the guided sport and commercial fisheries in Area 2C and Area 3A, establish allocations for each sector, and specify harvest restrictions for guided sport anglers that are intended to limit harvest to the annual guided sport fishery catch limit. The proposed catch sharing plan also will authorize annual transfers of commercial halibut quota to charter halibut permit holders for harvest in the guided sport fishery.

NMFS received several requests from members of the public and representatives of recreational fishing organizations to extend the comment period on the proposed rule due to overlap with the recreational halibut fishing season and the complexity of the proposed catch sharing plan. Several commenters requested a 30-day extension and one commenter asked for an additional 60 days. We have considered these comments and conclude that a 15-day extension should allow sufficient time for the public to review and comment on the proposed rule without significantly delaying the rulemaking process.

Dated: September 1, 2011.

John Oliver,
Deputy Assistant Administrator for Operations, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 2011–22862 Filed 9–1–11; 4:15 pm]
BILLING CODE 3510–22–P