remain in effect through December 31, 2015. The closure applies to all U.S. purse seine fishing vessels.

Petition for Rulemaking

Under the Administrative Procedure Act, interested persons may petition Federal agencies for the issuance, amendment, or repeal of a rule.

In a petition to NMFS dated May 12, 2015, Tri Marine requested that NMFS take two actions. First, Tri Marine requested that ''NOAA undertake an emergency rulemaking with respect to the 2015 ELAPS limits for fishing days on the high seas.'' Second, Tri Marine requested that ''NOAA issue a rule exempting from that high seas limit any US flag purse seine vessel which, pursuant to contract or declaration of intent, delivers or will deliver at least 50 percent of its catch to tuna processing facilities based in American Samoa.''

At the time of Tri Marine's initial request, NMFS was preparing to issue an interim rule establishing a limit on purse seine fishing effort in the ELAPS for 2015. As described above, NMFS established a limit in the ELAPS for 2015 in an interim rule published May 21, 2015. Accordingly, the first part of Tri Marine's request has been addressed. In the interim rule, NMFS acknowledged that it had received Tri Marine's petition for rulemaking, and stated that it will consider and respond to the petition separately from the interim rule.

With regard to the second part of Tri Marine's request, the petition explains that as a result of decisions by the Republic of Kiribati, U.S. purse seine vessels' access to their traditional fishing grounds in 2015 has been dramatically reduced, and that the high seas portion of the ELAPS can be expected to be closed to fishing as early as June. The petition further states that because of the limited fishing grounds now available to the American Samoa-based purse seine fleet and other factors, including an unusually low tuna price and the higher cost of access to fishing grounds in the region, the ability of American Samoa-based tuna vessels to operate profitably is in serious question, and the loss of a reliable supply of tuna from these vessels will jeopardize the ability of the canneries in American Samoa to compete in world markets. The petition states that under the Convention, American Samoa is afforded special treatment as a small island developing state or participating territory for purposes of applying conservation and management measures of the Commission, and therefore NMFS should develop rules that exempt from the ELAPS limit those vessels that deliver to the canneries in American Samoa.

The petition includes further information on the basis of the request, including information related to the recommendations of the Governor of American Samoa's Fisheries Task Force, and an ''issue brief'' with statements about the nature of the issue and how the requested rule(s) would address it.

In a second letter to NMFS dated May 26, 2015, which supplements the May 12, 2015, petition, Tri Marine acknowledged the interim rule published May 21, 2015, and amended its request. Tri Marine requested that ''NOAA undertake an emergency rulemaking with respect to the 2015 ELAPS limits for fishing days (both) on the high seas and in the US EEZ,'' and further requested that ''NOAA issue a rule exempting from the ELAPS limits any US flag purse seine vessel which, pursuant to contract or declaration of intent, delivers or will deliver at least 50 percent of its catch to tuna processing facilities based in American Samoa.''

See the **ADDRESSES** section for instructions on how to obtain copies of the petition.

Request for Comments

NMFS has determined that the petition contains enough information to enable NMFS to consider its substance. NMFS is issuing this notice to solicit comments on the petitioner's request. NMFS is particularly interested in comments on the nature and severity of the problem identified by the petitioner, whether any exigencies exist, and whether the petitioner's requests would solve the alleged problem in an efficient and fair manner.

Next Steps

NMFS will consider public comments in deciding whether to proceed with the rulemaking(s) requested by Tri Marine. Once NMFS decides whether or not to proceed, or to proceed in part, it will publish a notice of its decision in the **Federal Register**.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 6901 *et seq.*

Dated: July 13, 2015.

Samuel D. Rauch III,

Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 2015–17571 Filed 7–16–15; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 424

[Docket Nos. FWS–HQ–ES–2015–0016; DOC 150506429–5586–02; 4500030113]

RIN 1018–BA53; 0648–BF06

Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Revisions to the Regulations for Petitions

AGENCY: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), Interior; National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Proposed rule; extension of the comment period.

SUMMARY: We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service, announce the extension of the public comment period on our May 21, 2015, proposed revisions to the regulations concerning petitions under section 4(b)(3) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended. Comments previously submitted need not be resubmitted, as they will be fully considered in preparation of the final rule.

DATES: The comment period for the proposed rule published in the **Federal Register** on May 21, 2015 (80 FR 29286), is extended. We will accept comments from all interested parties until September 18, 2015. Please note that if you are using the Federal eRulemaking Portal (see **ADDRESSES**, below), the deadline for submitting an electronic comment is 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on that date.

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

- *Federal eRulemaking Portal: http://www.regulations.gov.* In the Search box, enter the docket number for the proposed rule, which is FWS–HQ–ES–2015–0016. You may submit a comment by clicking on ''Comment Now!'' Please ensure that you have found the correct rulemaking before submitting your comment.
- *U.S. mail:* Public Comments Processing, Attn: Docket No. FWS–HQ–ES–2015–0016; Division of Policy, Performance, and Management Programs; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; 5275 Leesburg Pike, MS: BPHC, Falls Church, VA 22041–3803.

We will post all comments on *http://www.regulations.gov.* This

generally means that we will post any personal information you provide us (see Public Comments, below, for more information).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Douglas Krofta, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Conservation and Classification, 5275 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041–3803, telephone 703/358–2171; facsimile 703/358–1735; or Angela Somma, National Marine Fisheries Service, Office of Protected Resources, 1315 East–West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910, telephone 301/427–8403. If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD), call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 800/877–8339.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Public Comments

We will accept written comments and information during this extended comment period on our proposed revisions to the regulations concerning petitions under section 4(b)(3) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act; 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), that was published in the **Federal Register** on May 21, 2015 (80 FR 29286). We will consider information we receive from all interested parties on or before the close of the comment period (see **DATES**).

If you have already submitted comments or information during the public comment period that began May 21, 2015, please do not resubmit them. We have incorporated them into the public record, and we will fully consider them in the preparation of our final rule.

You may submit your comments and materials by one of the methods listed in **ADDRESSES**. We request that you send comments only by the methods described in **ADDRESSES**.

If you submit a comment via *http://www.regulations.gov,* your entire comment—including any personal identifying information—will be posted on the Web site. We will post all hardcopy comments on *http://www.regulations.gov* as well. If you submit a hardcopy comment that includes personal identifying information, you may request at the top of your document that we withhold this information from public review. However, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Background

On May 21, 2015, we published a proposed rule regarding changes to the regulations in title 50 of the Code of Federal Regulations at 50 CFR 424.14 concerning petitions, to improve the content and specificity of petitions and to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the petitions process to support species conservation. Our proposed revisions to § 424.14 would clarify and enhance the procedures by which the Services will evaluate petitions under section 4(b)(3) of the Act, 16 U.S.C. 1533(b)(3). We proposed to revise the regulations pertaining to the petition process to provide greater clarity to the public on the petition-submission process, which will assist petitioners in providing complete petitions. These revisions would also maximize the efficiency with which the Services process petitions, making the best use of available resources. These changes would improve the quality of petitions through expanded content requirements and guidelines, and, in doing so, better focus the Services' energies on petitions that merit further analysis.

The comment period on the May 21, 2015, proposed rule was originally scheduled to close on July 20, 2015. We have received comments requesting an extension to that date, and we now announce that we will accept comments on the proposed revisions to the regulations concerning petitions at 50 CFR 424.14 as specified in **DATES**.

Authority: The authority for this action is the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*).

Dated: July 9, 2015.

Signed:

Michael J. Bean,

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks.

Dated: July 9, 2015.

Signed:

Samuel D. Rauch,

Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 2015–17580 Filed 7–16–15; 8:45 am]

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