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U.S. Geological Survey 1996c. Annual report summarizing results of Bruneau-area ground water-level and spring discharge monitoring through September 1996. Boise, Idaho.

Varricchione, J. T. and G. W. Minshall 1995. 1994 Monitoring Report: Bruneau hot springsnail (*Pyrgulopsis bruneauensis*). Technical Bulletin No. 95-14, Idaho Bureau of Land Management.

Varricchione, J. T. and G. W. Minshall 1995. Gut content analysis of wild *Gambusia* and *Tilapia* in Hot Creek, Bruneau, Idaho. Unpublished report, Idaho State University, Pocatello, Idaho.

Varricchione, J. T. and G. W. Minshall 1996. 1995 Monitoring Report: Bruneau hot springsnail (*Pyrgulopsis bruneauensis*). Idaho Bureau of Land Management Technical Bulletin No. 96-8. Stream Ecology Center, Idaho State University, Pocatello, Idaho.

Authority

The authority for this action is the Endangered Species Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531-1544.)

List of Subjects in 50 CFR Part 17

Endangered and threatened species, Exports, Imports, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Transportation.

Dated: March 18, 1997.

Thomas J. Dwyer,

Acting Regional Director, Region 1, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 648

[I.D. 031497B]

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council; Public Hearings

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

ACTION: Public hearings; request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) will

hold public hearings to allow for input on proposed Amendment 10 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Atlantic Surf Clam and Ocean Quahog Fishery (FMP).

DATES: Written comments will be accepted until May 2, 1997. The public hearings will be at 7 p.m. and will be tape recorded with the tapes filed as the official transcript of the hearings. The hearings are scheduled as follows:

1. Tuesday, April 8, 1997, Machias, ME
2. Wednesday, April 9, 1997, Ellsworth, ME
3. Monday, April 14, 1997, Cape May Courthouse, NJ

ADDRESSES: Send comments to: David R. Keifer, Executive Director, Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Room 2115 Federal Building, 300 South New Street, Dover, DE 19904-6790.

The hearings will be held at the following locations:

1. Machias—University of Maine (Science Building, Room 202), 9 O'Brien Avenue, Machias, ME, telephone 207-255-1200.
2. Ellsworth—Holiday Inn, 215 High Street, Ellsworth, ME, telephone 207-667-9341.
3. Cape May Courthouse—Cape May Extension Office, Dennisville Road, Cape May Courthouse, NJ, telephone 609-465-5115.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

David R. Keifer, 302-674-2331 (fax 302-674-5399).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: An individual transferable quota (ITQ) allocation system for the FMP was implemented in Amendment 8 (55 FR 24184, June 14, 1990). It was discovered, about that time, that the Maine inshore ocean quahog, or "mahogany quahog," fishery that occurred on the same species (*Arctica islandica*) was moving out of state waters into the exclusive economic zone (EEZ). This created quite a problem, in that the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act mandated that "to the extent practical, an individual stock of fish shall be managed as a unit throughout its range, and interrelated stocks of fish shall be managed as a unit or in close coordination" (National Standard 3). The small inshore Maine mahogany ocean quahog fishery differs profoundly from the traditional EEZ ocean quahog fishery that occurs on Georges Bank and south, because the mahogany quahogs are harvested at a much smaller average size by fishermen on a much smaller scale individually than in the ocean quahog fishery. The management tools developed during the first 20 years of Federal management for

surf clams and ocean quahogs did not fit the Maine fishery well. In 1990, as a temporary expedient, it was decided to declare the Maine ocean quahog fishery "experimental," pending a better and permanent solution. Amendment 10 is intended to provide that solution and fully integrate the Maine fishery into the FMP upon the expiration of the experimental fishery on September 30, 1997. Amendment 10 would create a separate additional unit of quota (27,611 bushels, or less than 1 percent of the total EEZ quota) for ocean quahogs landed in Maine from the EEZ. There are currently no limitations on entry into the fishery. Vessel owners and dealers would have to obtain permits and comply with all reporting requirements, as has been done during the experimental fishery. The principal intent of Amendment 10 would be to preserve the artisanal nature of this fishery with the minimal amount of Federal intrusion necessary for the conservation and management of the fishery. Amendment 10 would also introduce a voluntary vessel tracking system (VTS) and would require mandatory operator permits.

Participants in the Maine ocean quahog fishery would be required to comply with the provisions of Amendment 8 to the FMP, except as modified by the following proposed management measures:

1. The Governor of the State of Maine would receive an allocation for ocean quahogs landed in Maine from the EEZ.
2. The initial provisional EEZ quota (27,611 bushels) would be the average of the first 5 years of the experimental fishery.
3. The State of Maine would continue to test for and certify for paralytic shellfish poisoning (PSP) in the ocean quahogs landed in its State, whether from the EEZ or Territorial Sea to ensure public health.
4. The status of the Maine allocation would have the same legal status as ITQs for the remainder of the fishery. Just as those quota owners may make any financial arrangements that they see fit (consistent with governing regulations) for the harvesting of their quota, so could the Governor of Maine.
5. The State of Maine would administer the EEZ quota, except that no program would exempt participants from any of the permitting and reporting requirements specified in Amendment 10 or prior amendments to the FMP.
6. Non-Maine vessels that hold ITQs for quahogs would not be prohibited from fishing in the Federal waters off Maine but, if they choose to land their catch in Maine, they would be required to adhere to all State landings laws.

7. There would be no provision to convert Maine allocation (bag tags) to cage tags or cage tags to bag tags.

8. Maine reporting would be in number of "bushels" through bag tags.

All vessels and dealers participating in the Maine fishery would be required to maintain and submit logbooks pursuant to § 648.7(b)(ii). Federal reporting, as is currently required for the experimental fishery, would continue. Maine landing laws require all bushels of Maine ocean quahogs to be tagged for PSP. Maine would continue their bag tag program, which could be

used as a basis for allocation should Maine decide to distribute its allocation.

Any surf clam or ocean quahog fishermen may decide to voluntarily participate in a vessel tracking system (VTS) rather than the mandatory call-in system currently in place. The VTS requirements are specified at § 648.9.

All surf clam and ocean quahog fishermen would be required to have operator permits. Operator permit requirements are specified at § 648.5.

The hearings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other

auxiliary aids should be directed to David Keifer at the Council (see **ADDRESSES**) at least 5 days prior to the hearing date.

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

Dated: March 19, 1997.

Bruce Morehead,

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