

conjunction with NMFS intends to prepare a DEIS to describe and analyze management alternatives to be included in an amendment to the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for the Queen Conch Fishery of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI). These alternatives will consider measures to reduce harvest of queen conch. The purpose of this notice of intent is to solicit public comments on the scope of issues to be addressed in the DEIS.

DATES: Written comments on the scope of issues to be addressed in the DEIS must be received by the Council or NMFS (see **ADDRESSES** below) by November 13, 2007. A series of scoping meetings will be held in October 2007. See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** below for the specific dates, times, and locations of the scoping meetings.

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

- E-mail: 0648-AW15.Proposed@noaa.gov. Include in the subject line the following document identifier: 0648-AW15.
- Mail: Jason Rueter, Southeast Regional Office, NMFS, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, FL 33701.
- Fax: 727-824-5308.
- Mail: Graciela Garcia-Moliner, Caribbean Fishery Management Council, 268 Muñoz Rivera Avenue, Suite 1108, San Juan, PR 00918-25772203;
- Fax: 787-766-6239.
- E-mail: Graciela.Garcia-Moliner@noaa.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Graciela Garcia-Moliner; phone: 787-766-5927; fax: 787-766-6239; e-mail: Graciela.Garcia-Moliner@noaa.gov; or Jason Rueter; phone: 727-824-5350; fax: 727-824-5308; or e-mail: Jason.Rueter@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: St. Croix queen conch landings by commercial fishermen alone have exceeded sustainable harvest levels since the 2000-2001 fishing season. In 2005-2006 the commercial harvest was over four times sustainable levels. Additionally, there is an unknown but significant recreational harvest.

According to the NMFS Report on the Status of the U.S. Fisheries for 2006, queen conch is overfished and undergoing overfishing. Under current fishing practices, reductions in mortality are not expected to be sufficient in the queen conch fishery. Without a reduction in mortality, queen conch are not expected to achieve the rebuilding goals established in the Sustainable Fisheries Amendment of 2005. Therefore, a change in fishing

practices is needed to help achieve the necessary reductions in queen conch fishing mortality.

The Council in conjunction with NMFS will develop a DEIS to describe and analyze management alternatives to implement harvest restrictions in the queen conch fishery. The DEIS will provide updates to the best available scientific information regarding the queen conch stock, and based on the information, the Council, in conjunction with NMFS, will determine what actions and alternatives are necessary to protect queen conch. Those alternatives may include, but are not limited to: a "no action" alternative regarding the fishery, which would not require any harvest reductions; alternatives to extend existing closed seasons; and an alternative to close the area east of 64°34' W. longitude that includes Lang Bank east of St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands to the harvest of queen conch.

In accordance with NOAA's Administrative Order NAO 216-6, Section 5.02(c), the Council, in conjunction with NMFS, has identified this preliminary range of alternatives as a means to initiate discussion for scoping purposes only. This may not represent the full range of alternatives that eventually will be evaluated by the Council and NMFS.

Once the Council and NMFS completes the DEIS associated with the amendment to the Caribbean queen conch FMP, NMFS will submit the DEIS for filing with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The EPA will publish a notice of availability of the DEIS for public comment in the **Federal Register**. The DEIS will have a 45-day comment period. This procedure is pursuant to regulations issued by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) for implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA; 40 CFR parts 1500-1508) and to NOAA's Administrative Order 216-6 regarding NOAA's compliance with NEPA and the CEQ regulations.

The Council and NMFS will consider public comments received on the DEIS in developing the final environmental impact statement (FEIS) and before adopting final management measures for the amendment. The Council will submit both the final amendment and the supporting FEIS to NMFS for review under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, i.e., Secretarial review.

NMFS will announce, through a notice published in the **Federal Register**, the availability of the final amendment for public review during the Secretarial review period. During

Secretarial review, NMFS will also file the FEIS with the EPA for a final 30-day public comment period. This comment period will be concurrent with the Secretarial review period and will end prior to final agency action to approve, disapprove, or partially approve the final amendment.

NMFS will announce, through a notice published in the **Federal Register**, all public comment periods on the final amendment, its proposed implementing regulations, and its associated FEIS. NMFS will consider all public comments received during the Secretarial review period, whether they are on the final amendment, the proposed regulations, or the FEIS, prior to final agency action.

Scoping Meeting Dates, Times, and Locations

All scoping meetings are scheduled to be held from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. The meetings will be physically accessible to people with disabilities. Request for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to the Council (see **ADDRESSES**).

October 16—Windward Passage Hotel, Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas, USVI.

October 17—Buccaneer Hotel, Christiansted, St. Croix, USVI.

October 23—Pierre Hotel, De Diego Avenue, San Juan, PR.

October 24—Ponce Golf and Casino Resort, 1150 Caribe Avenue, Ponce, PR.

October 25—Mayaguez Holiday Inn, 2701 Highway 12, Mayaguez, PR.

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

Dated: October 5, 2007.

Alan D. Risenhoover,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XD24

General Advisory Committee to the U.S. Section to the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC); Meeting Announcement

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

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces the meeting of the General Advisory Committee to

the U.S. Section to the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) on November 2, 2007.

DATES: The meeting of the General Advisory Committee will be held on November 2, 2007, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (or until business is concluded), Pacific time. Meeting topics can be found in the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section of this notice.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held via video conference at NMFS, Southwest Regional Office, 501 West Ocean Boulevard, Suite 4200, Long Beach, CA 90803-4213, and at the NMFS Southwest Fisheries Science Center, 8604 La Jolla Shores Drive, Large Conference Room, La Jolla, CA 92037-1508.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Allison Routt at (562)980-4019 or (562) 980-4030.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In accordance with the Tuna Conventions Act, as amended, the Department of State has appointed a General Advisory Committee to the U.S. Section to the IATTC. The U.S. Section consists of the four U.S. Commissioners to the IATTC and the representative of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans and Fisheries. The Advisory Committee supports the work of the U.S. Section in a solely advisory capacity with respect to U.S. participation in the work of the IATTC, with particular reference to the development of policies and negotiating positions pursued at meetings of the IATTC. NMFS, Southwest Region, administers the Advisory Committee in cooperation with the Department of State.

Meeting Topics

The General Advisory Committee to the U.S. Section to the IATTC will meet to receive and discuss information on: (1) 2007 IATTC activities; (2) status of the stocks and status of the fishery in 2007; (3) recent and upcoming meetings of the IATTC and its working groups; (4) conservation and management measures for yellowfin and bigeye tuna for 2008 and beyond; (5) measures to be taken in cases of noncompliance with the IATTC's conservation and management measures; (6) management of fishing capacity; (7) IATTC cooperation with other regional fishery management organizations; (8) Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act reauthorization; (9) Advisory Committee operational issues; and (10) other issues.

Special Accommodations

The meeting location is physically accessible to people with disabilities.

Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Allison Routt at (562) 980-4019 or (562) 980-4030 by October 26, 2007.

Dated: October 5, 2007.

Emily H. Menashes,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.
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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Availability of Seats for the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council

AGENCY: National Marine Sanctuary Program (NMSP), National Ocean Service (NOS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Department of Commerce (DOC).

ACTION: Notice and request for applications.

SUMMARY: The Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary (OCNMS or sanctuary) is seeking applicants for the following vacant seats on its Sanctuary Advisory Council (council): Citizen-at-large member and alternate, Tourism/Chamber of Commerce/Recreation member and alternate, and Conservation/Environmental member and alternate. Applicants are chosen based upon their particular expertise and experience in relation to the seat for which they are applying; community and professional affiliations; philosophy regarding the protection and management of marine resources; and possibly the length of residence in the area affected by the sanctuary. The terms of the seats are for three years with the exception of the Conservation/Environmental seat which has one year remaining on an unexpired term.

DATES: Applications are due by November 16, 2007.

ADDRESSES: Application kits may be obtained from Andrew Palmer, Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary, 115 East Railroad Ave., Suite 301, Port Angeles, WA 98362. Completed applications should be sent to the same address.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Andrew Palmer, Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary, 115 East Railroad Ave., Suite 301, Port Angeles, WA 98362, Phone (360) 457-6622, ext. 15, e-mail andrew.palmer@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Sanctuary Advisory Council members and

alternates serve three-year terms. The Advisory Council meets bi-monthly in public sessions in communities in and around the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary.

The Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council was established in December 1998 to assure continued public participation in the management of the sanctuary. Serving in a volunteer capacity, the advisory council's 15 voting members represent a variety of local user groups, as well as the general public. In addition, five Federal government agencies and one federally funded program serve as non-voting, ex officio members. Since its establishment, the advisory council has played a vital role in advising the sanctuary and NOAA on critical issues. In addition to providing advice on management issues facing the Sanctuary, the Council members serve as a communication bridge between constituents and the Sanctuary staff.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. Sections 1431, *et seq.* (Federal Domestic Assistance Catalog Number 11.429 Marine Sanctuary Program.)

Dated: October 5, 2007.

Daniel J. Basta,

Director, National Marine Sanctuary Program, National Ocean Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Evaluation of State Coastal Management Programs and National Estuarine Research Reserves

AGENCY: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, National Ocean Service, Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of intent to evaluate and notice of availability of final findings.

SUMMARY: The NOAA Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (OCRM) announces its intent to evaluate the performance of the Grand Bay (Mississippi) National Estuarine Research Reserve, the Alabama Coastal Management Program, and the Virgin Islands Coastal Management Program.

The Coastal Zone Management Program evaluations will be conducted pursuant to section 312 of the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, as amended (CZMA) and regulations at 15 CFR Part 923, Subpart L. The National Estuarine Research Reserve evaluation