



Reminder of Public Meetings Concerning Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Management and Permitting

NMFS reminds constituents who are interested in Atlantic highly migratory species (HMS) management that public meetings on the recently issued advance notice of proposed rulemaking (ANPR) are approaching. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) published an ANPR on June 1, 2009 (74 FR 26174), which requests public comment on potential adjustments to the regulations governing the U.S. Atlantic bluefin tuna (BFT), north Atlantic swordfish (SWO), and shark fisheries to enable more thorough utilization of the available BFT and SWO quotas and to improve the permit structure for Atlantic Highly Migratory Species (HMS) fisheries.

All comments received in response to this ANPR will be considered in any potential future rulemakings. Potential action(s) may be taken to increase opportunities for U.S. fisheries to fully harvest the U.S. quotas recommended by the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) while balancing continuing efforts to end BFT overfishing by 2010 and rebuild the stock by 2019; continue efforts to revitalize the SWO fishery while minimizing bycatch to the extent practicable; and clarify and simplify the current HMS permit structure. NMFS is also requesting public comment regarding the potential implementation of catch shares, limited access privilege programs (LAPPs), and individual bycatch caps (IBCs) in HMS fisheries. This ANPR provides background information to inform the public on several actions that NMFS is considering to accomplish these objectives.

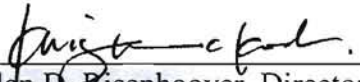
Public meetings to obtain additional comments on the items discussed in this ANPR will be held in June and July 2009. **All meetings will be held from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.** All meetings will begin with an informal opportunity for individuals to view information on the issues contained in this ANPR and ask questions at 5:00 p.m. followed by a formal presentation and opportunity for public comment beginning at 6:00 p.m. The meeting dates and locations are:

1. June 23, 2009, Holiday Inn, 151 Route 72 East, Manahawkin, NJ 08050
2. June 25, 2009, Roanoke Island Festival Park, 1 Festival Park, Manteo, NC 27954
3. June 29, Radisson Hotel Plymouth Harbor, 180 Water Street, Plymouth MA 02360
4. July 21, Belle Chasse Auditorium, 8398 Hwy. 23, Belle Chasse, LA 70037
5. July 28, Broward County Main Library, 100 S. Andrews Ave., Ft Lauderdale, FL 33301

This ANPR has two separate comment periods. Because NMFS has already received substantive comment over the past year both for and against changing the BFT regulations, ***the comment period for directed BFT fishery issues ends June 30, 2009.*** ***The comment period for the remaining issues,*** which may require a greater amount of analysis and a longer comment period, will allow constituents to become more familiar with the issues through public meetings,

thus facilitating more informed comment, *ends August 31, 2009*. Instructions for submitting public comments are contained in the ANPR. To view the ANPR, go to www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/breaking_news.htm.

This notice is a courtesy to HMS fisheries participants to invite your comment and help keep you informed about potential future actions in the fisheries. Official notice of Federal fishery actions is made through filing such notice with the Office of the Federal Register. For further information, contact Sarah McLaughlin at (978) 281-9260 or Randy Blankinship at 727-824-5399.


for Alan D. Risenhoover, Director
Office of Sustainable Fisheries

6/15/09
Date

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