

parte presentations are permitted, provided they are disclosed as provided in the Commission's Rules. See generally 47 CFR 1.1202, 1.1203 and 1.1206(a).

Comment Dates

38. Pursuant to applicable procedures set forth in §§ 1.415 and 1.419 of the Commission's Rules, interested parties may file comments on or before May 16, 1997 and reply comments on or before June 16, 1997. All relevant and timely comments will be considered before final action is taken in this proceeding. To file formally in this proceeding, participants must file an original and four copies of all comments, reply comments, and supporting comments. If participants want each Commissioner to receive a personal copy of their comments, an original plus nine copies must be filed. Comments and reply comments should be sent to the Office of the Secretary, Federal Communications Commission, Washington, D.C. 20554. Comments and reply comments will be available for public inspection during regular business hours in the FCC Reference Center (Room 239) of the Federal Communications Commission, 1919 M Street, NW, Washington, DC 20554.

List of Subjects in 47 CFR Part 76

Cable television.

Federal Communications Commission.

William F. Caton,

Acting Secretary.

[FR Doc. 97-5350 Filed 3-4-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6712-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

50 CFR Part 17

RIN: 1018-AC10

Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants, Notice of Reopening of Comment Period on Proposed Threatened Status for the Flat-tailed Horned Lizard

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Proposed Rule, notice of reopening of comment period.

SUMMARY: The Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), pursuant to the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act), provides notice of reopening of the comment period on proposed endangered status for the flat-tailed horned lizard (*Phrynosoma mcalli*). The

comment period has been reopened to acquire additional information from interested parties.

DATES: The public comment period closes May 9, 1997. Any comments received by the closing date will be considered in the final decision on this proposal.

ADDRESSES: Written comments and materials concerning this proposal should be sent directly to the Field Supervisor, Carlsbad Field Office, 2730 Loker Avenue West, Carlsbad California 92008. Comments and materials received will be available for public inspection, by appointment, during normal business hours at the above address.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Sandy Vissman at (619) 431-9440.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The flat-tailed horned lizard inhabits desert areas of southern Riverside, eastern San Diego, and Imperial Counties in California; southwestern Arizona; and adjacent regions of northwestern Sonora and northeastern Baja California Norte, Mexico. Within the United States, populations of the flat-tailed horned lizard are centered in portions of the Coachella Valley, Ocotillo Wells, Anza Borrego Desert, West Mesa, East Mesa and the Yuma Desert in California; and the area between Yuma and the Gila Mountains in Arizona. The flat-tailed horned lizard occurs on Federal, State, county, and privately owned lands.

This species may be threatened by one or more of the following: commercial and residential development, agricultural development, off-highway vehicle activity, energy developments, military activities, and pesticide use.

On November 29, 1993, the Service published a rule proposing threatened status for the flat-tailed horned lizard. The original comment period closed on January 28, 1994. The Service was unable to make a final listing determination on this species because of a limited budget, other endangered species assignments driven by court orders, and higher listing priorities. In addition, a moratorium on listing actions (Public Law 104-6) that took effect April 10, 1995, stipulated that no funds could be used to make final listing or critical habitat determinations. Now that funding has been restored, the Service is proceeding with a final determination for this species.

Due to the length of time that has elapsed since the close of the initial comment period, changing procedural

and biological circumstances, and the need to review the best scientific information available during the decision-making process, the comment period is being reopened. Such changing circumstances include the recent (October 1996) draft *Flat-tailed Horned lizard Rangewide Management Strategy*, which likely affect the threats facing the species.

The Service seeks information that has become available in the last three years concerning:

(1) Biological, commercial, or other relevant data on any threat (or lack thereof) to this species; and

(2) The size, number, or distribution of populations of this species.

Written comments may be submitted until May 9, 1997 to the Carlsbad Field Office, 2730 Loker Avenue West, Carlsbad, California 92008.

Author: The primary author of this notice is Sandy Vissman.

Authority

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

Dated: February 26, 1997.

Thomas J. Dwyer,

Acting Regional Director, Region 1.

[FR Doc. 97-5383 Filed 3-4-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

[Docket No. 970226037-7037-01; I.D. 022197F]

RIN 0648-AJ39

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Management Measures to Reduce Seabird Bycatch in the Hook-and-Line Groundfish Fisheries

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

ACTION: Proposed rule; request for comments.

SUMMARY: NMFS proposes regulations to require operators of hook-and-line vessels fishing for groundfish in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI) and the Gulf of Alaska (GOA) and federally-permitted hook-and-line vessels fishing for groundfish in Alaska waters adjacent to the BSAI and to the GOA, to conduct

fishing operations in a specified manner, and to employ specified bird avoidance techniques to reduce seabird bycatch and incidental seabird mortality. This measure is necessary to mitigate hook-and-line fishery interactions with the short-tailed albatross, an endangered species protected under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), and other seabird species. This measure is intended to accomplish the objectives of the ESA and of the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Gulf of Alaska and the Fishery Management Plan for the Groundfish Fishery of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Area (Groundfish FMPs) with respect to the management of the GOA groundfish fishery and the BSAI groundfish fishery and the marine environment.

DATES: Comments must be received by March 20, 1997.

ADDRESSES: Comments should be sent to Ronald J. Berg, Chief, Fisheries Management Division, Alaska Region, NMFS, P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802, Attn: Lori J. Gravel, or delivered to the Federal Building, 709 West 9th Street, Juneau, AK. Copies of the Environmental Assessment/Regulatory Impact Review/Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis (EA/RIR/IRFA) prepared for the amendment may be obtained from the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, Suite 306, 605 West 4th Avenue, Anchorage, AK 99501-2252; telephone: 907-271-2809. **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Kim S. Rivera, 907-586-7228.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The U.S. groundfish fisheries of the GOA and the BSAI in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) are managed by NMFS under the Groundfish FMPs. The FMPs were prepared by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 773 *et seq.*, 1801 *et seq.*; Magnuson-Stevens Act) and are implemented by regulations for the U.S. fisheries at 50 CFR part 679. General regulations that also pertain to U.S. fisheries appear at subpart H of 50 CFR part 600.

Background

Recent takes of the endangered short-tailed albatross (*Diomedea albatrus*) (two in 1995 and one in 1996) in hook-and-line groundfish fisheries in the BSAI and the GOA highlight a seabird bycatch problem. A biological opinion issued in an ESA section 7 consultation on the GOA and BSAI groundfish fisheries includes an incidental take statement for the take of two short-tailed

albatrosses annually in the fisheries. If the annual take exceeds two, NMFS immediately must reinstate section 7 consultation and review with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) the need for possible modification of the reasonable and prudent measures established to minimize take of the short-tailed albatross.

In response to these recent takes, several industry groups representing hook-and-line vessels in the GOA and the BSAI petitioned the Council and NMFS to impose regulatory measures intended to reduce the incidental mortality of seabirds in their fisheries. The presence of "free" food in the form of offal and bait attract many birds to fishing operations. In the process of feeding, birds sometimes come into contact with fishing gear and are accidentally killed. For example, most birds taken during hook-and-line operations are attracted to the baited hooks when the gear is being set. These birds become hooked at the surface and are then dragged underwater where they drown. The proposed measures would reduce the incidental mortality of short-tailed albatrosses and other seabird species by (1) minimizing the seabirds' attraction to fishing vessels and (2) preventing seabirds from attempting to seize baited hooks.

At its December 1996 meeting, the Council voted unanimously to recommend that all hook-and-line vessels fishing for groundfish in the GOA and BSAI must use certain seabird bycatch avoidance devices intended to reduce the incidental mortality of the short-tailed albatross and other seabird species. At its April 1997 meeting, the Council is scheduled to take final action to expand these measures to the Pacific halibut fishery in convention waters off Alaska. Should the Council take this action, rulemaking to require seabird avoidance measures would be initiated separately for the halibut fishery.

At the February 1997 Council meeting, NMFS informed the Council of revisions in the draft proposed rulemaking made because of concerns regarding the enforceability of some of the seabird avoidance measures. The Council reiterated its December 1996 recommendations that the seabird avoidance measures be required in regulation.

Seabird Bycatch in Alaskan Groundfish Fisheries

Over 80 species of seabirds, including the short-tailed albatross, occur over waters off Alaska and could potentially be affected by interactions with the GOA and BSAI groundfish fisheries. Fulmars, gulls, and albatrosses account

for the vast majority of seabird bycatch in both the GOA and the BSAI. NMFS, USFWS, and the National Biological Survey are cooperating to obtain accurate information on the mortality of seabirds related to hook-and-line, trawl, and pot vessels fishing groundfish in the EEZ of the GOA and BSAI. This cooperative project will also address questions about the effects of various levels of take on the world-wide population of short-tailed albatrosses, currently estimated at 800 birds. Whereas the USFWS provided an opinion in 1989 that short-tailed albatrosses could be adversely affected by commercial fishing operations in Alaska, this effect on the world population is unknown.

The EA/RIR/IRFA prepared for this action contains more information on Alaskan seabirds and a historical background of the seabird bycatch issue (see **ADDRESSES**).

Seabird Bycatch Avoidance Gear and Methods

The proposed measures are intended to reduce the incidental mortality of seabirds by minimizing their attraction to fishing vessels and by preventing the seabirds from attempting to seize baited hooks. The proposed measures would apply to vessels fishing for groundfish with hook-and-line gear in the GOA and the BSAI and federally-permitted vessels fishing groundfish with hook-and-line gear in waters of the State of Alaska that are adjacent to the GOA and the BSAI and that retain more round-weight equivalent of groundfish than round-weight equivalent of halibut.

1. All applicable hook-and-line fishing operations would be conducted in the following manner:

a. Use hooks that, when baited, sink as soon as they are put in the water. This could be accomplished by the use of weighted groundlines and/or thawed bait.

b. Avoid dumping of offal to the extent practicable while gear is being set or hauled. If discharge of offal is unavoidable, the discharge must take place aft of the hauling station or on the opposite side of the vessel to that where gear is set or hauled.

c. Make every reasonable effort to ensure that birds brought on board alive are released alive and that, wherever possible, hooks are removed without jeopardizing the life of the bird.

2. All applicable hook-and-line fishing operations would be required to employ one or more of the following seabird avoidance measures:

a. Deploy gear only during the hours specified at § 679.24(e)(2)(iv)(D) of this

proposed rule, using only the minimum vessel's lights necessary for safety;

b. Tow a streamer line or lines during deployment of gear to prevent birds from taking hooks;

c. Tow a buoy, board, stick or other device during deployment of gear, at a distance appropriate to prevent birds from taking hooks. Multiple devices may be employed; or

d. Deploy hooks underwater through a lining tube at a depth sufficient to prevent birds from settling on hooks during deployment of gear.

The Council and NMFS intend to implement these proposed regulations for the groundfish fisheries first and to follow at a future time with the same or similar regulations for the Pacific halibut fishery. To avoid having the proposed groundfish regulations applicable to halibut fishermen that retain bycatch amounts of groundfish, the proposed regulations would apply only to those hook-and-line fishermen that retain more round-weight equivalent of groundfish than round-weight equivalent of halibut.

The Council and NMFS intend to reduce the fisheries-related bycatch and incidental mortality of seabirds that occur over waters off Alaska. To maximize the extent to which these proposed regulations would apply, an operator of a hook-and-line vessel that has been issued a Federal permit to fish for groundfish in the BSAI and GOA would be required to comply, even while fishing for groundfish in State of Alaska waters.

Although the Council's recommendation at its December 1996 meeting included a provision whereby fishermen could substitute other experimental seabird avoidance devices with the approval of the NMFS Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS believes that such a waiver provision is not administratively practicable. NMFS strongly encourages the industry's efforts to find other effective seabird avoidance devices. Additional effective measures can be implemented through the regulatory amendment process in the future.

The proposed measures are modeled after NMFS' regulations implementing conservation and management measures adopted by the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) (61 FR 8483; March 5, 1996) and measures currently in use by some hook-and-line fishermen in Alaskan fisheries. Some of the CCAMLR measures were initially developed for use in the Australian and New Zealand longline fisheries and have proven very effective in reducing bait loss and incidental seabird

mortality. In addition to the measures benefitting seabirds, the reduction of bait loss and subsequent increased fish harvest provides financial benefits to fishermen. In the Australian southern bluefin tuna fishery, annual economic losses attributed to bait loss and reduced harvest were estimated to exceed \$7 million in Australian dollars (approximately \$5 million United States).

The CCAMLR regulations indicate that longline gear shall be set between the times of nautical twilight. Nautical twilight is defined practically as those times when it is too dark to see the horizon clearly and when normal outdoor activities cannot be conducted without the use of artificial light. The intent of the proposed regulation is to limit hook-and-line gear deployment to those hours (nighttime hours/hours of darkness) between nautical twilight, if that is the option being exercised by the fisherman. The proposed regulation provides a table specifying the allowed hours of hook-and-line gear deployment. The *Nautical Almanac*, a U.S. Naval Observatory publication, was used to determine these times. This option is not available during the months of June and July, due to the lack of nautical twilight at northernmost latitudes.

Besides the measures proposed here, other methods have been used to reduce seabird bycatch. Some of them are: Loud noises to deter birds from the stern of the fishing vessel during gear deployment, automatic bait-caster to deploy bait away from the turbulent water caused by "prop wash" and causing the bait to remain afloat, deflating swim bladders or the squid mantle of bait species (causing bait to sink faster), and reducing the time taken to haul back gear. NMFS specifically requests comments on: (a) These and other effective methods for reducing seabird bycatch that are not included in the proposed measures, (b) any safety concerns of using seabird bycatch avoidance devices during extreme weather conditions, and (c) offal discharge during setting or hauling of hook-and-line gear and how either or both of these operations impacts seabird bycatch.

Suggestions for Streamer Line Construction

The streamer line is a seabird avoidance device that currently is required in Australian and New Zealand longline fisheries and has been credited with effectively reducing seabird bycatch. Scientific studies in New Zealand indicate that the quality of a streamer line, both in construction and

materials used, played a major role in the streamer line's effectiveness in preventing seabirds from seizing baited hooks. In fact, the difference in bycatch rates between sets that used no streamer line and sets that used a poorly-constructed streamer line was not significant. Sets that used a high-quality streamer line were significantly less likely to catch seabirds than sets that used a poor-quality streamer line or no streamer line at all. The purpose of the streamer line is to scare birds away from the stern of the vessel when gear is deployed and baited hooks are present near or on the water's surface. A well-constructed streamer line thrashes about unpredictably; thus, the seabirds do not become habituated to its movement. The key characteristics of an effective streamer line are:

- All materials used to construct the streamer line and to hold the streamer line in place are strong enough to withstand all weather conditions in which hook-and-line fishing activity is likely to be undertaken;
- The streamer line is attached to a pole at the stern of the vessel and positioned such that it will be directly above the baited hooks as they are deployed;
- The height of the streamer line at the point of attachment is 3 to 4 meters (m) above sea level;
- The streamer line is constructed of material that is between 2 and 5 millimeters (mm) in diameter;
- Length of streamer line is a minimum of 150 to 175 m;
- Number of streamers attached to a streamer line is 5 to 10 pairs;
- Streamers made of a heavy, flexible material that will allow the streamers to move freely and flop unpredictably (for example, streamer cord inserted inside a red polyurethane tubing);
- Streamer pairs attached to the bird streamer line using a 3-way swivel; and
- Streamers should just skim above the water's surface over the baited hooks.

These characteristics should be taken into consideration when employing a bird streamer line, as proposed in this rulemaking.

The Magnuson-Stevens Act requires that the public be provided with a comment period of 15 to 60 days to respond to proposed regulations. Beginning January 1, the hook-and-line fisheries open in the BSAI and GOA. Short-tailed albatross sightings in the BSAI and/or GOA have occurred in all months from April to November. Considering the urgency of completing rulemaking regarding these proposed measures, NMFS has provided for a 15-day public comment period. The

proposed measures were initially requested by hook-and-line industry representatives as emergency measures because of concerns about the potential economic impacts if the annual take limit for the short-tailed albatross is exceeded and fishing ceases pending reinitiation and conclusion of consultation pursuant to section 7 of the ESA.

Classification

This proposed rule has been determined to be not significant for purposes of E.O. 12866.

NMFS prepared an IRFA as part of the RIR, which describes the impact this proposed rule would have on small entities, if adopted. Based on the analysis, it was determined that this proposed rule could have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities. In 1995, 1,217 and 100 hook-and-line catcher vessels harvested groundfish from the GOA and BSAI, respectively. Catcher/processor vessels numbered 35 and 46 in those respective areas. Very significant impacts on small entities could occur if the groundfish fisheries are altered or perhaps closed due to the annual take of the endangered short-tailed albatross being exceeded. The likelihood of this happening is great under the status quo alternative because of recent takes (e.g., two in 1995). The economic impacts of such alterations or closures would depend on the development and implementation of the reasonable and prudent measures established to minimize take of the short-tailed albatross.

Several measures available under the preferred alternative would minimize the economic impacts on small entities. The economic impact on small entities would depend upon the particular measures chosen. Procedural or operational changes may be necessary in fishing operations. A vessel operator would have a choice of several other measures. The cost of buoys and bird streamer lines as seabird bycatch avoidance devices range from \$50–\$250 per vessel. A lining tube is a technology used in fisheries of other nations to deploy baited hooks underwater to avoid birds and is offered as a possible option. NMFS anticipates that the operators of smaller vessels (less than 60 ft (18.3 m)) would choose an avoidance measure other than a lining tube, which

could cost as much as \$35,000 per vessel. There are 154 and 53 hook-and-line catcher vessels and 31 and 45 catcher/processor vessels equal to or greater than 60 ft (18.3 m) in the GOA and BSAI, respectively.

If the annual take of short-tailed albatross in the hook-and-line fisheries operating under these proposed measures would exceed the take limit established under the ESA section 7 consultation, the actual economic impacts resulting from the modification of the reasonable and prudent measures established to minimize take of the short-tailed albatross would depend upon the development and implementation of revised measures. The revised measures could range from those proposed by this rule, additional or modified measures, to closures. The economic impact on fishing operations would depend upon the length of time of the closed period and the additional cost of revised measures. Significant impacts on small entities could occur if the fisheries closed due to the annual take of the endangered short-tailed albatross being exceeded. The likelihood of this happening is less under the proposed rule than under the status quo alternative. The economic impacts of this proposed rule on small entities could result in a reduction in annual gross revenues by more than 5 percent and could, therefore, potentially have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities. A copy of this analysis is available from the Council (see **ADDRESSES**).

List of Subjects in 50 CFR Part 679

Fisheries, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

Dated: February 28, 1997.

Nancy Foster,

Deputy Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.

For the reasons set out in the preamble, 50 CFR part 679 is proposed to be amended as follows:

PART 679—FISHERIES OF THE EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONE OFF ALASKA

1. The authority citation for 50 CFR part 679 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 773 *et seq.* and 1801 *et seq.*

2. In § 679.24, paragraph (e) is added to read as follows:

§ 679.24 Gear limitations.

* * * * *

(e) *Seabird avoidance gear and methods for hook-and-line vessels fishing for groundfish—(1)*

Applicability. (i) Except as provided in paragraph (e)(1)(ii) of this section, the operator of a vessel that is required to obtain a Federal fisheries permit under § 679.4(b)(1) must comply with the seabird avoidance measures in paragraph (e)(2) of this section while fishing for groundfish with hook-and-line gear in the BSAI, in the GOA, or in waters of the State of Alaska that are shoreward of the BSAI and the GOA.

(ii) The operator of a vessel is not required to comply with the seabird avoidance measures in paragraph (e)(2) of this section whenever the round-weight equivalent of halibut retained on board exceeds the round-weight equivalent of groundfish retained on board.

(2) The operator of a vessel described in paragraph (e)(1) of this section must conduct fishing operations in the following manner:

(i) Use hooks that when baited, sink as soon as they are put in the water.

(ii) Avoid dumping of offal to the extent practicable while gear is being set or hauled. If discharge of offal is unavoidable, the discharge must take place aft of the hauling station or on the opposite side of the vessel to that where gear is set or hauled.

(iii) Make every reasonable effort to ensure that birds brought on board alive are released alive and that wherever possible, hooks are removed without jeopardizing the life of the bird.

(iv) Employ one or more of the following seabird avoidance measures:

(A) Tow a streamer line or lines during deployment of gear to prevent birds from taking hooks;

(B) Tow a buoy, board, stick or other device during deployment of gear, at a distance appropriate to prevent birds from taking hooks. Multiple devices may be employed; or

(C) Deploy hooks underwater through a lining tube at a depth sufficient to prevent birds from settling on hooks during deployment of gear; or

(D) Deploy gear only during the hours specified below, using only the minimum vessel's lights necessary for safety.

HOURS THAT HOOK-AND-LINE GEAR CAN BE DEPLOYED FOR SPECIFIED LONGITUDES ACCORDING TO PARAGRAPH
(E)(2)(IV) OF THIS SECTION
[Hours are Alaska local time]

Calendar Month	Longitude		
	Shoreward to 150°W	151 to 165°W	166 to 180°W
January	1800–0700	1900–0800	2000–0900
February	1900–0600	2000–0700	2100–0800
March	2000–0500	2100–0600	2200–0700
April	2100–0400	2200–0500	2300–0600
May	2200–0300	2300–0400	2400–0500
June	¹	¹	¹
July	²	²	²
August	2200–0400	2300–0500	2400–0600
September	2000–0500	2100–0600	2200–0700
October	1900–0600	2000–0700	2100–0800
November	1800–0700	1900–0800	2000–0900
December	1700–0700	1800–0800	1900–0900

¹ This measure cannot be exercised during June.

² This measure cannot be exercised during July.

[FR Doc. 97–5438 Filed 3–4–97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–22–P

50 CFR Part 697

[I.D. 091696A]

Atlantic Coast Weakfish Fisheries; Public Hearings

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

ACTION: Notice of additional public hearing; extension of comment period.

SUMMARY: On February 21, 1997, NMFS announced three public hearings to receive comments from fishery participants and other members of the public regarding proposed regulations on the harvest and possession of weakfish in the exclusive economic zone of the Atlantic Ocean from Maine through Florida.

Due to requests from the public, NMFS now announces one additional public hearing in New Bern, NC and extends the comment deadline.

To accommodate people unable to attend a hearing or wishing to provide additional comments, NMFS also solicits written comments on the proposed rule.

DATES: Written comments on the proposed rule and supporting documents (Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement and Regulatory Impact Review (DSEIS/RIR)) must be received on or before April 1, 1997.

The New Bern, NC hearing will be held on Thursday, March 27, 1997, from 7–9 p.m.

ADDRESSES: Written comments should be sent to Richard H. Schaefer, Chief, Staff Office of Intergovernmental and Recreational Fisheries (Fx2), National Marine Fisheries Service, 8484 Georgia Avenue, Suite 425, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Clearly mark the outside of the envelope “Atlantic Weakfish Comments.” The hearing will be held at the following location:

Sheraton Grand New Bern, 1 Bicentennial Park, New Bern, NC 28563.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Thomas Meyer/Paul Perra, 301–427–2014.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The hearing announcement was published on February 21, 1997, (62 FR 7994).

A complete description of the measures, and the purpose and need for the proposed action, is contained in the proposed rule published February 14, 1997 (62 FR 6935), and is not repeated here. A copy of the proposed rule may be obtained by writing (see **ADDRESSES**) or calling the contact person (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**).

The purpose of this document is to alert the interested public of hearings and provide for public participation. These hearings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids for the New Bern, NC hearing should be directed to Thomas Meyer by March 17, 1997 (see **ADDRESSES**).

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1851 note.

Dated: February 27, 1997.

Gary C. Matlock,

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

[FR Doc. 97–5335 Filed 3–4–97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–22–F