



NMFS Announces a Public Hearing Conference Call and Webinar for Draft Amendment 7 on Bluefin Tuna Management Measures

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) announces an additional opportunity to comment on Draft Amendment 7 to the 2006 Consolidated Atlantic Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Fishery Management Plan (FMP) (78 FR 52032, August 21, 2013). NMFS will host an additional public hearing via conference call and webinar so interested members of the public, from all geographic areas, can submit verbal comments on January 8, 2014, from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., EST. The conference call information is phone number tel: 800-619-7481; participant pass code 5246202. Participants are strongly encouraged to log/dial in fifteen minutes prior the meeting. NMFS will show a brief presentation via webinar followed by public comment. RSVP at <https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/470946448>. A confirmation email with webinar log-in information will be sent after your RSVP has been registered

On August 21, 2013, NMFS published a proposed rule (78 FR 52032) for Draft Amendment 7 to the 2006 Consolidated HMS Fishery Management Plan to control bluefin incidental catch (landings and dead discards) in the pelagic longline fishery, enhance reporting in all categories, and ensure U.S. compliance with the ICCAT-recommended quota.

On August 22, 2013, NMFS published a notice of public hearings for Draft Amendment 7 to the 2006 Consolidated HMS FMP, which provided dates and locations for ten scheduled public hearings. Those ten public hearings have been held to date: San Antonio, TX; Gloucester, MA; Manteo, NC; Charleston, SC; Belle Chasse, LA; Portland, ME; Panama City, FL; Fort Pierce, FL, St. Petersburg, FL; and Toms River, NJ. NMFS also conducted consultations with the New England Fishery Management Council, the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, and the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council. Due to the government shut down and NMFS' inability to respond to constituents on this complex rule during that time frame and based on the comments received to date requesting an extension due to the complexity and interplay of the measures covered in the DEIS, NMFS extended the comment period for this action until January 10, 2014.

Written public comments can be submitted electronically or by mail. Submit all electronic public comments via the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. To submit comments via the e-Rulemaking Portal, first click the "submit a comment" icon, then enter NOAA-NMFS-2013-0101 in the keyword search. Locate the document you wish to comment on from the resulting list and click on the "Submit a Comment" icon on the right of that line. Submit written comments to Thomas Warren, National Marine Fisheries Service, 55 Great Republic Drive, F/SF1, Suite 02-200, Gloucester, MA 01930. Please mark the outside of the envelope "Comments on the Draft Amendment 7 to the 2006 Consolidated HMS FMP."

The public is reminded that NMFS expects participants at public hearings, council meetings, and phone conferences to conduct themselves appropriately. At the beginning of each meeting, a representative of NMFS will explain the ground rules (e.g., all comments are to be directed to the agency on the proposed action; attendees will be called to give their comments in the order in which they registered to speak; each attendee will have an equal amount of time to speak; attendees may not interrupt one another; etc.). NMFS representatives will structure the meeting so that all attending members of the public will be able to comment, if they so choose, regardless of the controversial nature of the subject(s). Attendees are expected to respect the ground rules, and those that do not may be asked to leave the meeting.

This notice is a courtesy to HMS fishery participants to help keep you informed about the fishery. For further information, contact Thomas Warren or Brad McHale at 978-281-9260, or Craig Cockrell or Jennifer Cudney at 301-427-8503. This information will also be posted on the HMS website at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms>.

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