

Atlantic Council public meetings at the Palm Beach Gardens Marriott, 4000 RCA Boulevard, Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33410; telephone: (407) 622-8888.

Requests for copies of the public scoping and hearing documents should be sent to the Council at the following address: South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, One Southpark Circle, Suite 306, Charleston, SC 29407-4699.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Sharon Coste (Council staff); telephone: 803-571-4366; fax: 803-769-4520.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** A public scoping meeting will be held to solicit comments on the sale of fish caught under the recreational bag limit (all species). The Council has considered this issue on numerous occasions over the past several years, and both commercial and recreational fishermen have expressed concerns about this matter. Currently, all of the Council's FMPs allow for the sale of fish taken under a legal bag limit. The issue regarding the sale of fish caught under bag limits involves several considerations including: (1) The definitions of recreational and commercial fishermen; (2) the ethical question of a "recreational" fisherman selling his catch; and (3) the impacts on a commercial quota from selling fish caught under the bag limit. The Council will consider prohibiting the sale of fish by recreational anglers.

The Council will also hold a public scoping meeting to solicit comments on Amendment 2 to the Shrimp FMP to address the issue of finfish bycatch in the shrimp trawl fishery. The Council prepared the Shrimp FMP in 1992 and NMFS approved and implemented it in 1993. At the time the Shrimp FMP was implemented, the Council was concerned about finfish bycatch in the shrimp trawl fishery, and intended to begin developing management measures through an FMP amendment that would reduce bycatch. The Council's goal for bycatch reduction was delayed by the 1990 amendments to the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act, which mandated a 3-year research program to assess the impacts of shrimp trawl bycatch on fishery resources under management of the Council. The results of this research program have been recently summarized in a NMFS report to Congress titled "A Report to Congress—Cooperative Research Program Addressing Finfish Bycatch in the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Shrimp Fisheries—April 1995."

These research results will be considered by the Council as an important basis for any specific

management actions. Recent advances in gear development through cooperative efforts between Federal and state governments and the shrimp industry have produced Bycatch Excluder Devices (BRDs) that successfully exclude juvenile fish from shrimp trawls with a minimum of shrimp loss. At its October 1994 meeting in Wrightsville Beach, NC, the Council recommended that NMFS emphasize the development of efficient and effective BRDs in its bycatch reduction research efforts in the South Atlantic; this would provide the Council and the South Atlantic states with expanded options to reduce finfish bycatch in the shrimp trawl fishery. Both the Council and the South Atlantic states have requested that NMFS proceed as rapidly as possible to obtain the research information needed to identify and assess options for requiring the use of BRDs under the Shrimp FMP and under coastal fishery management plans (CFMPs) developed by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (Commission), under provisions of the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act of 1993 (Atlantic Coastal Act).

The Council has asked NMFS to conduct a bycatch characterization of the rock shrimp fishery off Cape Canaveral, FL. Concerns still exist relative to the impacts of shrimp bycatch on the Spanish and king mackerel resources. In addition, under the current Amendment 2 to the CFMP for Weakfish, prepared by the Commission under the Atlantic Coastal Act, all South Atlantic states must implement management measures to reduce the bycatch of weakfish in the shrimp trawl fisheries by 50 percent for the 1996 fishing season. Bycatch reduction plans must be submitted to the Commission's Weakfish Technical Committee by October 1, 1995.

The Council is closely coordinating its efforts with the marine resource agencies of the South Atlantic states and has also initiated action on the shrimp trawl bycatch issue by beginning the scoping process on the development of Amendment 2 to the Shrimp FMP. Among several management alternatives under consideration by the Council are the use of BRDs by season and/or area, as well as areal or seasonal closures.

A public scoping meeting will also be held to solicit comments on the development of an FMP for the calico scallop fishery. The Council may consider the following measures as possible management options for this fishery: (1) No action; (2) prohibit calico scallop trawling (trawling) south of 28°30' N. lat.; (3) prohibit trawling south

of 28° N. lat.; (4) allow trawling south of Cape Canaveral only with transponders; (5) prohibit trawling west of Oculina Bank; (6) prohibit trawling in depths of less than 120 ft (36.58 m); (7) allow trawling with transponders only from Duval County through St. Lucie County; (8) limit trawling from Duval County through St. Lucie, County; and (9) prohibit trawling south of Cape Canaveral, FL (i.e., south of 28°35.1' N. lat.).

A scoping meeting will also be held to solicit comments on wreckfish caught by recreational fishermen and the commercial bycatch of wreckfish outside of the Blake Plateau.

Amendments 3 and 4 to the Snapper-Grouper FMP established a management program for wreckfish in the South Atlantic region. A framework measure was also included allowing the Council to set total allowable catch (TAC) each year and at the same time consider other options. Amendment 5 to the Snapper-Grouper FMP established an individual transferable quota (ITQ) system in the wreckfish fishery that only allows ITQ shareholders to land and sell wreckfish, and allows only permitted dealers to handle wreckfish and to buy wreckfish from ITQ shareholders. Recently, there have been reports of wreckfish being caught by recreational fishermen fishing primarily for red grouper off Key West, FL, and commercial fishermen, especially off south Florida, observing occasional wreckfish bycatch. These reports do not indicate frequency or poundage of catches, disposition of catches, nor substantial quantities or targeting of wreckfish. The Council is considering the following management options for regulating this fishery: (1) No action (i.e., do not allow the taking or landing of wreckfish in the South Atlantic region except by ITQ shareholders; (2) set a recreational bag limit of 1 or 2 fish per fisherman per trip; (3) set a recreational bag limit of 1 or 2 fish per boat per day; (4) set a recreational bag limit of 1 or 2 fish per boat per trip; (5) set an undetermined recreational bag limit; (6) set a bag limit of 1 or 2 fish per boat per trip for commercial fishermen in the South Atlantic region who are not wreckfish ITQ shareholders; (7) set a bag limit of 1 or 2 fish per boat per day for commercial fishermen in the South Atlantic region who are not wreckfish ITQ shareholders; (8) set a bag limit of 1 or 2 fish per boat per trip for commercial fishermen in the south Florida area who are not wreckfish ITQ shareholders; (9) set a bag limit of 1 to 2 fish per boat per day for commercial fishermen in the south Florida area who