

NOAA Fisheries Announces an Additional Public Scoping Meeting and an Extension to the Comment Period for the Issues and Options Paper

On April 30, 2004 (69 FR 23730), the National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) published in the Federal Register a notice of availability of an Issues and Options paper that examines possible alternatives for amending some of the regulations in the HMS and Atlantic Billfish FMPs. That notice of availability included the schedule for nine scoping meetings in Gloucester, MA; Ocean City, MD; New Orleans, LA; Manteo, NC; San Juan, PR; Destin, FL; Montauk, NY; Port Aransas, TX; and Cocoa Beach, FL.

Since publication of the notice of availability, NOAA Fisheries has scheduled one additional hearing in Key West, FL, on June 17, 2004, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. to allow interested parties an additional chance to comment on and discuss the issues included in the issues and options paper. A revised meeting schedule is attached. All of the meetings will be physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Heather Stirratt, 301-713-2347, at least 7 days prior to the meeting. NOAA Fisheries is also planning to attend several Fishery Management Council meetings that occur in May, June, and July 2004 to discuss the Issues and Options paper.

Additionally, in order to ensure all interested parties have adequate time to prepare their written comments, NOAA Fisheries is also extending the public comment period on the Issues and Options paper from July 14, 2004, to July 23, 2004.

Comments received on the Issues and Options paper will assist NOAA Fisheries in determining suitable alternatives for rulemaking and improve the management of Atlantic HMS. A copy of the issues and options paper can be obtained from our website at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms> or by contacting the HMS Management Division at 301-713-2347.

This FAX notice is a courtesy to HMS fisheries interests to keep you informed about your fisheries. Official notice of Federal fishery actions is made through filing such notice with the Office of the Federal Register. For further information, contact: Karyl Brewster-Geisz 301-713-2347, Mark Murray Brown 978-281-9260, or Russ Dunn 727-570-5447.

Bruce C. Morehead for
John H. Dunnigan
Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries

May 20, 2004
Date

The revised scoping meeting schedule:

Location	Address	Date	Time
Gloucester, MA	Gloucester Lyceum and Sawyer Free Library 2 Dale Ave. Gloucester, MA 01930	May 19, 2004	7-9 PM
Ocean City, MD	Ocean City Council Chambers 301 Baltimore Ave. Ocean City, MD 21842	June 2, 2004	7-9 PM
New Orleans, LA	Elquier Regional Library 3014 Holiday Dr. New Orleans, LA 70131	June 3, 2004	7-9 PM
Manteo, NC	North Carolina Aquarium Roanoke Island PO Box 967 Airport Road Manteo, NC 27954	June 8, 2004	7-9 PM
San Juan, Puerto Rico	Carnegie Library (Biblioteca Carnegie) Ponce De Leon Ave. #7 San Juan, Puerto Rico 00901	June 10, 2004	2-4 PM
Destin, FL	Destin Community Center 101 Stahlman Ave. Destin, FL 32541	June 17, 2004	7-9 PM
Key West, FL	Pier House Hotel in the SAFMC's room 1 Duval Street Key West, FL 33040	June 17, 2004	6:30- 8:30 PM
Montauk, NY	Montauk Fire House 12 Flamingo Avenue Montauk, NY 11954	June 22, 2004	7-9 PM
Port Aransas, TX	University of Texas Marine Science Institute Visitor's Center (located on Cotter St. near beach) 750 Channel View Dr. Port Aransas, TX 78373	June 24, 2004	7-9 PM
Cocoa Beach, FL	Cocoa Beach Public Library 550 North Brevard Avenue Cocoa Beach, FL 32931	June 30, 2004	7-9 PM