

fund an at-sea monitoring (ASM) program. Amendment 16 also included a provision that allows electronic monitoring (EM) to be used to satisfy this monitoring requirement, provided NMFS deems the technology sufficient for the purposes of catch accounting. There are likely different visions for what an EM system entails, but generally EM incorporates video cameras, sensors, and electronic reporting systems into a vessel's fishing operations. Depending on the program design, EM has the potential to reduce the expenses associated with monitoring groundfish sectors, and, at the same time, increase accountability and monitoring in the fishery. However, moving away from human observers has its trade-offs; the types and quality of data can be different between EM and ASMs. Simply stated, EM may be a suitable replacement to ASM, provided EM has the ability to identify species, and verify weights and counts of discards in the groundfish fishery.

For the groundfish fishery, the program designs being considered are the "audit model" and the "maximized retention model." The audit model would use EM to verify discards reported by a captain on a vessel trip report. Under the maximized retention model, vessels would be required to retain most fish species (*e.g.*, allocated groundfish stocks), be allowed to discard others (*e.g.*, protected species), and EM would be used to ensure compliance with discarding regulations. NMFS has not yet approved EM as a suitable alternative to ASM for the groundfish fishery. However, there have been several efforts in recent years to develop EM as a monitoring tool in the fishery.

NMFS has been collaborating with The Nature Conservancy (TNC), the Gulf of Maine Research Institute, the Maine Coast Fishermen's Association, the Cape Cod Commercial Fishermen's Alliance, and Ecotrust Canada to implement a program that uses EM for monitoring in the groundfish fishery. NMFS has been building database infrastructure and processing tools for data collected from EM video footage, conducting comparative analysis to the existing catch monitoring systems in the fishery, and addressing additional legal and logistical hurdles. However, there are some challenges that remain that will require additional EM data and analysis to resolve. For example, an EM program must specify how much video needs to be reviewed to satisfy the monitoring objectives, and best practices need to be developed for species that are difficult to identify using EM.

To further examine these issues and develop EM, TNC submitted a complete application for an EFP on March 17, 2016, to enable data collection activities and catch monitoring that the regulations on commercial fishing would otherwise restrict. The EFP would support an EM study intended to improve the functionality of EM systems, optimize fish handling protocols by participating fishermen, and continue development of EM as a monitoring tool for the groundfish fishery. Results of this study would be used to inform the approval and implementation of EM in the fishery.

The EFP would exempt participating vessels from adhering to its sector's monitoring plan, which requires the deployment of ASMs on sector trips selected for ASM coverage. While participating in the EM study, vessels would use EM to replace ASMs when selected for ASM coverage. EM would not replace Northeast Fishery Observer Program (NEFOP) observers. Approximately 20 sector vessels would participate in this project, including participants from the Georges Bank Cod Fixed Gear Sector, the Maine Coast Community Sector, the Northeast Fishery Sector 11, and possibly additional sectors as well.

Under the EFP, vessels would declare sector trips in the Pre-Trip Notification System, as required by the FMP. However, if selected for ASM coverage, the vessel would be issued an ASM waiver and instead be required to turn on the EM system for the entire fishing trip. If selected for NEFOP coverage, the vessel would fish with a NEFOP observer and would also turn on the EM system for the entire trip. A third-party provider would review 100 percent of the video from each EM trip, and NMFS would audit the provider(s) to verify the accuracy of the EM data collected. For sector monitoring, NMFS uses a combination of the discard data collected from NEFOP observers and ASMs to estimate discards. For vessels participating in this EFP, NMFS would use the EM data collected in place of the ASM data. All other catch monitoring under the EFP would be consistent with standard sector monitoring, such as using dealer-reported landings and vessel trip reports.

Across all participants, TNC expects approximately 900 total trips throughout the 2016 fishing year. If the target observer coverage was set at 14 percent, as proposed in Framework Adjustment 55 to the NE Multispecies FMP, this would result in approximately 126 EM trips. Some of these trips would have a NEFOP observer onboard as well.

All catch of groundfish stocks allocated to sectors by vessels would be deducted from the sector's annual catch entitlement for each NE multispecies stock. Legal-sized regulated groundfish would be retained and landed, as required by the FMP. Undersized groundfish would be handled according to the EM project guidelines in view of cameras and returned to the sea as quickly as possible. All other species would be handled per normal commercial fishing operations. No legal-size regulated groundfish would be discarded, unless otherwise permitted through regulatory exemptions granted to the participating vessel's sector.

If approved, the applicant may request minor modifications and extensions to the EFP throughout the year. EFP modifications and extensions may be granted without further notice if they are deemed essential to facilitate completion of the proposed research and have minimal impacts that do not change the scope or impact of the initially approved EFP request. Any fishing activity conducted outside the scope of the exempted fishing activity would be prohibited.

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

Dated: April 6, 2016.

Emily H. Menashes,
Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XE536

Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee Meeting

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

ACTION: Notice of open public meeting.

SUMMARY: This notice sets forth the proposed schedule and agenda of a forthcoming meeting of the Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee (MAFAC). The members will discuss and provide advice on issues outlined under **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** below.

DATES: The meeting will be held April 25–27, 2016, from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Hotel Monaco Portland, 506 SW. Washington Street, Portland, OR 97204; 503-222-0001.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jennifer Lukens, MAFAC Executive Director; (301) 427-8004; email: Jennifer.Lukens@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: As required by section 10(a)(2) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act, 5 U.S.C. App. 2, notice is hereby given of a meeting of MAFAC. The MAFAC was established by the Secretary of Commerce (Secretary), and, since 1971, advises the Secretary on all living marine resource matters that are the responsibility of the Department of Commerce. The complete charter and summaries of prior meetings are located online at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/ocs/mafac/>.

Matters To Be Considered

This meeting time and agenda are subject to change.

The meeting is convened to hear presentations and discuss policies and guidance on the following topics: Proposed Columbia Basin Partnership Task Force, hatchery genetic management plans, draft National Bycatch Reduction Strategy, fishing community and coastal resilience, and strategic planning. The meeting will include updates on electronic monitoring on the west coast, recreational fishing regional implementation plans, and the budget outlook for FY2016-2017; discussion of various MAFAC administrative and organizational matters; and may include meetings of standing subcommittees and working groups.

Special Accommodations

The meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Heidi Lovett; 301-427-8034 by April 15, 2016.

Dated: April 5, 2016.

Samuel D. Rauch III,

Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 2016-08221 Filed 4-8-16; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Submission for OMB Review; Comment Request

The Department of Commerce will submit to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for clearance the following proposal for collection of

information under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35).

Agency: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Title: Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Recreational Landings and Bluefin Tuna Catch Reports.

OMB Control Number: 0648-0328.

Form Number(s): None.

Type of Request: Regular (extension of a currently approved information collection).

Number of Respondents: 13,402.

Average Hours per Response: 5 minutes for an initial call-in or internet report; 5 minutes for a confirmation call; 10 minutes for a landing card; 1 hour for a weekly or biweekly state report; and 4 hours for an annual state report.

Burden Hours: 1,586.

Needs and Uses: This request is for extension of a currently approved information collection.

Catch reporting from recreational and commercial hand-gear fisheries provides important data used to monitor catches of Atlantic highly migratory species (HMS) and supplements other existing data collection programs. Data collected through this program are used for both domestic and international fisheries management and stock assessment purposes.

Atlantic bluefin tuna (BFT) catch reporting provides real-time catch information used to monitor the BFT fishery. Under the Atlantic Tunas Convention Act of 1975 (ATCA, 16 U.S.C. 971), the United States is required to adopt regulations, as necessary and appropriate, to implement recommendations of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), including recommendations on a specified BFT quota. BFT catch reporting helps the U.S. monitor this quota and supports scientific research consistent with ATCA and the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act, 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*). Recreational anglers and commercial hand-gear fishermen are required to report specific information regarding their catch of BFT.

Atlantic billfish and swordfish are managed internationally by ICCAT and nationally under ATCA and the Magnuson-Stevens Act. This collection provides information needed to monitor the recreational catch of Atlantic blue and white marlin, which is applied to the recreational limit established by ICCAT, and the recreational catch of North Atlantic swordfish, which is applied to the U.S. quota established by ICCAT. This collection also provides

information on recreational landings of West Atlantic sailfish which is unavailable from other established monitoring programs. Collection of sailfish catch information is authorized under the Magnuson-Stevens Act for purposes of stock management.

Affected Public: Individuals or households; business or other for-profit organizations.

Frequency: Daily, biweekly, monthly, annual.

Respondent's Obligation: Mandatory.

This information collection request may be viewed at reginfo.gov. Follow the instructions to view Department of Commerce collections currently under review by OMB.

Written comments and recommendations for the proposed information collection should be sent within 30 days of publication of this notice to OIRA_Submission@omb.eop.gov or fax to (202) 395-5806.

Dated: April 5, 2016.

Sarah Brabson,

NOAA PRA Clearance Officer.

[FR Doc. 2016-08165 Filed 4-8-16; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Evaluation of State Coastal Management Programs and National Estuarine Research Reserves

AGENCY: Office for Coastal Management (OCM), National Ocean Service (NOS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce (DOC).

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Office for Coastal Management will hold two separate public meetings to solicit comments on the performance evaluation of the Oregon Coastal Management Program and the Narragansett Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve. Notice is also hereby given of the availability of the final evaluation findings for Maryland, Puerto Rico and Ohio Coastal Management Programs.

DATES: *Oregon Coastal Management Program Evaluation:* The public meeting will be held on May 24, 2016, and written comments must be received on or before June 10, 2016.

Narragansett Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve Evaluation: The public meeting will be held on June 28,