DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Parts 611 and 675

Foreign Fishing; Groundfish of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), NOAA, Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of availability of an amendment to a fishery management plan and request for comments.

SUMMARY: NOAA issues this notice that the North Pacific Fishery Management Council has submitted to the Secretary of Commerce for his review Amendment #9 to the fishery management plan for the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands groundfish fishery (FMP) and is requesting comments from the public.

DATE: Comments on the amendment should be submitted on or before September 27, 1985.

ADDRESSES: Send comments to Robert W. McVey, Director, Alaska Region, National Marine Fisheries Service, P.O. Box 1668, Juneau, AK 99802. Copies of the amendment, the environmental assessment, and the regulatory impact review/initial regulatory flexibility analysis may be obtained from North Pacific Fishery Management Council, P.O. Box 103130, Anchorage, AK 99501.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Janet E. Smoker (Resource Management Specialist, NMFS), 907–688–7230; or the Council staff (Jim Glock), 907–274–4563.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act requires that when a fishery management plan or plan amendment is submitted by a regional fishery management council to the Secretary for review, he must publish a notice that the plan or amendment is available for public review and comment. The Secretary will consider the public comments in determining whether to approve the plan or amendment.

Amendment 9 to the FMP proposes three measures to better manage and protect groundfish stocks in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands area as follows:

1. Prohibit foreign trawling within 20 miles of the Aleutian Islands. This measure would greatly reduce the foreign incidental catch of near-shore species which are fully utilized by the U.S. fishing industry. Its effect on the ability of foreign nations to harvest their groundfish allocations would be insignificant.

2. Establish a system for domestic catcher/processor vessels to submit a written catch report within one week of the date of catch and to check in and check out of fishing areas. This measure would provide timely catch data to fisheries managers to assure that optimum yields are not exceeded. It was not needed before onboard processing and freezing, when small boats landed their catch within a few days.

3. Implement the NMFS habitat conservation policy. In addition to implementing broad new policy, this measure would require fishing vessel operators not to discard or abandon fishing gear or other items in the sea and to make a reasonable attempt to retrieve such items if encountered or report the location to an appropriate official.

An environmental assessment, required under the National Environmental Policy Act, and a regulatory impact review/initial regulatory flexibility analysis, required under Executive Order 12291 and the Regulatory Flexibility Act, were prepared for this amendment and are available from the Council at the address above.

Regulations proposed by the Council and based on this amendment are scheduled to be published in 30 days.

List of Subjects in 50 CFR Parts 611 and 675

Fisheries, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

(16 U.S.C. 1801 et seq.)


Richard B. Roe,
Director, Office of Protected Species and Habitat Conservation, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 85–1736 Filed 7–16–85; 9:08 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–22–M

50 CFR Part 650

Atlantic Sea Scallop Fishery

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), NOAA, Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of availability of a fishery management plan amendment and request for comments.

SUMMARY: NOAA issues this notice that the New England Fishery Management Council has submitted an amendment (Amendment 1) to the Fishery Management Plan for the Atlantic Sea Scalp Fishery for review by the Secretary of Commerce, and is requesting comments from the public. The amendment proposes to replace the current maximum average meat count/minimum shell height with a four-ounce standard corresponding to a minimum scallop size of 40 meat count. The amendment also proposes to eliminate the adjustable meat count standard, and extend enforcement of the four-ounce standard beyond the point of first transaction in the United States. Copies of the amendment may be obtained from the address below.

DATE: Comments on the amendment should be submitted on or before September 30, 1985.

ADDRESS: All comments should be sent to Mr. Richard H. Schaefer, Acting Regional Director, National Marine Fisheries Service, Northeast Regional Office, 14 Elm Street, Gloucester, MA 01930. Clearly mark, “Comments for Sea Scallop Amendment 1” on the envelope.

Copies of the amendment are available upon request from Mr. Douglas G. Marshall, Executive Director, New England Fishery Management Council, Suntoga Office Park, 5 Broadway (Route 1), Saugus, MA 01906.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Carol J. Kilbride, Scallop Management Coordinator, 617–281–3600, ext. 244.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1801 et seq.), requires that each regional fishery management council submit any fishery management plan or amendment it prepares to the Secretary of Commerce (Secretary) for review and approval or disapproval. This act also requires that the Secretary, upon receiving the plan or amendment, must immediately publish a notice that the plan or amendment is available for public review and comment. The Secretary will consider the public comments in determining whether or not to approve the plan or amendment.

The proposed amendment establishes a four-ounce standard for Atlantic sea scallops, which becomes the minimum that the smallest tuss sea scallops in a one-pound sample may weigh. Enforcement of this measure will be accomplished through a prohibition against the possession of non-conforming sea scallops at all times. The amendment is intended to improve the conservation program for Atlantic sea scallops by reducing the mortality of small, immature sea scallops which now occur when those scallops are mixed with larger scallops in technical compliance with the maximum average meat count.

Regulations proposed by the Council and based on this amendment are scheduled to be published within 30 days.

(16 U.S.C. 1801 et seq.)