

the escape windows, visual stimuli, and codend mesh shapes (diamond versus square mesh). Length frequency distributions and catch rates would be compared for each species by vessel, area, and experimental net configuration. Selectivity parameters would be developed for each species, including a determination of the 50-percent retention length, the selection factor, and the selection range for each species targeted in this study.

The participating vessels would be required to report all landings in their

Vessel Trip Reports. The data collection activities aboard the participating vessel would be observers trained to NMFS standards to ensure compliance with the experimental fishery objectives. The EFP would also contain a provision that the Regional Administrator has the authority to reconsider the continuation of the experimental fishery on a month-to-month basis, based upon a monthly status report outlining total catch and bycatch submitted by the applicant, and would authorize the Regional

Administrator to terminate the experimental fishery at any time, at her discretion.

Based on the results of the EFPs, this action may lead to future rulemaking.

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

Dated: April 3, 2003.

**Richard W. Surdi,**

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