

Endangered Species Act (ESA)

Under section 7 of the ESA, NMFS has begun consultation on the proposed issuance of an IHA for this project. Consultation will be concluded upon completion of the comment period and consideration of those comments in the final determination on issuance of an authorization.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

In conjunction with the promulgation of regulations implementing section 101(a)(5)(D) of the MMPA, NMFS completed an Environmental Assessment (EA) on May 9, 1995 that addressed the impacts on the human environment from issuance of IHAs and the alternatives to that action. NMFS' analysis resulted in a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). In addition, this proposed action, including pile driving, will use pile driving equipment that is less intense and will, therefore, have a lower impact on the marine environment than pile driving equipment used in other surveys for which EAs and resulting FONSI's have been prepared previously. Accordingly, this proposed action qualifies for a categorical exclusion under NEPA and, therefore, a new EA will not be prepared.

Preliminary Conclusions

NMFS has preliminarily determined that the short-term impact of the floating dock installation, as described in this document and in USCG (2002), should result, at worst, in the temporary modification in behavior by California sea lions and Pacific harbor seals. While behavioral modifications, including temporarily vacating the haulout, may be made by these species to avoid the resultant visual and acoustic disturbance, this action is expected to have a negligible impact on the animals. In addition, no take by injury and/or death is anticipated, and harassment takes will be at the lowest level practicable due to incorporation of the mitigation measures mentioned previously in this document.

Proposed Authorization

NMFS proposes to issue an IHA to the USCG for the potential harassment of small numbers of harbor seals and California sea lions incidental to floating dock installation, provided the previously mentioned mitigation, monitoring, and reporting requirements are incorporated. NMFS has preliminarily determined that the proposed activity would result in the harassment of only small numbers of harbor seals and California sea lions and

will have no more than a negligible impact on these marine mammal stocks.

Information Solicited

NMFS requests interested persons to submit comments, information, and suggestions concerning this request (see **ADDRESSES**).

Dated: January 31, 2003.

Laurie K. Allen,

*Acting Director, Office of Protected Resources,
National Marine Fisheries Service.*

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

[I.D. 012903F]

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council; Public Meetings

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

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council's (Council) Demersal Species Committee and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's (ASMFC) Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Board, will hold a public meeting. **DATES:** The meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 25, 2003, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Doubletree Hotel, Crystal City, 300 Army Navy Drive, Arlington, VA; telephone: 703-416-4100 or 800-222-8733.

Council address: Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, 300 S. New Street, Dover, DE 19904; telephone: 302-674-2331.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Daniel T. Furlong, Executive Director, Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council; telephone: 302-674-2331, ext. 19.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The main agenda item for this meeting is to discuss 2003 planning priorities for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass.

Although non-emergency issues not contained in this agenda may come before the Council and ASMFC for discussion, these issues can not be the subject of formal Council action during this meeting. Council action will be restricted to those issues specifically listed in this notice and any issues

arising after publication of this notice that require emergency action under section 305(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, provided the public has been notified of the Council's intent to take final action to address the emergency.

Special Accommodations

This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Joanna Davis at the Council (see **ADDRESSES**) least 5 days prior to the meeting date.

Dated: January 29, 2003.

Theophilus R. Brainerd,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

[I.D. 012903E]

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

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

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council's (MAFMC) Atlantic Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish Committee, together with Industry Advisors, will hold a public meeting.

DATES: The meeting will be held on Thursday, February 20, 2003, from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m.

ADDRESSES: This meeting will be held at the Renaissance Hotel Philadelphia Airport, 500 Stevens Drive, Philadelphia, PA; telephone: 610-521-8954.

Council address: Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Room 2115, 300 S. New Street, Dover, DE 19904.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Daniel T. Furlong, Executive Director, Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council; telephone: 302-674-2331, ext. 19.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The purpose of this meeting is to discuss possible management measures to address over-capacity in the *Loligo* fishery including additional limited entry provisions, seasonal allocation of quota, trip limits, and individual fishing quotas for inclusion in Amendment 10