



OCT 22 2012

To All Interested Government Agencies and Public Groups:

Under the National Environmental Policy Act, an environmental review has been performed on the following action.

**TITLE:** Amendment 98 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Groundfish of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area (BSAI Groundfish FMP); Amendment 90 to the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Gulf of Alaska (GOA Groundfish FMP); Amendment 40 to the Fishery Management Plan for Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands King and Tanner Crabs (BSAI Crab FMP); Amendment 15 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Scallop Fishery off Alaska (Scallop FMP); Amendment 1 to the Fishery Management Plan for Fish Resources of the Arctic Management Area (Arctic FMP) Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) Omnibus Amendments [RIN 0648-XA500]

**LOCATION:** Exclusive economic zone off Alaska

**SUMMARY:** A review of Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) components in the North Pacific Fishery Management Council's (Council's) fishery management plans (FMPs) should be completed every 5 years, and the EFH provisions should be revised or amended, as warranted, based on the best available information. The 5-year review that concluded in April 2010 evaluated new information on EFH, assessed information gaps and research needs, and identified whether any revisions to EFH are needed or suggested. Based on the 5-year review, the Council determined that new habitat and life history information is available to revise many of the EFH descriptions and recommendations in the FMPs. Amendment 98 to the BSAI Groundfish FMP, Amendment 90 to the GOA Groundfish FMP, Amendment 40 to the BSAI Crab FMP, Amendment 15 to the Scallop FMP, and Amendment 1 to the Arctic FMP revise EFH provisions of these FMPs. The impact of the changes under these amendments is not substantively different from that analyzed in the 2005 EFH environmental impact statement. None of the changes require regulatory action, and the 2010 EFH 5-year review concluded that no change to the 2005 conclusions on the evaluation of fishing effects on EFH is warranted based on new information from the last 5 years.

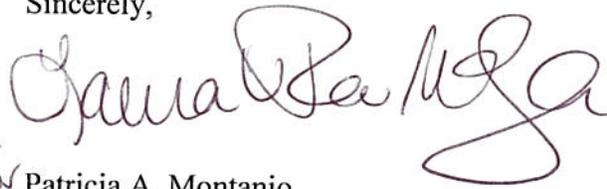
RESPONSIBLE

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The environmental review process led us to conclude that this action will not have a significant impact on the environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement was not prepared. A copy of the finding of no significant impact (FONSI), including the environmental assessment, is enclosed for your information.

Although NOAA is not soliciting comments on this completed EA/FONSI we will consider any comments submitted that would assist us in preparing future NEPA documents. Please submit any written comments to the Responsible Official named above.

Sincerely,

  
for Patricia A. Montanio  
NOAA NEPA Coordinator

Enclosure