information'' includes reporting, record-keeping, monitoring, posting, labeling, and other, similar actions. The Coast Guard will review the existing information collection requirements in 46 CFR 197.480 through 46 CFR 197.488 to either validate existing burdens or to reduce or eliminate burdens that are no longer necessary.

Questions

We request your comments and any data or information that would answer the following questions, as well as comments on any other part of the current regulations that should be revised. In responding to a question, please explain your reasons for each answer so that we can carefully weigh the consequences and impacts of any future requirements we may propose. In addition, please provide relevant data (accident data would be particularly useful), if possible, that will support the need for a revision to the commercial diving operations regulations.

1. Based on your review of the ADC submission to the Coast Guard, which revisions should the Coast Guard include in its proposed rule, not include in a proposed rule, or revise and include in a proposed rule? Why?

2. Should the Coast Guard adopt the ADC Consensus Standards or any other written industry standards? If so, which ones and why?

3. Is ADC's cost estimate of $300,000.00 for implementing their proposed regulatory changes reasonable? If not, please explain why and, if possible, provide your own cost estimate.

4. What definitions in the existing regulations should be updated or deleted? Please explain. Are there other terms that the Coast Guard should define in the regulations? Please explain.

5. Should dynamically positioned vessels (vessels with an installed system that automatically maintains the position of the vessel within a specified tolerance by controlling onboard thrusters to counter the forces of the wind, waves and currents) and remotely operated vehicles be addressed in the regulations? If so, what particular issues should the Coast Guard propose to regulate?

6. Should the Coast Guard propose regulations concerning diving in contaminated waters? If yes, how should it be addressed?

7. Should the Coast Guard propose regulations concerning one atmosphere observation bells, suits or submersibles? If yes, how should it be addressed?

8. Should the Coast Guard propose regulations concerning bell bounce (a diving procedure whereby a diving bell is used to transport divers under atmospheric pressure to a work site, and subsequently to transport the divers back to the surface in a decompression status)? If yes, how should it be addressed?

9. Should the Coast Guard propose regulations concerning saturation diving in more detail? If yes, how should it be addressed?

10. Should the Coast Guard propose regulations concerning requirements for back-up equipment at the dive site? If yes, how should it be addressed?

11. Should the Coast Guard propose regulations concerning minimum training requirements for divers? If yes, how should it be addressed?

12. If you think the regulations should include minimum training requirements, please answer the following questions:

a. What courses or information should the training include?

b. What should be the minimum number of hours required for training?

c. What would be the benefits of establishing minimum training requirements?

d. Should training organizations or providers meet certification requirements? If so, what organization should certify the training organizations or providers?

13. Should diving supervisors be licensed by the Coast Guard to ensure compliance with federal regulations? Please explain the reason for your choice and, if your answer is ''yes'', provide examples, if possible, of situations in which a licensed diving supervisor would have improved a situation.

14. If you are a small entity as defined under ''Small Entities'' and believe you will be affected by potential changes to the commercial diving regulations, please explain what flexibility or compliance options the Coast Guard should consider and how these options would minimize the burden on small entities, while promoting commercial diving safety.

Dated: June 19, 1998.

Joseph J. Angelo,

Acting Assistant Commandant for Marine Safety and Environmental Protection.

[FR Doc. 98–17069 Filed 6–25–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–15–U

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 622

[Docket No. 980608151–8151–01; I.D.122497B]

RIN 0648–AK43

Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Golden Crab Fishery of the South Atlantic Region; Gear and Vessel Management Measures

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

ACTION: Proposed rule; request for comments.

SUMMARY: NMFS issues this proposed rule to implement a regulatory amendment prepared by the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) in accordance with framework procedures for adjusting management measures of the Fishery Management Plan for the Golden Crab Fishery of the South Atlantic Region (FMP). For the golden crab fishery in the South Atlantic exclusive economic zone (EEZ), the regulatory amendment would revise the vessel size limitations applicable when a vessel permit is transferred to another vessel and would extend through January 31, 1999, the authorized use of wire cable for a mainline attached to a golden crab trap. In addition, NMFS proposes to remove from the regulations the eligibility criteria and procedures for obtaining initial commercial vessel permits in the South Atlantic golden crab fishery. Such criteria and procedures are no longer applicable. The intended effects of this proposed rule are to allow for additional evaluation of cable used as mainlines for traps, to provide greater flexibility for fishermen to fish with vessels of different lengths without adversely affecting the FMP's cap on fishing effort, and to simplify the regulations.

DATES: Written comments must be received on or before July 13, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Comments on the proposed rule must be sent to Peter Eldridge, Southeast Regional Office, NMFS, 9721 Executive Center Drive N., St. Petersburg, FL 33702.

Requests for copies of the framework regulatory amendment, which includes an environmental assessment, a regulatory impact review (RIR), and a social impact assessment/fishery impact statement, should be sent to the South

Atlantic Fishery Management Council, One Southpark Circle, Suite 306, Charleston, SC 29407-4699; Phone: 843-571-4366; Fax: 843-769-4520.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Peter Eldridge, 813-570-5305.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The golden crab fishery in the EEZ of the South Atlantic is managed under the FMP. The FMP was prepared by the Council and is implemented under the authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act) by regulations at 50 CFR part 622.

The Council has proposed to adjust management measures for the South Atlantic golden crab fishery. The Council has submitted this regulatory amendment to NMFS for its review, approval, and implementation. These measures were developed and submitted to NMFS under the FMP's framework procedure for adjustments in gear regulations and permit requirements.

Use of Cable for Mainlines

The Council proposes that the use of cable for mainlines be allowed through January 31, 1999, to allow for additional evaluation of cable in the golden crab fishery. Under current regulations at 50 CFR 622.40(d)(2)(ii), rope is the only material allowed for a buoy line or mainline attached to a golden crab trap, except that wire cable is allowed for these purposes through January 31, 1998. The Council heard extensive discussion of the issue at the joint Golden Crab Advisory Panel/Committee meeting June 16, 1997, in Key West. The Council considered extending the authorized use of cable for buoy lines but declined to do so based on safety issues raised by the Coast Guard. The Council will reexamine the use of cable in the golden crab fishery when it reviews the status of the fishery in June 1998.

Vessel Size Limitations

The Council proposes to ease the limitations on vessel size that apply when NMFS transfers a permit from one vessel to another. To obtain a vessel permit by transfer of an existing permit under current regulations, the owner of the receiving vessel must acquire a permit from a vessel with documented length overall, or permits from vessels with aggregate lengths overall, of at least 90 percent of the documented length overall of the receiving vessel. However, some owners want to use temporarily a shorter vessel (i.e., downsize) and subsequently return to a longer vessel. Current regulations may prevent them from doing so, because the permit NMFS transfers to a shorter vessel cannot be transferred again to a vessel that is more than 11.1 percent longer than that smaller-sized vessel.

To provide fishermen with greater flexibility in their choice of vessel length, the Council and this rule propose that, when NMFS has transferred a golden crab limited access permit to a smaller vessel, a subsequent transfer to a longer vessel will be limited based on the length of the vessel permitted prior to downsizing. For example, if NMFS transfers a permit issued to a vessel that is 90 ft (27.4 m) long to a vessel that is 50 ft (15.2 m) long, NMFS could subsequently transfer the permit to a vessel that is 100 ft (30.5 m) long. Such a transfer would be allowed because the length of the permitted vessel prior to downsizing is 90 percent of the length of the replacement vessel. The Council concluded that limiting vessel length based on the length of the permitted vessel prior to downsizing meets the Council's intent to cap fishing effort while at the same time providing greater flexibility for fishermen to use shorter vessels temporarily.

Changes Proposed by NMFS

NMFS proposes to remove from the regulations the eligibility criteria and procedures for obtaining initial commercial vessel permits for the South Atlantic golden crab fishery. All initial permits have been issued, and no additional permits are being issued. Therefore, the criteria and procedures are no longer applicable. This change would be accomplished by moving from § 622.17 to § 622.4 the permit requirement for the fishery and by removing from § 622.17 the paragraphs on initial eligibility, documentation of eligibility, application procedure, issuance, and appeals. The paragraph on display of a permit, which is adequately covered in § 622.4, would also be removed.

Classification

This proposed rule has been determined to be not significant for purposes of E.O. 12866.

The Assistant General Counsel for Legislation and Regulation of the Department of Commerce, based on the Council's regulatory impact review (RIR) that assesses the economic impacts of the management measures proposed in this rule on fishery participants, certified to the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration that this proposed rule, if adopted, would not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities as follows:

> * * * the provisions extending use of cable for mainlines and easing the restrictions on vessel size that would apply when NMFS transfers a permit from one vessel to another would not have adverse economic effects on a substantial number of the firms that own and operate fishing vessels for golden crabs in the South Atlantic Region. All such firms are considered small entities for purposes of the Regulatory Flexibility Act. These actions would not be expected to cause any reduction in revenue or force fishermen to modify their fishing operations. No increase in production cost would be expected as a result of these actions. The proposed actions would not require any existing fishing entity to acquire new equipment or to completely refit existing equipment for compliance purposes. The economic analyses do not indicate that any entity would be forced out of business. On the contrary, the actions would enable permitted fishermen to participate actively in the fishery and contribute toward developing the market for golden crab.

As a result, a regulatory flexibility analysis was not prepared.

This rule repeats a collection-of-information requirement subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act which has been approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control number 0648–0205. Permit applications involving transfers are estimated to take 20 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate, or any other aspect of this data collection, including suggestions for reducing the burden, to NMFS (see **ADDRESSES**) and to the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget, Washington, DC. 20503 (Attention: NOAA Desk Officer).

List of Subjects in 50 CFR Part 622

Fisheries, Fishing, Puerto Rico, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Virgin Islands.

Dated: June 19, 1998.

Rolland A. Schmitten,

Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.

For the reasons set out in the preamble, 50 CFR part 622 is proposed to be amended as follows:

PART 622—FISHERIES OF THE CARIBBEAN, GULF, AND SOUTH ATLANTIC

1. The authority citation for part 622 continues to read as follows:

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

2. In § 622.4, paragraph (a)(2)(x) is added to read as follows:

§ 622.4 Permits and fees.

(a) * * *

(2) * * *

(x) For a person aboard a vessel to fish for golden crab in the South Atlantic EEZ, possess golden crab in or from the South Atlantic EEZ, off-load golden crab from the South Atlantic EEZ, or sell golden crab in or from the South Atlantic EEZ, a commercial vessel permit for golden crab must be issued to the vessel and must be on board. It is a rebuttable presumption that a golden crab on board a vessel in the South Atlantic or off-loaded from a vessel in a port adjoining the South Atlantic was harvested from the South Atlantic EEZ. See § 622.17 for limitations on the use, transfer, and renewal of a commercial vessel permit for golden crab.

* * * * *

§ 622.5 [Amended]

3. In § 622.5, in paragraph (a)(1)(v), the reference to ''§ 622.17(a)'' is removed and ''§ 622.4(a)(2)(x)'' is added in its place.

§ 622.6 [Amended]

4. In § 622.6, in paragraph (a)(1)(i) introductory text, the phrase ''or § 622.17'' is removed.

§ 622.7 [Amended]

5. In § 622.7, in paragraphs (a) and (b), the phrase ''or § 622.17'' is removed, in paragraph (c), the phrase ''or § 622.17(g)'' is removed, and in paragraph (z), the reference to ''§ 622.17(h)'' is removed and ''§ 622.17(b)'' is added in its place.

§ 622.8 [Amended]

6. In § 622.8, in paragraph (a), the reference to ''§ 622.17(a)'' is removed and ''§ 622.4(a)(2)(x)'' is added in its place.

7. Section 622.17 is revised to read as follows:

§ 622.17 South Atlantic golden crab controlled access.

(a) *General.* In accordance with the procedures specified in the Fishery Management Plan for the Golden Crab Fishery of the South Atlantic Region, initial vessel permits have been issued for the fishery. No additional permits may be issued.

(b) *Fishing zones.* (1) The South Atlantic EEZ is divided into three fishing zones for golden crab. A permitted vessel may fish for golden crab only in the zone shown on its permit. A vessel may possess golden crab only in that zone, except that other zones may be transited if the vessel notifies NMFS, Office of Enforcement, Southeast Region, St. Petersburg, FL, by telephone (813–570–5344) in advance and does not fish in an unpermitted zone. The designated fishing zones are as follows:

(i) Northern zone—the South Atlantic EEZ north of 28° N. lat.

(ii) Middle zone—the South Atlantic EEZ from 25° N. lat. to 28° N. lat.

(iii) Southern zone—the South Atlantic EEZ south of 25° N. lat.

(2) An owner of a permitted vessel may request that NMFS change the zone specified on a permit from the middle or southern zone to the northern zone. A request for such change and the existing permit must be submitted from an owner of a permitted vessel to the RD.

(c) *Transfer.* (1) An owner of a vessel with a valid golden crab permit may request that NMFS transfer the permit to another vessel by returning the existing permit(s) to the RD with an application for a permit for the replacement vessel.

(2) To obtain a commercial vessel permit via transfer, the owner of the replacement vessel must submit to the RD a valid permit for a vessel with a documented length overall, or permits for vessels with documented aggregate lengths overall, of at least 90 percent of the documented length overall of the replacement vessel.

(3) In addition to the provisions of paragraph (c)(2) of this section, the owner of a permitted vessel who has requested that NMFS transfer that permit to a smaller vessel (i.e., downsized), may subsequently request NMFS transfer that permit to a vessel of a length calculated from the length of the permitted vessel immediately prior to downsizing.

(d) *Renewal.* In addition to the procedures and requirements of § 622.4(h) for commercial vessel permit renewals, for a golden crab permit to be renewed, the SRD must have received reports for the permitted vessel, as required by § 622.5(a)(1)(v), documenting that at least 5,000 lb (2,268 kg) of golden crab were landed from the South Atlantic EEZ by the permitted vessel during at least one of the two 12-month periods immediately prior to the expiration date of the vessel permit.

§ 622.31 [Amended]

8. In § 622.31, in paragraph (a) the phrase ''or § 622.17'' is removed.

§ 622.35 [Amended]

9. In § 622.35, in paragraph (f), the reference to ''§ 622.17(h)'' is removed and ''§ 622.17(b)'' is added in its place.

10. In § 622.40, in paragraph (c)(3)(ii), the reference to ''§ 622.17(h)'' is removed and ''§ 622.17(b)'' is added in its place and paragraph (d)(2)(ii) is revised to read as follows:

§ 622.40 Limitations on traps and pots.

* * * * *

(d) * * *

(2) * * *

(ii) Rope is the only material allowed to be used for a buoy line or mainline attached to a golden crab trap, except that wire cable is allowed for a buoy line through January 31, 1998, and for a mainline through January 31, 1999.

§ 622.45 [Amended]

11. In § 622.45, in paragraph (f)(2), the reference to ''§ 622.17(a)'' is removed and ''§ 622.4(a)(2)(x)'' is added in its place.

[FR Doc. 98–17129 Filed 6–25–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–22–F