



## **DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

### **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

**[RTID 0648-XA753]**

#### **South Atlantic Fishery Management Council; Public Hearings**

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

**ACTION:** Notice of public hearings.

**SUMMARY:** The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) will hold a series of public scoping meetings via webinar pertaining to Amendment 10 to the Coral, Coral Reef and Live Hard Bottom Habitat Fishery Management Plan (FMP). The amendment addresses establishing a Shrimp Fishery Access Area along the eastern border of the northern extension of the Oculina Bank Coral Habitat Area of Particular Concern (HAPC).

**DATES:** The public hearings will be held via webinar on February 8 and 9, 2021.

#### **ADDRESSES:**

*Council address:* South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, 4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201, N. Charleston, SC 29405

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Kim Iverson, Public Information Officer, SAFMC; phone: (843) 571-4366 or toll free: (866) SAFMC-10; fax: (843) 769-4520; email: [kim.iverson@safmc.net](mailto:kim.iverson@safmc.net).

#### **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

The scoping meetings will be conducted via webinar and accessible via the internet from the Council's website at <https://safmc.net/safmc-meetings/public-hearings-scoping-meetings/>. The scoping meeting on February 8, 2021 will begin at 5 p.m. and the

scoping meeting on February 9, 2021 will begin at 9 a.m. Registration for the webinars is required. Registration information, a copy of the Public Scoping Document, an online public comment form and any additional information as needed will be posted on the Council's website at <https://safmc.net/safmc-meetings/public-hearings-scoping-meetings/> as it becomes available. Public scoping comments are due by 5 p.m. on February 10, 2021.

*Amendment 10 to the Coral, Coral Reef and Live Hard Bottom Habitat FMP*

The draft amendment currently addresses a request from the rock shrimp industry to create a Shrimp Fishery Access Area (SFAA) along the eastern boundary of the northern extension of the Oculina Bank Coral HAPC to allow rock shrimp trawling and access to historic rock shrimp fishing grounds. Vessels fishing for rock shrimp in the South Atlantic region are required to carry approved Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS) to harvest or possess rock shrimp. Establishing a SFAA would allow access to the area at times where the species is found slightly west of the existing boundary while retaining the integrity of the eastern boundary of the Oculina Bank Coral HAPC, maintaining the prohibition on all other bottom tending gear.

During the scoping meetings, Council staff will present an overview of the amendment and will be available for informal discussions and to answer questions via webinar. Members of the public will have an opportunity to go on record to record their comments for consideration by the Council.

**Special Accommodations**

These hearings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for auxiliary aids should be directed to the Council office (see **ADDRESSES**) 5 days prior to the meeting.

Note: The times and sequence specified in this agenda are subject to change.

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

**Dated:** January 7, 2021.

**Rey Israel Marquez,**

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