

3:15 p.m.–4:15 p.m.
 —Discussion/Synthesis Identifying Current Challenges and Barriers to Aquaculture Development in the U.S. Caribbean

March 25, 2026

8 a.m.–8:30 a.m.
 —Workshop Mix and Mingle

8:30 a.m.–9 a.m.
 —Day One Recap and Day 2 Objectives

9 a.m.–9:30 a.m.
 —Investing in Aquaculture
 —Cuna del Mar
 —Hatch Blue

9:30 a.m.–9:45 a.m.
 —Introduction to SWOT and PESTEL Analysis—Kieley Hurff

9:45 a.m.–10:45 a.m.
 —SWOT Exercise Focus Groups—Identifying Challenges and Opportunities for Aquaculture Development in the U.S. Caribbean

10:45 a.m.–11 a.m.
 —Break

11 a.m.–11:15 a.m.
 —SWOT Exercise Results—Kieley Hurff

11:15 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
 —PESTEL Exercise Focus Groups; Identifying Challenges and Opportunities for Aquaculture Development in the U.S. Caribbean

12:30 p.m.–1:30 p.m.
 —Lunch

1:30 p.m.–2:45 p.m.
 —Discussion: Vision for Aquaculture Development in the U.S. Caribbean

2:45 p.m.–4 p.m.
 —Workshop Findings Summary and Closing Remarks
 —Other Business
 —Adjourn

Note (1): Other than starting time and dates of the meetings, the established times for addressing items on the agenda may be

adjusted as necessary to accommodate the timely completion of discussion relevant to the agenda items. To further accommodate discussion and completion of all items on the agenda, the meeting may be extended from or completed before the date established in this notice. Changes in the agenda will be posted to the CFMC website, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram as practicable.

Note (2): Financial disclosure forms are available for inspection at this meeting, as per 50 CFR part 601.

The order of business may be adjusted as necessary to accommodate the completion of agenda items. The meeting will begin on March 24, 2026, at 8 a.m., AST, and will end on March 25, 2026, at 4 p.m., AST. Other than the start time on the first day of the meeting, interested parties should be aware that discussions may start earlier or later than indicated in the agenda, at the discretion of the Chair.

Special Accommodations: For any additional information on this public hybrid meeting, please contact Diana Martino, Caribbean Fishery Management Council, 270 Muñoz Rivera Avenue, Suite 401, San Juan, Puerto Rico, 00918–1903, telephone: (787) 226–8849.

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

Dated: March 4, 2026.

Rey Israel Marquez,
Acting Deputy Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.
 [FR Doc. 2026–04498 Filed 3–6–26; 8:45 am]
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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
[RTID 0648–XF568]

Magnuson-Stevens Act Provisions; General Provisions for Domestic Fisheries; Application for Exempted Fishing Permits

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

ACTION: Notice; request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Assistant Regional Administrator for Sustainable Fisheries, Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO), NMFS, has made a preliminary determination that an Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) application contains all of the required information and warrants further consideration. The EFP would allow federally permitted fishing vessels to fish outside fishery regulations in support of exempted fishing activities proposed by the University of Rhode Island (URI). Regulations under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act require publication of this notification to provide interested parties the opportunity to comment on applications for proposed EFPs.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before March 24, 2026.

ADDRESSES: You may submit written comments by email: nmfs.gar.efp@noaa.gov. Include in the subject line “URI Scallop Kite Panel EFP.” All comments received are a part of the public record and may be posted for public viewing without change. All personal identifying information (*e.g.*, name, address), confidential business information, or otherwise sensitive information submitted voluntarily by the sender will be publicly accessible. NMFS will accept anonymous comments (enter “anonymous” as the signature if you wish to remain anonymous).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Christine Ford, Fishery Management Specialist, christine.ford@noaa.gov, 978–281–9185.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The applicant submitted a complete application for an EFP to conduct commercial fishing activities that the regulations would otherwise restrict. This EFP would exempt the participating vessels from the following Federal regulations:

TABLE 1—REQUESTED EXEMPTIONS

CFR citation	Regulation	Need for exemption
50 CFR 648.51(b)(4)(iii)	Restriction against dredge or net obstructions	To trial a bycatch reduction device.
50 CFR 648.80(h)(3)(iii)(A).	Restriction against Limited Access General Category-Individual Fishing Quota vessels from possessing any species other than scallops.	To allow for the temporary possession of yellowtail flounder and windowpane flounder for catch data collection.
50 CFR 648.83(a)(1)	Yellowtail flounder minimum size regulations	To allow for the temporary possession of undersized yellowtail flounder for catch data collection.
50 CFR 648.86(l)	Windowpane flounder possession	To allow for the temporary possession of windowpane flounder for catch data collection.
50 CFR 648.86(g)	Yellowtail flounder possession	To allow for the temporary possession of yellowtail flounder for catch data collection.

TABLE 1—REQUESTED EXEMPTIONS—Continued

CFR citation	Regulation	Need for exemption
50 CFR 648.88 (a)(2)(i)	Handgear permit restrictions	To allow a vessel issued a NE multispecies Handgear permit to use scallop gear to temporarily possess yellowtail and windowpane flounder for catch data collection.

TABLE 2—PROJECT SUMMARY

Project title	Piloting the use of a kite panel on a scallop dredge twine top to reduce bycatch of flatfish and juvenile scallops.
Project start	04/01/2026.
Project end	09/30/2026.
Project objectives	To evaluate the potential of attaching a canvas kite to the twine top of scallop dredges as a bycatch reduction strategy.
Project location	Statistical Area 539.
Number of vessels	2 (1 primary; 1 back-up).
Number of trips	5.
Trip duration (days)	1.
Total number of days	5.
Gear type(s)	Dredge.
Number of tows or sets	7–12 per trip.
Duration of tows or sets	60–90 minutes.

Project Narrative

The applicant proposes to attach a canvas panel to a scallop dredge twine top to act as a kite that will open the dredge bag and facilitate escapement of flatfish species and juvenile scallops. This project was designed to identify optimal kite size, location, and tow speed to achieve optimal bag lift for future testing. To achieve the goal, the researchers would: (1) Conduct underwater video tows with dredge modifications; (2) conduct paired tows between control and experimental scallop dredges; and (3) quantify and compare the scallop catch and bycatch between the dredges.

This EFP would authorize two commercial fishing vessels (one primary; one backup) to complete five total research trips for this project. All trips would occur within Statistical Area 539. URI and/or Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation researchers would accompany the vessels on each trip. The first two trips would consist of video testing to evaluate the practicality of implementing the kite design and confirming underwater performance. GoPro cameras would be mounted on the dredge facing the twine top to characterize the performance of the dredge with the kite panel attached. Video evidence would also enable the project team to assess whether any modifications are needed. Following video analysis, 3 days of field trials would be conducted at the best-verified kite location, based on evidence from the first two trips. As the vessels may only tow one dredge at a time, tows would alternate using an ABBA method,

with A being the control dredge and B being the experimental dredge. Between 7 and 12 tows would be conducted each trip. The expected tow duration of 60–90 minutes would be standardized across all tows.

The participants would use a standard New Bedford-style dredge that is commonly used throughout the industry. The only modification would be the addition of the kite. The kite would be triangular in shape (with the front-facing corner removed), and approximately 12 x 20 inches (30.5 x 50.8 cm). The kite will be attached to the twine top using snap links, that allow it to stretch. The kite will not be snug against the twine; as such, it is not expected to restrict escapement of non-target species.

For each tow, the entire scallop catch would be placed into baskets. A random sub-sample of baskets would be selected to measure scallops. Legal catch would be landed for sale in accordance with the fishing permits held by the vessels. All incidental catch of interest would be identified to species and weighed, prior to being released back into the water.

If approved, the applicant may request minor modifications and extensions to the EFP throughout the year. EFP modifications and extensions may be granted without further notice if they are deemed essential to facilitate completion of the proposed research and have minimal impacts that do not change the scope or impact of the initially approved EFP request. Any fishing activity conducted outside the scope of the exempted fishing activity would be prohibited.

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

Dated: March 4, 2026.

David R. Blankinship,
Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.
 [FR Doc. 2026–04537 Filed 3–6–26; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Agency Information Collection Activities; Submission to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for Review and Approval; Comment Request; Basic Requirements for Special Exception Permits and Authorizations To Take, Import, and Export Marine Mammals, Threatened and Endangered Species, and for Maintaining a Captive Marine Mammal Inventory Under Section 104 of the Marine Mammal Protection Act, the Fur Seal Act, and/or Section 10(a)(1)(A) of the Endangered Species Act

AGENCY: National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of information collection, request for comment.

SUMMARY: The Department of Commerce, in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA), invites the general public and other Federal agencies to comment on proposed and continuing information collections, which helps us assess the impact of our information collection requirements and minimize the public’s reporting burden. The purpose of this