

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

[I.D. 072503C]

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council; Public Hearings

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

ACTION: Notice of public scoping meetings for an environmental assessment (EA) and workshops on individual fishing quotas (IFQ); request for comments.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces public scoping meetings to determine issues for an EA for possible new management measures for vermilion snapper under the Fishery Management Plan for the Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico (FMP) in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969. The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) will convene these scoping meetings to solicit public ideas to reduce overfishing in the Gulf of Mexico vermilion snapper fishery. Immediately following each scoping meeting on vermilion snapper, the Council will hold a workshop on individual fishing quota (IFQ) systems to acquaint the public with IFQ systems prior to a fall referendum on an IFQ system for the Gulf red snapper fishery.

DATES: The meetings and workshops will be held in August. See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** for specific dates and times. Public comments on the scoping document for vermilion snapper should be received in the Council office by 5 p.m., eastern daylight time, September 5, 2003, to ensure consideration by the Council.

ADDRESSES: Written comments and requests for the scoping document on vermilion snapper should be addressed to the Council at the following address: Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, 3018 U.S. Highway 301, North, Suite 1000, Tampa, FL 33619; telephone: (813) 228-2815.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Wayne Swingle, Executive Director, Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council; telephone: (813) 228-2815.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NMFS announces public scoping meetings to solicit public and interested agencies input on the nature and extent of issues and impacts to be addressed in the EA and the methods by which they will be evaluated. The Council will hold these

scoping meetings to solicit public ideas to reduce overfishing in the Gulf of Mexico vermilion snapper fishery. Copies of the scoping document will be available at the meetings and are available prior to the meetings from the Council office (see **ADDRESSES**).

Vermilion and red snapper in the Gulf of Mexico are managed under the FMP. The results of several scientific analyses indicate that the vermilion snapper resource is undergoing overfishing and that, therefore, the fishing mortality rate (F) on the stock may need to be reduced up to 30-50 percent. Some possible management actions to reduce F include bag limits for the recreational fishery, trip limits for the commercial fishery, and size limits for both fisheries. In addition, specific values (or a range of values) for maximum sustainable yield (MSY), optimum yield (OY), the minimum stock size threshold (MSST) (below which a stock is considered to be overfished), and the maximum fishing mortality threshold (MFMT) (above which a stock is considered to be undergoing overfishing) need to be determined for vermilion snapper.

Immediately following each scoping meeting on vermilion snapper, the Council will hold a workshop on IFQ systems to acquaint the public with the provisions of IFQ systems in other areas of the country. Copies of the workshop PowerPoint presentation will be available at each workshop. NMFS intends to hold a referendum in late September through November for eligible commercial red snapper fishers to determine whether they support an IFQ system for their fishery. The purpose of the workshops is to inform these fishers on how current IFQ systems work and to answer their questions before they vote in the referendum.

Scoping Meetings and Workshops

The vermilion snapper scoping meetings followed immediately by the IFQ workshops will be held at the following locations and dates from 7 p.m. until 10 p.m. (or earlier if the meetings and workshops are concluded).

1. Monday, August 18, 2003, Hilton Beachfront Garden Inn, 23092 Perdido Beach Boulevard, Orange Beach, AL 36561; telephone 251-974-1600;

2. Tuesday, August 19, 2003, National Marine Fisheries Service, 3500 Delwood Beach Road, Panama City, FL 32408; telephone 850-234-6541;

3. Wednesday, August 20, 2003, Tampa Airport Hilton, 2225 Lois Avenue, Tampa, FL 33607; telephone 813-877-6688;

4. Monday, August 25, 2003, Port Aransas Community Center, 408 North Allister, Port Aransas, TX 78373; telephone 361-749-4111;

5. Tuesday, August 26, 2003, San Luis Resort, 5222 Seawall Boulevard, Galveston Island, TX 77551; telephone 409-744-1500;

6. Wednesday, August 27, 2003, New Orleans Airport Hilton, 901 Airline Drive, Kenner, LA 70062; telephone 504-469-5000; and

7. Thursday, August 28, 2003, Palace Casino Resort, 158 Howard Avenue, Biloxi, MS 39530; telephone 800-725-2239.

Public comments on the scoping document for vermilion snapper will be considered by the Council if received in the Council office by 5 p.m., eastern daylight time, September 5, 2003.

These meetings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Anne Alford at the Council (see **ADDRESSES**) by August 11, 2003.

Dated: August 4, 2003.

Bruce Morehead,

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

[FR Doc. 03-20288 Filed 8-7-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-S

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

[I.D. 072503A]

Marine Mammals; File No. 881-1668

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

ACTION: Issuance of permit amendment.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that the Alaska SeaLife Center (ASLC), Seward, Alaska 99664 (Principal Investigator: Don Calkins) has been issued a permit amendment to take Steller sea lions (*Eumetopias jubatus*) for the purposes of scientific research.

ADDRESSES: The permit amendment and related documents are available for review upon written request, by downloading from the internet, or by appointment in the following office(s): Permits, Conservation and Education Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13705, Silver Spring, MD 20910, (301)713-2289, or the Division's Web page at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/>

[prot_res/PR1/Permits/pr1permits_review.html](#).

Alaska Region, NMFS, P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802-1668, (907)586-7221.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Tammy Adams or Amy Sloan, (301)713-2289.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On June 27, 2002, notice was published in the **Federal Register** (67 FR 43283) that a request for a scientific research permit to take Steller sea lions had been submitted by the above-named organization. The requested permit was issued on November 11, 2002 (67 FR 69724) under the authority of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*), the Regulations Governing the Taking and Importing of Marine Mammals (50 CFR part 216), the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA; 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), and the regulations governing the taking, importing, and exporting of endangered and threatened species (50 CFR parts 222-226). However, a decision regarding the proposed transport of juvenile sea lions to the ASLC for temporary maintenance and associated experiments was deferred pending additional environmental analyses. A supplemental environmental assessment on the effects of these activities was prepared, resulting in a Finding of No Significant Impact.

Permit No. 881-1668, issued to the Alaska SeaLife Center, authorizes takes of threatened and endangered Steller sea lions of all ages in Alaska by capture, hot-branding, flipper tagging, collection of blood and tissue samples from, attachment of external scientific instruments, mortality incidental to research, and harassment incidental to these activities and remote monitoring. In addition to these activities, the amended permit authorizes transport of up to 16 juvenile Steller sea lions per year to the ASLC for short-term captivity, health assessments (including

anesthesia, blood sampling, blubber biopsy, diagnostic x-ray, endoscopy, bioelectric impedance analysis, deuterated water, and urinalysis), controlled fasting, and adrenocorticotrophic hormone challenge experiments.

Issuance of this permit amendment, as required by the ESA, was based on a finding that such permit (1) was applied for in good faith, (2) will not operate to the disadvantage of the endangered species which is the subject of this permit, and (3) is consistent with the purposes and policies set forth in section 2 of the ESA.

Dated: July 31, 2003.

Stephen L. Leathery,
Chief, Permits, Conservation and Education Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 03-20287 Filed 8-7-03; 8:45 am]

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COMMITTEE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF TEXTILE AGREEMENTS

Adjustment of Import Limits for Certain Cotton, Wool, Man-Made Fiber, Silk Blend and Other Vegetable Fiber Textiles and Textile Products Produced or Manufactured in the People's Republic of China

August 5, 2003.

AGENCY: Committee for the Implementation of Textile Agreements (CITA).

ACTION: Issuing a directive to the Commissioner, Bureau of Customs and Border Protection adjusting limits.

EFFECTIVE DATE: August 8, 2003.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Roy Unger, International Trade Specialist, Office of Textiles and Apparel, U.S. Department of Commerce, (202) 482-4212. For information on the quota status of these limits, refer to the Quota Status Reports posted on the bulletin

boards of each Customs port, call (202) 927-5850, or refer to the Bureau of Customs and Border Protection Web site at <http://www.customs.gov>. For information on embargoes and quota re-openings, refer to the Office of Textiles and Apparel Web site at <http://otexa.ita.doc.gov>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Authority: Section 204 of the Agricultural Act of 1956, as amended (7 U.S.C. 1854); Executive Order 11651 of March 3, 1972, as amended.

The current limits for certain categories are being adjusted for swing and carryover.

A description of the textile and apparel categories in terms of HTS numbers is available in the **CORRELATION: Textile and Apparel Categories with the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States** (see **Federal Register** notice 68 FR 1599, published on January 13, 2002). Also see 67 FR 63891, published on October 16, 2002.

James C. Leonard III,
Chairman, Committee for the Implementation of Textile Agreements.

Committee for the Implementation of Textile Agreements

August 5, 2003.

Commissioner, Bureau of Customs and Border Protection, Washington, DC 20229.

Dear Commissioner: This directive amends, but does not cancel, the directive issued to you on October 9, 2002, by the Chairman, Committee for the Implementation of Textile Agreements. That directive concerns imports of certain cotton, wool, man-made fiber, silk blend and other vegetable fiber textiles and textile products, produced or manufactured in China and exported during the twelve-month period which began on January 1, 2003 and extends through December 31, 2003.

Effective on August 8, 2003, you are directed to adjust the limits for the following categories, as provided for under the Uruguay Round Agreement on Textiles and Clothing:

| Category | Twelve-month limit ¹ |
|---|---|
| Group I 200, 218, 219, 226, 237, 239pt. ² , 300/301, 313-315, 317/326, 331pt. ³ , 333-336, 338/339, 340-342, 345, 347/348, 351, 352, 359-C ⁴ , 359-V ⁵ , 360-363, 410, 433-436, 438, 440, 442-444, 445/446, 447, 448, 611, 613-615, 617, 631pt. ⁶ , 633-636, 638/639, 640-643, 644, 645/646, 647, 648, 651, 652, 659-C ⁷ , 659-H ⁸ , 659-S ⁹ , 666pt. ¹⁰ , 845 and 846, as a group. | 1,181,007,809 square meters equivalent. |
| Sublevels in Group I | |
| 200 | 887,271 kilograms. |
| 218 | 12,787,895 square meters. |
| 219 | 2,855,462 square meters. |
| 226 | 12,965,879 square meters. |
| 237 | 2,429,788 dozen. |
| 300/301 | 2,571,798 kilograms. |
| 313 | 48,061.550 square meters. |