

mammals occur within or near south VAFB harbor.

Information Solicited

NMFS requests interested persons to submit comments and information concerning this request (see **ADDRESSES**). Prior to submitting comments, NMFS recommends readers review NMFS' responses to those comments on this activity submitted previously (see 67 FR 63151, May 23, 2002, 68 FR 36540, June 18, 2003, and 69 FR 29696, May 25, 2004).

Dated: March 16, 2005.

Michael Payne,

Division Chief, Marine Mammal and Turtle Conservation District, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 031105F]

Taking of Marine Mammals Incidental to Commercial Fishing Operations; Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan Regulations; Public Hearings

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

ACTION: Notice of public hearing.

SUMMARY: On March 14, 2005, NMFS announced its intent to hold 12 public hearings in Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, and Florida in March and April 2005 for the purpose of answering questions and receiving public testimony on the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan (ALWTRP) draft environmental impact statement (DEIS). NMFS will hold an additional public hearing in East Machias, Maine in April 2005.

DATES: See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** under the heading "Hearing Dates, Times, and Locations" for the dates and locations of the public hearings.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Diane Borggaard, NMFS, Northeast Region, 978-281-9300 ext. 6503; Barb Zoodsma, NMFS, Southeast Region, 904-321-2806; or Kristy Long, NMFS, Office of Protected Resources, 301-713-2322.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On February 25, 2005, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) published a Notice of Availability in the **Federal**

Register announcing the availability of the DEIS for public review and comment. The DEIS is open for public comment from February 25, 2005 to April 26, 2005. The public has the opportunity to submit comments on the document by any one of the following methods:

(1) NMFS/Northeast Region Website: <http://www.nero.noaa.gov/nero/regs/com>. Follow the instructions on the website for submitting comments.

(2) E-mail: whaledeis.comments@noaa.gov.

(3) Mail: Mary Colligan, Assistant Regional Administrator for Protected Resources, NMFS, Northeast Region, 1 Blackburn Dr., Gloucester, MA 01930, ATTN: ALWTRP DEIS.

(4) Facsimile (fax) to: 978-281-9394, ATTN: ALWTRP DEIS.

(5) Public hearings: submit oral comments at one of the DEIS public hearings.

NMFS has scheduled another public hearing on the DEIS in addition to the 12 already announced (70 FR 12446, March 14, 2005). The purpose of these hearings is to provide an opportunity for the public to ask questions on the DEIS, as well as to submit formal oral testimony on the document during the comment period. Information on the public hearings can also be found on the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan (ALWTRP) website at <http://www.nero.noaa.gov/whaletrp/>.

Hearing Dates, Times, and Locations

The date, time, and location of the hearing is as follows:

Wednesday, April 6, 2005 - East Machias, ME - 6-9 p.m.—Washington Academy (Gardner Gym), One High Street, East Machias, ME 04630

Special Accommodations

These hearings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Diane Borggaard at 978-281-9300 ext. 6503 at least 7 working days prior to the hearing date.

Dated: March 17, 2005.

Donna S. Weiting,

Deputy Director, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 020905A]

Endangered Species; File No. 1449

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

ACTION: Issuance of permit.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that Christine A. Tomichek, Kleinschmidt Associates, Kleinschmidt Building, 35 Pratt Street, Essex, Connecticut, 06426, has been issued a permit to take shortnose sturgeon (*Acipenser brevirostrum*) for purposes of scientific research.

ADDRESSES: The permit and related documents are available for review upon written request 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; phone (301) 713-2289; fax (301) 427-2521; and Northeast Region, NMFS, One Blackburn Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930-2298; phone (978) 281-9200; fax (978) 281-9371.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Jennifer Jefferies or Amy Sloan, (301)713-2289.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On August 18, 2004, notice was published in the **Federal Register** (69 FR 51267) that a request for a scientific research permit to take shortnose sturgeon had been submitted by the above-named individual. The requested permit has been issued under the authority of 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).

Ms. Tomichek is authorized to conduct three projects. In the first project, 30 captively bred juvenile sturgeon will be externally radio tagged, released into the canal, tracked and recaptured after exiting the canal. In the second project, 50 adult sturgeon will be captured annually for four years via trawls and gillnets, measured, weighed, a subset of 20 PIT tagged and externally radio tagged, released and tracked. In the third project, 200 eggs and larvae will be captured via D-nets and preserved to evaluate spawning behavior. This permit is authorized for five years.