

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Amy Hapeman or Kristy Beard,
(301)713-2289.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On August 4, 2008, notice was published in the **Federal Register** (73 FR 45217) that an amendment to Permit No. 605-1904, issued February 21, 2008 (73 FR 10744), had been requested by the above-named organization. The requested amendment has been granted 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).

Permit No. 605-1904 authorizes the WCNE to harass humpback (*Megaptera novaengliae*), fin (*Balaenoptera physalus*), and sei (*Balaenoptera borealis*) whales along the U.S. Atlantic coast during close approaches for vessel surveys, photo-identification, tracking, and incidental harassment annually. During approaches, researchers may suction-cup tag and/or biopsy sample whales greater than six months of age. A subset of approached humpback and fin whale calves three to six months of age may also be biopsy sampled. This amendment authorizes the WCNE to harass up to 75 North Atlantic right whales (*Eubalaena glacialis*) annually during close vessel approaches for photo-identification, behavioral observation, and prey sampling. This work would continue long-term population monitoring to determine status and trends of this species in the North Atlantic. The amendment is valid until the permit expires on February 15, 2013.

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), an environmental assessment was prepared analyzing the effects of the permitted activities. After a Finding of No Significant Impact, the determination was made that it was not necessary to prepare an environmental impact statement.

Issuance of this permit, 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 such endangered species; and (3) is consistent with the purposes and policies set forth in section 2 of the ESA.

Dated: September 18, 2009.

P. Michael Payne,

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

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

RIN: 0648-XR79

New England Fishery Management Council; Public Meetings

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

ACTION: Notice of public meetings.

SUMMARY: The New England Fishery Management Council(s) (Council) Habitat Committee and Habitat Advisory Panel will hold meetings to consider actions affecting New England fisheries in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ).

DATES: The meetings will be held in October, 2009. For specific dates and times, see **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**.

ADDRESSES: The meetings will be held at the Holiday Inn, 31 Hampshire Street, Mansfield, MA 02048; telephone: (508) 339-2200; fax: (508) 339-1040.

Council address: New England Fishery Management Council, 50 Water Street, Mill 2, Newburyport, MA 01950.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Paul J. Howard, Executive Director, New England Fishery Management Council; telephone: (978) 465-0492.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The advisory panel and committee meeting schedules and agendas are as follows:

1. *Joint Habitat Committee and Advisory Panel Meeting - Tuesday, October 13, 2009 beginning at 9 a.m.*

The committee and advisory panel will review Swept Area Seabed impact (SASI) model. They will also solicit Committee and Advisory Panel input on model components and discuss terms of reference for upcoming Scientific and Statistical Committee review of SASI. The Committee and Advisory Panel may also consider other topics at their discretion.

2. *Habitat Committee Meeting - Wednesday, October 14, 2009 beginning at 9 a.m.*

The Committee will discuss alternatives to minimize the effects of

fishing on essential fish habitat (EFH) and will also review a timeline for completion of Omnibus EFH Amendment 2.

Although non-emergency issues not contained in this agenda may come before these groups for discussion, those issues may not be the subject of formal action during this meeting. Action will be restricted to those issues specifically identified in this notice and any issues arising after publication of this notice that require emergency action under section 305(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, provided the public has been notified of the Council(s) intent to take final action to address the emergency.

Special Accommodations

These meetings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Paul J. Howard (see **ADDRESSES**), at least 5 working days prior to the meeting date.

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

Dated: September 21, 2009.

William D. Chappell,

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

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

RIN: 0648-XR80

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council; Public Meetings

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

ACTION: Notice of a public meeting.

SUMMARY: The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) will convene its Law Enforcement Advisory Panel (LEAP).

DATES: The meeting will convene at 1:30 p.m. on Tuesday, October 13, 2009 and conclude no later than 5 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the IP Casino Resort, 850 Bayview Ave., Biloxi, MS 39530.

Council address: Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, 2203 North Lois Avenue, Suite 1100, Tampa, FL 33607.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Richard Leard, Deputy Executive Director, Gulf of Mexico Fishery