

limits and targets for red snapper. The AP will also be asked to provide recommendations for issues to consider in a red snapper benchmark assessment to be conducted during 2012 and 2013. The AP will also review a draft regulatory amendment to revise the Fall red snapper recreational closed season and set the red snapper annual catch limit for 2012. The AP will also review an options paper to consider providing weekend only or weekday only openings during portions of the recreational red snapper season, or during a reopening if the season is closed prematurely.

Copies of the agenda and other related materials can be obtained by calling (813) 348-1630 or can be downloaded from the Council's ftp site, <ftp.gulfcouncil.org>.

Although other non-emergency issues not on the agenda may come before the Scientific and Statistical Committees for discussion, in accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, those issues may not be the subject of formal action during this meeting. Actions of the Scientific and Statistical Committees will be restricted to those issues specifically identified in the agenda 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 action to address the emergency.

Special Accommodations

This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Kathy Pereira at the Council (see **ADDRESSES**) at least 5 working days prior to the meeting.

Dated: December 21, 2011.

Tracey L. Thompson,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XA895

Pacific Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and

Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of a public meeting.

SUMMARY: The Pacific Fishery Management Council's (Pacific Council) Ad Hoc Groundfish Essential Fish Habitat Review Committee (EFHRC) will hold a work session to continue the periodic review of groundfish essential fish habitat (EFH).

DATES: The work session will be held January 17-18, 2012; starting at 10 a.m. the first day, and 8 a.m. the second day.

ADDRESSES: The work session will be held at the Embassy Suites Portland Airport Hotel, 7900 NE 82nd Avenue, Portland, OR 97220.

Council address: Pacific Fishery Management Council, 7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101, Portland, OR 97220-1384.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Kerry Griffin, Staff Officer, Pacific Council; (503) 820-2280.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The purpose of the work session is to continue developing the Phase I report on the review of information relevant to EFH for Pacific Coast groundfish stocks. The Phase I report is designed to compile new and newly-available information, and compare it with the suite of information that was used to establish the current groundfish EFH designations. The EFHRC is scheduled to report to the Council at its April 1-6, 2012 meeting in Seattle, WA.

Although non-emergency issues not contained in the meeting agenda may come before the EFHRC for discussion, those issues may not be the subject of formal EFHRC action during this meeting. EFHRC action will be restricted to those issues specifically listed 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 EFHRC's intent to take final action to address the emergency.

Special Accommodations

This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Mr. Kris Kleinschmidt at (503) 820-2280 at least 5 days prior to the meeting date.

Dated: December 21, 2011.

Tracey L. Thompson,

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

[FR Doc. 2011-33069 Filed 12-23-11; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XA898

Endangered Species; File Nos. 13599 and 1614

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

ACTION: Notice; receipt of applications for permit modifications.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that the following applicants have applied in due form for modifications to their scientific research permits: the National Ocean Service Marine Forensic Lab (NOS Lab) [Responsible Party: Julie Carter], 219 Fort Johnson Road, Charleston, SC 29412 (Permit No. 13599-01), and the NOAA Fisheries Northeast Region, Protected Resources Division [Responsible Party: Mary Colligan], 1 Blackburn Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930 (Permit No. 1614-01).

DATES: Written, telefaxed, or email comments must be received on or before January 26, 2012.

ADDRESSES: Documents associated with this amendment request are available 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) 427-8401; fax (301) 713-0376;

Northeast Region, NMFS, One Blackburn Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930-2298; phone (978) 281-9300; fax (978) 281-9394; and Southeast Region, NMFS, 263 13th Avenue South, Saint Petersburg, Florida 33701; phone (727) 824-5312; fax (727) 824-5309.

Written comments on this application should be submitted to the Chief, Permits and Conservation Division, at the address listed above. Comments may also be submitted by facsimile to (301) 713-0376, or by email to NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov. Please include the File No. in the subject line of the email comment.

Those individuals requesting a public hearing should submit a written request to the Chief, Permits and Conservation Division at the address listed above. The request should set forth the specific reasons why a hearing on this application would be appropriate.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Jennifer Skidmore or Colette Cairns, (301) 427-8401.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The subject modifications to Permit No. 13599-01 and 1614-01 are requested under the authority of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA), as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) and the regulations governing the taking, importing, and exporting of endangered and threatened species (50 CFR 222-226).

Permit No. 13599-01, issued on September 20, 2010 (73 FR 78724), authorizes the permit holder to receive, import, export, transfer, archive, and conduct analyses of marine mammal and endangered species parts. Species include all cetaceans, pinnipeds (except for walrus), sea turtles (in the water), smalltooth sawfish (*Pristis pectinata*), shortnose (*Acipenser brevirostrum*), green (*Acipenser medirostris*) and Gulf (*Acipenser oxyrinchus desotoi*) sturgeon, black (*Haliotis cracherodii*) and white (*Haliotis sorenseni*) abalone, chinook (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*), chum (*Oncorhynchus keta*), coho (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*) and sockeye (*Oncorhynchus nerka*) salmon, steelhead trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*), and totoaba (*Totoaba macdonaldi*). Permit No. 1614-01, (73 FR 25668) issued on April 30, 2008 authorizes the permit holder to collect, receive and transport 100 dead shortnose sturgeon, or parts thereof, annually. Researchers are also authorized the receipt and transport of up to 350 captive bred, dead shortnose sturgeon annually from any U.S. facility authorized to hold captive sturgeon.

The permit holders are requesting their permits be modified to include Atlantic sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrinchus oxyrinchus*), due to the proposed listing of this species under the ESA. The modifications to include Atlantic sturgeon on these permits would be issued once the listing becomes effective. The permit holders request authorization for the receipt, importation, exportation, transfer, archive and analysis of Atlantic sturgeon parts and carcasses. Atlantic sturgeon parts and samples would be used to support law enforcement actions, research studies (primarily genetics), and outreach education. Atlantic sturgeon samples would be obtained from individuals authorized to collect them in the course of scientific research, salvage activities, or taken during other authorized activities. The modifications would be valid until each permit expires.

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), an initial determination has been made that the activities proposed are categorically excluded from the requirement to prepare an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement.

Dated: December 20, 2011.

Tammy C. Adams,

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

[FR Doc. 2011-33166 Filed 12-23-11; 8:45 am]

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

RIN 0648-XA408

Small Takes of Marine Mammals Incidental to Specified Activities; Cape Wind's High Resolution Survey in Nantucket Sound, MA

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

ACTION: Notice; issuance of an incidental harassment authorization.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), notification is hereby given that NMFS has issued an Incidental Harassment Authorization (IHA) to Cape Wind Associates (CWA) to take marine mammals, by harassment, incidental to pre-construction high resolution survey activities in Nantucket Sound.

DATES: Effective January 1, 2012, through December 31, 2012.

ADDRESSES: A copy of the IHA and application are available by writing to Michael Payne, Chief, Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910.

An electronic copy of the application containing a list of references used in this document may be obtained by writing to the above address, telephoning the contact listed here (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**), or visiting the Internet at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/permits/incidental.htm#applications>. NMFS prepared its own Environmental Assessment (EA) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), which are available at the same Internet address. Documents cited in this notice may be viewed, by appointment, during regular

business hours, at the aforementioned address.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Michelle Magliocca, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, (301) 427-8401.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**Background**

Sections 101(a)(5)(A) and (D) of the MMPA (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*) direct the Secretary of Commerce to allow, upon request, the incidental, but not intentional, taking of small numbers of marine mammals by U.S. citizens who engage in a specified activity (other than commercial fishing) within a specific geographical region if certain findings are made and either regulations are issued or, if the taking is limited to harassment, a notice of a proposed authorization is provided to the public for review.

Authorization for incidental takings shall be granted if NMFS finds that the taking will have a negligible impact on the species or stock(s), will not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of the species or stock(s) for subsistence uses (where relevant), and if the permissible methods of taking and requirements pertaining to the mitigation, monitoring, and reporting of such takings are set forth. NMFS has defined "negligible impact" in 50 CFR 216.103 as " * * * an impact resulting from the specified activity that cannot be reasonably expected to, and is not reasonably likely to, adversely affect the species or stock through effects on annual rates of recruitment or survival."

Section 101(a)(5)(D) of the MMPA established an expedited process by which citizens of the United States can apply for an authorization to incidentally take small numbers of marine mammals by harassment. Section 101(a)(5)(D) establishes a 45-day time limit for NMFS to review an application followed by a 30-day public notice and comment period on any proposed authorizations for the incidental harassment of marine mammals. Within 45 days of the close of the comment period, NMFS must either issue or deny the authorization.

Except with respect to certain activities not pertinent here, the MMPA defines "harassment" as:

any act of pursuit, torment, or annoyance which (i) has the potential to injure a marine mammal or marine mammal stock in the wild [Level A harassment]; or (ii) has the potential to disturb a marine mammal or marine mammal stock in the wild by causing disruption of behavioral patterns, including, but not limited to, migration, breathing, nursing, breeding, feeding, or sheltering [Level B harassment].