

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

RIN 0648-XE408

Whaling Provisions; Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling Quotas

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

ACTION: Notice; notification of quota for bowhead whales.

SUMMARY: NMFS notifies the public of the aboriginal subsistence whaling quota for bowhead whales that it has assigned to the Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission (AEWC), and of limitations on the use of the quota deriving from regulations of the International Whaling Commission (IWC). For 2016, the quota is 75 bowhead whales struck. This quota and other applicable limitations govern the harvest of bowhead whales by members of the AEWC.

DATES: Effective February 18, 2016.

ADDRESSES: Office for International Affairs and Seafood Inspection, National Marine Fisheries Service, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Melissa Andersen Garcia, (301) 427-8385.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Aboriginal subsistence whaling in the United States is governed by the Whaling Convention Act (WCA) (16 U.S.C. 916 *et seq.*). Under the WCA, IWC regulations shall generally become effective with respect to all persons and vessels subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, within 90 days of notification from the IWC Secretariat of an amendment to the IWC Schedule (16 U.S.C. 916k). Regulations that implement the WCA, found at 50 CFR 230.6, require the Secretary of Commerce (Secretary) to publish, at least annually, aboriginal subsistence whaling quotas and any other limitations on aboriginal subsistence whaling deriving from regulations of the IWC.

At the 64th Annual Meeting of the IWC, the Commission set catch limits for aboriginal subsistence use of bowhead whales from the Bering-Chukchi-Beaufort Seas stock. The bowhead catch limits were based on a joint request by the United States and the Russian Federation, accompanied by documentation concerning the needs of two Native groups: Alaska Eskimos and Chukotka Natives in the Russian Far East.

The IWC set a 6-year block catch limit of 336 bowhead whales landed. For each of the years 2013 through 2018, the number of bowhead whales struck may not exceed 67, except that any unused portion of a strike quota from any prior year may be carried forward. No more than 15 strikes may be added to the strike quota for any one year. At the end of the 2015 harvest, there were 15 unused strikes available for carry-forward, so the combined strike quota set by the IWC for 2016 is 82 (67 + 15).

An arrangement between the United States and the Russian Federation ensures that the total quota of bowhead whales landed and struck in 2016 will not exceed the limits set by the IWC. Under this arrangement, the Russian natives may use no more than seven strikes, and the Alaska Eskimos may use no more than 75 strikes.

Through its cooperative agreement with the AEWC, NOAA has assigned 75 strikes to the Alaska Eskimos. The AEWC will in turn allocate these strikes among the 11 villages whose cultural and subsistence needs have been documented, and will ensure that its hunters use no more than 75 strikes.

Other Limitations

The IWC regulations, as well as the NOAA regulation at 50 CFR 230.4(c), forbid the taking of calves or any whale accompanied by a calf.

NOAA regulations (at 50 CFR 230.4) contain a number of other prohibitions relating to aboriginal subsistence whaling, some of which are summarized here:

- Only licensed whaling captains or crew under the control of those captains may engage in whaling.
- Captains and crew must follow the provisions of the relevant cooperative agreement between NOAA and a Native American whaling organization.
- The aboriginal hunters must have adequate crew, supplies, and equipment to engage in an efficient operation.
- Crew may not receive money for participating in the hunt.
- No person may sell or offer for sale whale products from whales taken in the hunt, except for authentic articles of Native American handicrafts.
- Captains may not continue to whale after the relevant quota is taken, after the season has been closed, or if their licenses have been suspended. They may not engage in whaling in a wasteful manner.

Dated: February 11, 2016.

John Henderschedt,

Director, Office for International Affairs and Seafood Inspection, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 2016-03366 Filed 2-17-16; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-P

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

RIN 0649-XE447

Gulf of Mexico 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 Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council will hold a meeting of its Standing and Special *Shrimp* Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC).

DATES: The meeting will convene via WEBINAR on Tuesday, March 8, 2016 from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. EST; you may register for the webinar at: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/1004643937909180674>.

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

ADDRESSES: *Council address:* Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, 2203 N. Lois Avenue, Suite 1100, Tampa, FL 33607; telephone: (813) 348-1630.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Morgan Kilgour, Fishery Biologist, morgan.kilgour@gulfcouncil.org; Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council telephone: (813) 348-1630.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**Agenda**

The Chairman will start the meeting with introductions and adoption of agenda, approval of minutes from the March 10-12, 2015 Standing, Special *Reef Fish*, Special *Shrimp*, and Special *Spiny Lobster* Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) meeting, and selection of an SSC representative to attend the April, 2016 Council Meeting. The SSC will review updated *Penaeid Shrimp* Stock Assessments and review an update on the Aggregate Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) and Optimum Yield (OY) Working Group. Lastly, the SSC will discuss other business, if any. —Meeting Adjourns—

The Agenda is subject to change, and the latest version along with other

meeting materials will be posted on the Council's file server. To access the file server, the URL is <https://public.gulfcouncil.org:5001/webman/index.cgi>, or go to the Council's Web site and click on the FTP link in the lower left of the Council Web site (<http://www.gulfcouncil.org>). The username and password are both "gulfguest." Click on the "Library Folder," then scroll down to "SSC meeting-2016-03."

The meeting will be webcast over the internet. A link to register for the webcast is available on the Council's Web site, <http://www.gulfcouncil.org>.

Although other non-emergency issues not on the agenda may come before the Scientific and Statistical Committee 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 Committee 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 Gulf Council Office (see **ADDRESSES**), at least 5 working days prior to the meeting.

Dated: February 12, 2016.

Tracy Thompson,

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

[FR Doc. 2016-03339 Filed 2-17-16; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XE446

Gulf of Mexico 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 Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council will hold a

meeting of its Ad Hoc Red Snapper Charter Advisory Panel (AP).

DATES: The meeting will convene Tuesday, March 8, 2016 from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Wednesday, March 9, 2016 from 8:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will take place at the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, 2203 N. Lois Avenue, Suite 1100, Tampa, FL 33607; telephone: (813) 348-1630.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Ava Lasseter, Anthropologist, Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council; ava.lasseter@gulfcouncil.org; telephone: (813) 348-1630.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Agenda

The items of discussion on the agenda are as follows:

Ad Hoc Red Snapper Charter Advisory Panel Agenda, Tuesday, March 8, 2016 from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Wednesday, March 9, 2016 from 8:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.

- I. Adoption of Agenda
 - II. Approval of May 2015 Ad Hoc Red Snapper Charter AP meeting summary
 - III. Overview of Draft Amendment 41
 - IV. Program Goals and Objectives
 - V. Recommendations to the Council on the design of a Red Snapper Management Program for Charter Vessels
 - VI. Other Business
- Meeting Adjourns—

The Agenda is subject to change, and the latest version along with other meeting materials will be posted on the Council's file server. To access the file server, the URL is <https://public.gulfcouncil.org:5001/webman/index.cgi>, or go to the Council's Web site and click on the File Server link in the lower left of the Council Web site (<http://www.gulfcouncil.org>). The username and password are both "gulfguest." Click on the "Library Folder," then scroll down to "Ad Hoc Red Snapper Charter AP."

The meeting will be webcast over the Internet. A link to the ebcast will be available on the Council's Web site, <http://www.gulfcouncil.org>.

Although other non-emergency issues not on the agenda may come before the Advisory Panel 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 Advisory Panel 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 Gulf Council Office (see **ADDRESSES**), at least 5 working days prior to the meeting.

Dated: February 12, 2016.

Tracy Thompson,

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

[FR Doc. 2016-03337 Filed 2-17-16; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XE421

Atlantic Highly Migratory Species; Meeting of the Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Advisory Panel

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

ACTION: Notice of public meeting and webinar/conference call.

SUMMARY: NMFS will hold a 3-day Atlantic Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Advisory Panel (AP) meeting in March 2016. The intent of the meeting is to consider options for the conservation and management of Atlantic HMS. The meeting is open to the public.

DATES: The AP meeting and webinar will be held from 10:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Tuesday, March 29, 2016; from 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Wednesday, March 30, 2016; and from 8:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. on Thursday, March 31, 2016. There will be an introduction for new AP members at 9 a.m. on Tuesday, March 29, 2016.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel, 8120 Wisconsin Avenue, Bethesda, MD 20814. The meeting presentations will also be available via WebEx webinar/conference call.

On Tuesday, March 29, 2016, the conference call information is phone number 1-888-566-6157; Participant Code: 5998985; and the webinar event address is: <https://noaaevents2.webex.com/noaaevents2/onstage/g.php?MTID=ee08141a7a0cf50251a257df9d3b931fa>; event password: NOAA.

On Wednesday, March 30, 2016, the conference call information is phone