

When registering, operators must provide contact information and the tournament's date(s), location(s), and target species. In addition, HMS tournament registration provides a method for tournament operators to request educational and regulatory outreach materials from NMFS.

In addition to requiring tournament operators to register, the regulations at § 635.5(d) also authorize NMFS to select HMS tournaments for reporting. Currently, all billfish and swordfish tournaments are selected for reporting. When selected for reporting, Atlantic HMS tournament operators are required to submit an HMS tournament catch summary report within seven days after tournament fishing has ended.

NMFS recently developed the online Atlantic Tournament Registration and Reporting (ATR) system that allows tournament operators to easily register their tournaments and report. For over a year, NMFS received positive feedback from tournament operators about the ease of use of the ATR system.

In this notice, NMFS announces that all Atlantic HMS tournaments, not just billfish and swordfish tournaments, will be selected for reporting beginning on January 1, 2019. The estimated burden to the public for all HMS tournaments to report has already been approved under the Paperwork Reduction Act (OMB 0648-0323). NMFS does not expect the burden on tournaments to increase as most of the catch data in the summary report is routinely collected in the course of regular tournament operations and all tournament operators may use the ATR system to report. NMFS uses the data collected in these reports to estimate the total annual catch of HMS and the potential impacts to tournament operations in relation to other types of fishing activities. For more information about Atlantic HMS tournament registration and reporting, please go to <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/atlantic-highly-migratory-species/atlantic-highly-migratory-species-tournaments>.

Dated: December 7, 2018.

Karen H. Abrams,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.
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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XG655

Endangered Species; File Nos. 21857, 22078, and 22324

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

ACTION: Notice; receipt of applications for permits.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that three applicants have applied in due form for permits to take smalltooth sawfish (*Pristis pectinata*) for purposes of scientific research, with one also requesting to receive, import, and export parts of five foreign species of sawfish, including dwarf (*P. clavata*), narrow (*Anoxypristis cuspidata*), green (*P. zijsron*), largetooth (*P. pristis*), and non-U.S. DPS smalltooth sawfish for scientific research.

DATES: Written, telefaxed, or email comments must be received on or before January 11, 2019.

ADDRESSES: The permit requests and related documents are available for review by selecting "Records Open for Public Comment" from the Features box on the Applications and Permits for Protected Species (APPS) home page, <https://apps.nmfs.noaa.gov>, and then selecting the applicable File No. from the list of available applications. These documents are also available upon written request or by appointment in the Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13705, Silver Spring, MD 20910; phone (301) 427-8401; fax (301) 713-0376.

Written comments on the pertinent 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 the application would be appropriate.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Malcolm Mohead or Erin Markin at (301) 427-8401.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The subject permits are requested 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).

File No. 21857: Tonya Wiley, Havenworth Coastal Conservation, 5120 Beacon Road, Palmetto, FL 34221, requests a 10-year permit document the occurrence, distribution, biology, movements, and habitat use of smalltooth sawfish found in United States waters. Sampling may occur anywhere within the species' range, but primarily in the Gulf of Mexico coastal areas of Florida bordering Sarasota, Manatee, Hillsborough, Pinellas, Hernando and Pasco counties. To capture sawfish, researchers would use bottom longline, drum line, gillnet, angling gear, seine net, and cast net. Captured smalltooth sawfish would be sexed, measured, weighed (if possible), marked with passive integrated transponder (PIT) tags, dart tags, and roto tags, photographed, ultrasounded, and tissue sampled (*i.e.*, blood, fin clip, muscle biopsy). A maximum of 50 neonate and juvenile life stages and 50 adult and sub-adult life stages would be taken annually with subsets of 25 of each life stage group fitted with internal or external telemetry tracking devices. Up to one sawfish from each life stage group may unintentionally die during research activities. Additionally, the applicant requests to collect, receive, necropsy, analyze, and archive up to 100 salvaged dead smalltooth sawfish specimens (whole or parts) that have been legally collected or archived elsewhere within the U.S.

File No. 22078: The NMFS Southeast Fisheries Science Center (Responsible Party: Theo Brainerd, Ph.D.), 75 Virginia Beach Drive Miami, FL 33149, requests a 10-year permit monitoring the biology, habitat use, and movements of smalltooth sawfish primarily within the Everglades National Park, the Ten Thousand Islands National Wildlife Refuge, and Florida Bay.

Sampling would be conducted year-round with gillnets, longlines, seines, cast nets, and angling gear. The applicant anticipates annually capturing and sampling a maximum of 150 sawfish annually (100 neonates and juveniles and 50 subadults and adults). Depending on the life stage and research objective, research activities would include: Measurement, weigh (when possible), ultrasound, photograph/video, genetic tissue fin clip, muscle biopsy, external dart tag, PIT tag, and blood draw. Additionally, subsets of each life stage group would receive internal or external telemetry devices

prior to release. Up to one sawfish from each life stage group may unintentionally die during research activities. Additionally, the applicant requests to collect, receive, necropsy, analyze, and archive up to 30 salvaged dead smalltooth sawfish specimens (whole or parts) that have been legally collected or archived elsewhere within the U.S.

File No. 22324: The University of Florida (Responsible Party: Gavin Naylor, Ph.D.), Florida Museum of Natural History, Dickinson Hall, Gainesville, FL 32611, requests a 10-year permit to study smalltooth sawfish movements, habitat use, temporal and spatial distribution, and population structure using tagging, telemetry, and population genetic methods. Sawfish would be collected year-round in the Florida Bay and the upper Florida Keys using gillnets, longlines, and angling gear. The applicant anticipates capturing each year up to 60 sawfish, including 20 neonates and juveniles and 40 sub-adult and adult life stages. Research activities would include measurement, weigh (when possible), ultrasound, photograph/video, genetic tissue fin clip, muscle biopsy, skin biopsy, external dart tag, PIT tag, and blood draw. Subsets of each life stage group would receive either internal or external telemetry tracking devices prior to release. Additionally, the applicant further requests to collect, receive, necropsy, analyze and archive up to 100 salvaged dead smalltooth sawfish specimens (whole or parts) that have been legally collected or archived elsewhere within the U.S. Other objectives include receiving, importing, and exporting tissue samples (or parts) from five other foreign species of sawfish for scientific and archival purposes, including dwarf, narrow, green, largetooth, and non-U.S. DPS smalltooth sawfish.

Dated: December 6, 2018.

Julia Marie Harrison,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XG656

Fishing Capacity Reduction Program for the Longline Catcher Processor Subsector of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Non Pollock Groundfish Fishery

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

ACTION: Notice of fee rate adjustment.

SUMMARY: NMFS issues this notice to inform the public that there will be an increase of the fee rate required to repay the \$35,000,000 reduction loan financing the non-pollock groundfish fishing capacity reduction program. Effective January 1, 2019, NMFS is increasing the Loan A fee rate to \$0.017 per pound to ensure timely loan repayment. The fee rate for Loan B will remain unchanged at \$0.001 per pound.

DATES: The non-pollock groundfish program fee rate increase will begin with landings on and after January 1, 2019. The first due date for fee payments with the increased rate will be February 15, 2019.

ADDRESSES: Send questions about this notice to Michael A. Sturtevant, Acting Chief, Financial Services Division, National Marine Fisheries Service, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910-3282.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Elaine Saiz, (301) 427-8752.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background

Sections 312(b)–(e) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1861a(b) through (e)) generally authorizes fishing capacity reduction programs. In particular, section 312(d) authorizes industry fee systems for repaying reduction loans which finance reduction program costs. Subpart L of 50 CFR part 600 is the framework rule generally implementing section 312(b)–(e). Sections 1111 and 1112 of the Merchant Marine Act, 1936 (46 App. U.S.C. 1279f and 1279g) generally authorize reduction loans.

Enacted on December 8, 2004, section 219, Title II, of FY 2005 Appropriations Act, Public Law 104-447 (Act) authorizes a fishing capacity reduction program implementing capacity reduction plans submitted to NMFS by catcher processor subsectors of the

Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (“BSAI”) non-pollock groundfish fishery (“reduction fishery”) as set forth in the Act.

The longline catcher processor subsector (the “Longline Subsector”) is among the catcher processor subsectors eligible to submit to NMFS a capacity reduction plan under the terms of the Act.

The longline subsector non-pollock groundfish reduction program’s objective was to reduce the number of vessels and permits endorsed for longline subsector of the non-pollock groundfish fishery.

All post-reduction fish landings from the reduction fishery are subject to the longline subsector non-pollock groundfish program’s fee.

NMFS proposed the implementing notice on August 11, 2006 (71 FR 46364), and published the final notice on September 29, 2006 (71 FR 57696).

NMFS allocated the \$35,000,000 reduction loan (A Loan) to the reduction fishery and this loan is repayable by fees from the fishery.

On September 24, 2007, NMFS published in the **Federal Register** (72 FR 54219), the final rule to implement the industry fee system for repaying the non-pollock groundfish program’s reduction loan and established October 24, 2007, as the effective date when fee collection and loan repayment began. The regulations implementing the program are located at § 600.1012 of 50 CFR part 600’s subpart M.

NMFS published, in the **Federal Register** on November 2, 2009 (74 FR 56592), a notice to decrease the A Loan fee rate to \$0.016 per pound effective January 1, 2010. On November 12, 2010, NMFS published a notice (75 FR 69401), to decrease the fee rate to \$0.015 per pound, effective January 1, 2011. NMFS published a notice on November 30, 2011 (76 FR 74048) to decrease the fee rate to \$0.0145 per pound effective January 1, 2012. NMFS published a notice on February 13, 2013 (78 FR 10136) to further decrease the fee rate once more to \$0.0111 per pound effective January 1, 2013. NMFS published a notice on January 8, 2018 (83 FR 793) to increase the fee rate to \$0.013 per pound effective January 1, 2018.

NMFS published a final rule to implement a second \$2,700,000 reduction loan (B Loan) for this fishery in the **Federal Register** on September 24, 2012 (77 FR 58775). The loan was disbursed December 18, 2012 with fee collection of \$0.001 per pound to begin January 1, 2013. This fee is in addition to the A Loan fee.