

Agenda

The Scientific and Statistical Committee will meet to consider the New England Fishery Management Council's remand of the SSC's acceptable biological catch (ABC) recommendations for American plaice, Gulf of Maine and Georges Bank haddock stocks, and Atlantic pollock for fishing years 2020–23. They will also discuss any matters concerning issues with ABC control rules for groundfish and the lack of fish stock status determination criteria. Other business will be discussed as needed.

Although non-emergency issues not contained in this agenda may come before this group for discussion, those issues may not be the subject of formal action during this meeting. 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 Act, provided the public has been notified of the Council's intent to take final action to address the emergency. The public also should be aware that the meeting will be recorded, consistent with 16 U.S.C. 1852, a copy of the recording is available upon request.

Special Accommodations

This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Thomas A. Nies, Executive Director, at (978) 465-0492, at least 5 days prior to the meeting date.

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

Dated: December 18, 2019.

Tracey L. Thompson,

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

[FR Doc. 2019-27637 Filed 12-20-19; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XR002

Marine Mammals; File No. 22156

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

ACTION: Notice; receipt of application.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that Douglas Nowacek, Ph.D., Nicholas School of the Environment, Duke University Marine Laboratory, 135 Duke

Marine Lab Rd, Beaufort, NC 28516, has applied in due form for a permit to conduct research on and import specimens of 31 cetacean species for scientific research.

DATES: Written, telefaxed, or email comments must be received on or before January 22, 2020.

ADDRESSES: The application 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 File No. 22156 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 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:

Amy Hapeman or Shasta McClenahan, (301) 427-8401.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The subject permit is requested under the authority of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (MMPA; 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).

The applicant proposes to conduct a five-year research program on 31 species of cetaceans in U.S. and international waters of the North Atlantic Ocean. Species include endangered blue (*Balaenoptera musculus*), fin (*B. physalus*), sei (*B. borealis*), and sperm (*Physeter macrocephalus*) whales. The purpose of the research is to study variation in cetacean behavior, foraging ecology, body condition, health status, population structure, and use of and

response to sounds. Researchers would conduct surveys by vessel and an unmanned aircraft system to approach, count, observe, photograph, remotely measure, and track cetaceans. During surveys, researchers may conduct acoustic playback trials in the presence of animals, collect biological samples, and tag animals, with some species receiving two tags at a time. Non-target cetaceans in the vicinity of research could be incidentally harassed. See the application for take numbers by species. Biological samples collected in international waters would be imported into the United States and cell lines may be developed from tissue samples.

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 activity proposed is categorically excluded from the requirement to prepare an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement.

Concurrent with the publication of this notice in the **Federal Register**, NMFS is forwarding copies of the application to the Marine Mammal Commission and its Committee of Scientific Advisors.

Dated: December 17, 2019.

Julia Marie Harrison,

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

[FR Doc. 2019-27569 Filed 12-20-19; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XV155

North Pacific Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

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

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: The North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan Local Knowledge, Traditional Knowledge, and Subsistence Taskforce will meet January 16, 2020 through January 17, 2020.

DATES: The meeting will be held on Thursday, January 16, 2020 through Friday, January 17, 2020, from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Alaska Standard Time.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held in the Birch/Willow Room at the Hilton Hotel, 500 West Third Avenue,