

Endangered Species Act (ESA)

Based on a review conducted by NMFS Alaska Regional Office biologists, it is not likely that any ESA-listed species would be taken due to the proposed seismic operations. Steller sea lions are recorded in these waters, but are considered uncommon in spring and early summer in the proposed project area. Therefore, NMFS has determined that a formal section 7 consultation is not necessary.

Preliminary Determinations

NMFS has determined preliminarily that small numbers of beluga whales, Pacific harbor seals, and harbor porpoises may be taken incidental to seismic surveys, by no more than Level B harassment and that such taking will result in no more than a negligible impact on such species or stocks. In addition, NMFS has determined preliminarily that Steller sea lions and killer whales, if present within the vicinity of the proposed activities could be taken incidentally, but by no more than Level B harassment and that such taking would result in no more than a negligible impact on such species or stocks. At this time, NMFS is not able to determine whether any potential take would involve small numbers of Steller sea lions or killer whales due to data limitations and our inability to develop density estimates. Regardless, given the infrequent occurrence of these species (or none at all), NMFS believes that any take would be significantly lower than those of beluga whales or harbor seals.

While behavioral modifications, including temporarily vacating the area during the project period may be made by these species to avoid the resultant visual and acoustic disturbance, NMFS nonetheless finds that this action would result in no more than a negligible impact on these marine mammal species and/or stocks. NMFS also finds that the proposed action will not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of such species or stocks for taking for subsistence uses.

In addition, no take by Level A harassment (injury) or death is anticipated or authorized, and harassment takes should be at the lowest level practicable due to incorporation of the mitigation measures described in this document.

Proposed Authorization

NMFS proposes to issue IHAs to CPAI and UOCC for the potential harassment of small numbers of Cook Inlet beluga whales, Pacific harbor seals and harbor porpoises incidental to conducting seismic operations in the northwestern

Cook Inlet in Alaska, provided the previously mentioned mitigation, monitoring, and reporting requirements are incorporated. Likewise, NMFS proposes to issue IHAs for potential harassment of Steller sea lions and killer whales incidental to conducting of seismic operations in the northwestern Cook Inlet in Alaska, provided that previously mentioned mitigation, monitoring, and reporting requirements are incorporated.

Dated: December 28, 2006.

James H. Lecky,

*Director, Office of Protected Resources,
National Marine Fisheries Service.*

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 122806C]

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council); Public Meetings

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

ACTION: Notice of public meetings.

SUMMARY: The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council will convene public meetings.

DATES: The meeting will be held January 22–26, 2007.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Grand Hotel Marriott, 1 Grand Blvd., Point Clear AL 36564.

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

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Wayne E. Swingle, Executive Director, Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council; telephone: 813-348-1630.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Council

Thursday, January 25, 2007—The Council will begin at 8:30 am to review the agenda and minutes. Public testimony on a regulatory amendment to address vermilion snapper management and exempted fishing permits (EFPs), if any, will be from 8:45 to 10 a.m. Persons wishing to testify on the regulatory amendment must register by filling out a public testimony card prior to the beginning of the testimony period. From 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. the Council will hold an Open Public Comment Period regarding any fishery issue or concern.

People wishing to speak before the Council should complete a public comment card prior to the comment period. From 1:30–2 p.m. the Council will hear a presentation regarding Dolphin Depredation. The Council will then review and discuss reports from the previous three day's committee meetings as follows: 2–3:30 pm—Reef Fish Management; 3:30–4:15 pm—Joint Reef Fish/Shrimp Management Committees; 4:15–4:45 pm—Shrimp Management Committee; 4:45–5:00 pm—Mackerel Management Committee; 5–5:15 p.m.—Data Collection Committee; Budget/Personnel Committee from 5:15–5:30 p.m.

Friday, January 26, 2007—The Council will begin at 8:30 a.m. to continue reviewing and discussing reports from the previous three day's committee meetings as follows: 8:30–8:45 am—Migratory Species Management Committee; 8:45–9 a.m.—SSC Selection Committee; 9–9:30 a.m. Joint Reef Fish/Mackerel/Red Drum Committees. The Council will conclude its meeting by discussing Other Business items from 9:30–10:30 a.m.

Committees

Monday, January 22, 2007, 1–5:30 p.m.—The Reef Fish Management Committee will meet to take final action on a Regulatory Amendment for Vermilion Snapper, review Reef Fish Amendment 30 (gag, amberjack, triggerfish, red grouper), and set scoping hearings. The Committee will also review the Ad Hoc Grouper IFQ Advisory Panel's (AP) recommendations for Reef Fish Amendment 29 (Grouper Individual Fishing Quota [IFQ]), as well as review a Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission study and Southeast Fisheries Science Center recommendations for a goliath grouper scientific harvest.

Tuesday, January 23, 2007, 8:30 a.m.–12 p.m.—The Joint Reef Fish/Shrimp Management Committee will meet to receive a presentation on red snapper juvenile densities off Texas. The Committee will also review the current Draft Joint Reef Fish Amendment 27/Shrimp Amendment 14 and additional potential shrimp actions; the Committee report from the August 2006 meeting; the NMFS' FEIS and Interim Rule; the Final Shrimp Effort Workgroup and the Ad Hoc Shrimp Effort Management AP Reports; and consider linked vs. delinked shrimp and reef fish mortality reduction scenarios for Reef Fish Amendment 27/Shrimp Amendment 14. The Committee may also select public hearing locations for Reef Fish Amendment 27/Shrimp Amendment 14

and review Reef Fish 31/Shrimp 15 options.

1:30–4 p.m.—The Joint Reef Fish/Shrimp Management Committee continues.

4–5 p.m.—The Shrimp Management Committee will meet to receive a report of the Texas shrimp closure analyses and the Shrimp AP recommendations.

5–5:30 p.m. (CLOSED COUNCIL SESSION) The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) Selection Committee, which met prior to the meeting, will give their recommendations for Select SSC Subcommittee members to monitor NMFS' Design and Analysis Group.

Wednesday, January 24, 2007, 8:30–10:30 a.m. —The Data Collection Committee will meet to discuss the Committee's charge under the Council's Standard Operating Practices and Procedures's (SOPPS); consider action to require a recreational saltwater fishing license/permit in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ); discuss reporting requirements for the recreational-for-hire sector; review the existing Gulf charter and head boat surveys; and discuss the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act recreational data provision for a vessel registry along with state licensing and reporting requirements.

10:30–11:30 a.m.—The Mackerel Management Committee will meet to review an update on status criteria and acceptable biological catch (ABC) projections for king mackerel and to approve Amendment 18 to the Coastal Migratory Pelagics Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for public hearings.

1–3 p.m.—The Joint Reef Fish/Mackerel/Red Drum Committees will meet to discuss an Options Paper for an Aquaculture Amendment by possibly selecting preferred alternatives and scheduling public hearing locations.

3–3:45 p.m.—The Budget/Personnel Committee will meet to review the draft CY 2007 operating budget and consider increases in state liaison funding.

3:45–5:30 p.m.—The Migratory Species Management Committee will meet to discuss a proposed rule by NMFS to relax swordfish regulations and highly migratory species essential fish habitat.

The committee reports will be presented to the Council for consideration on Thursday January 25, and on Friday, January 26, 2007.

Although other non-emergency issues not on the agendas may come before the Council and Committees for discussion, in accordance with the M-SFCMA, those issues may not be the subject of formal action during these meetings. Actions of the Council and Committees will be restricted to those issues specifically

identified in the agendas and any issues arising after publication of this notice that require emergency action under Section 305(c) of the M-SFCMA, provided the public has been notified of the Council's intent to take action to address the emergency. The established times for addressing items on the agenda may be adjusted as necessary to accommodate the timely completion of discussion relevant to the agenda items. In order to further allow for such adjustments and completion of all items on the agenda, the meeting may be extended from, or completed prior to the date established in this notice.

These meetings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Tina Trezza at the Council (see ADDRESSES) at least 5 working days prior to the meeting.

Dated: December 29, 2006.

Tracey L. Thompson,

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

[FR Doc. E6–22597 Filed 1–4–07; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 122806B]

New England Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

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

ACTION: Notice; public meeting.

SUMMARY: The New England Fishery Management Council (Council) is scheduling a public meeting of its Recreational Advisory Panel (Panel) in January, 2007 to consider actions affecting New England fisheries in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ). Recommendations from this group will be brought to the full Council for formal consideration and action, if appropriate.

DATES: The meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 24, 2007 at 9 a.m.

ADDRESSES: *Meeting address:* The meeting will be held at the Sheraton Ferncroft Hotel, 50 Ferncroft Road, Danvers, MA 01923; telephone: (978) 777–2500; fax: (978) 750–7991.

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 Council has begun development of Amendment 16 to the Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan (FMP). This amendment will adjust measures as necessary to continue the stock rebuilding programs adopted by Amendment 13 to the FMP on May 1, 2004. The amendment may also consider other adjustments to management measures or alternatives to the effort control system currently used to manage the multispecies fishery. On November 6, 2006, the Council published a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare a Supplementary Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) to support this amendment (71 FR 64941) and announced a scoping period that ended on December 29, 2006. The Panel will meet to develop recommendations for management of the recreational fishery and the Panel may consider allocations to the recreational fishery, management measures or other issues. Recommendations of the Panel will be considered by the Council at future meetings.

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.

Special Accommodations

This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Paul J. Howard, 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 29, 2006.

Tracey L. Thompson,

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

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