

fecundity data would be collected. NEFSC is requesting an EFP to collect one tote of undersized haddock for sampling. The vessels would deliver up to five totes of fish (600 lb, 272.16 kg), four of which would contain legal sized fish, and one of which would contain undersized fish. The fish would be whole and iced. The total amount of GB haddock that would be authorized under this EFP would not exceed 1,300 lb (589.67 kg). NEFSC staff would meet the captain at the dock to collect the fish. None of the fish would be sold.

The NEFSC/SMAST/CMER SNE Yellowtail Flounder project would obtain 100 yellowtail flounder per month during the April through August spawning period on three vessels, up to 1,500 fish total, followed by non-spawning month sampling for 7 months at 25 fish per month per vessel, for up to an additional 525 fish. The resulting length frequency and maturity sampling would account for approximately 2,025 undersized yellowtail flounder, or 2,500 lb (1133.98 kg).

The GMRI Monkfish project would require the biological sampling EFP to allow fishermen to retain the entire monkfish catch on the last tow for two trips per month for eight months on five vessels, resulting in 80 separate samples, not to exceed 550 lb (249.48 kg) of monkfish per sample. Each sample would be delivered to a GMRI sampler. Legal sized fish would be allowed to be sold by the vessel, but undersized fish would be retained by GMRI. It is estimated that the amount of undersized fish for the 80 samples would not exceed 4,800 lb (2177.24 kg).

The SMAST GB Groundfish project is requesting the following under the biological sampling EFP: Up to 100 monkfish (750 lb, 340.19 kg) for age and growth, not to exceed 20 monkfish (150 lb, 68.04 kg) per trip; 50 whole skates (150 lb, 68.04 kg), not to exceed 10 (30 lb, 13.61 kg) per trip; and, 10 cod (100 lb, 45.36 kg), not to exceed 2 (20 lb, 9.07 kg) per trip. In addition, 100 lengths of kept fish and 100 lengths of discarded fish of each of the following species would be collected: Cod, winter flounder, grey sole, yellowtail flounder, haddock, monkfish, and American plaice.

The applicant may make requests to NMFS for minor modifications and extensions to the EFP throughout the year. EFP modifications and extensions may be granted by NMFS without further notice if they are deemed essential to facilitate completion of the proposed research and result in only a minimal change in the scope or impact of the initially approved EFP request. In accordance with NOAA Administrative

Order 216-6, a Categorical Exclusion or other appropriate NEPA document would be completed prior to the issuance of the EFP. Further review and consultation may be necessary before a final determination is made to issue the EFP. After publication of this document in the **Federal Register**, the EFP, if approved, may become effective following a 15-day public comment period.

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

Dated: March 20, 2008.

**Emily H. Menashes,**

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

[FR Doc. E8-6009 Filed 3-24-08; 8:45 am]

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

**RIN 0648-XG39**

#### Endangered Species; File No. 1614-01

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

**ACTION:** Notice; receipt of application for modification.

**SUMMARY:** Notice is hereby given that the NOAA Fisheries Northeast Region, Protected Resources Division [Responsible Party: Mary Colligan], One Blackburn Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930, has requested a modification to scientific research Permit No. 1614.

**DATES:** Written, telefaxed, or e-mail comments must be received on or before April 24, 2008.

**ADDRESSES:** The modification request and related documents are available for review upon written request or by appointment in the following offices:

Permits, Conservation and Education Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13705, Silver Spring, MD 20910; phone (301)713-2289; fax (301)427-2520;

Northeast Region, NMFS, One Blackburn Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930-2298; phone (978)281-9300; fax (978)281-9394; and

Southeast Region, NMFS, 263 13th Ave South, St. Petersburg, FL 33701; phone (727)824-5312; fax (727)824-5309.

Written comments or requests for a public hearing on this request should be submitted to the Chief, Permits, Conservation and Education Division, F/PR1, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room

13705, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Those individuals requesting a hearing should set forth the specific reasons why a hearing on this particular modification request would be appropriate.

Comments may also be submitted by facsimile at (301)427-2520, provided the facsimile is confirmed by hard copy submitted by mail and postmarked no later than the closing date of the comment period.

Comments may also be submitted by e-mail. The mailbox address for providing e-mail comments is *NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov*. Include in the subject line of the e-mail comment the following document identifier: File No. 1614-01.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Brandy Belmas or Jennifer Skidmore, (301)713-2289.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The subject modification to Permit No. 1614, issued on February 28, 2008 (73 FR 11873), is requested under the authority of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, 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. 1614 authorizes the permit holder to collect, receive and transport 100 dead shortnose sturgeon, or parts thereof, annually. In the case of an unusual mortality event, takes may be increased from 100 up to 1,000 animals with written approval from the Director, Office of Protected Resources. Researchers are also authorized the receipt and transport of up to 50 captive bred, dead shortnose sturgeon annually from any U.S. facility authorized to hold captive sturgeon. This permit authorizes the conduct of the aforementioned research over a period of five years.

The permit holder requests authorization to increase the number of dead captive bred shortnose sturgeon received annually to 350 individuals throughout the remainder of the permit. This request stems from the probable availability of a greater number of dead captive bred shortnose sturgeon than was originally anticipated. The applicant would like to obtain these sturgeon to help meet the objectives of their current research, including reviewing research procedures and developing necropsy protocols for shortnose sturgeon.

Dated: March 19, 2008.

**P. Michael Payne,**

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

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**BILLING CODE 3510-22-S**