

Hawaiian waters, including the following endangered species: blue whale (*Balaenoptera musculus*), fin whale (*B. physalus*), humpback whale (*Megaptera novaeangliae*), sei whale (*B. borealis*), and sperm whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*), had been submitted by the Hawaii Marine Mammal Consortium. In addition, on August 6, 2007, notice was published in the **Federal Register** (72 FR 43626) that a request for a scientific research permit to take humpback whales in Hawaiian waters, had been submitted by Dr. Cartwright. The requested permits have been issued under the authority of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (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).

Permit No. 1127–1921 authorizes a total of 6390 annual takes, of the species listed above, by means of close approach via vessel for photo-identification, behavioral observation, acoustic recording, underwater photography and video, photogrammetry, collection of sloughed skin and fecal samples, and incidental harassment. Up to 860 takes, of the total authorized, are allocated for biopsy sampling. With the exception of humpback whales, all age/sex classes, except calves less than one year and associated mothers, may be biopsy sampled. No humpback whale calves less than 6 months of age would be biopsy sampled. The objectives of this research are to study the status, numbers, distribution, and life histories of several cetacean species found in Hawaiian waters.

Permit No. 10018 authorizes up to 540 annual takes of humpback whales (420 juveniles/adults; 120 calves) by means of close approach via vessel for photo-identification, focal follows, underwater observations, collection of sloughed skin, and incidental harassment. Incidental harassment of bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*), spinner dolphins (*Stenella longirostris*), pantropical spotted dolphins (*Stenella attenuata*), false killer whales (*Pseudorca crassidens*), and short-finned pilot whales (*Globicephala macrorhynchus*) is also authorized. The purpose of this research is to test the hypotheses that behavior, dynamics, and distribution of female/calf pairs varies between different stocks and may be influenced by abiotic factors such as

aspects of bathymetry, water quality, and levels of vessel traffic.

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), an environmental assessment was prepared analyzing the effects of the permitted activities. After a Finding of No Significant Impact, the determination was made that it was not necessary to prepare an environmental impact statement.

Issuance of these permits, as required by the ESA, was based on a finding that such permits: (1) were applied for in good faith; (2) will not operate to the disadvantage of such endangered species; and (3) are consistent with the purposes and policies set forth in section 2 of the ESA.

Dated: June 19, 2008.

**P. Michael Payne,**

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

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

**RIN 0648–XI60**

#### 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's (Council) Groundfish Oversight Committee will meet to consider actions affecting New England fisheries in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ).

**DATES:** The meeting will be held on Thursday, July 17, 2008 at 9 a.m.

**ADDRESSES:** *Meeting address:* The meeting will be held at the Holiday Inn, One Newbury Street, Route 1, Peabody, MA 01960.

*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 items of discussion in the committee's agenda are as follows:

1. The Groundfish Oversight Committee will continue to develop

Amendment 16 to the Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan. Amendment 16 will adjust management measures as necessary to continue rebuilding of overfished groundfish stocks. The Committee will discuss measures for both the commercial and recreational components of the fishery at this meeting. The Committee will address questions raised by the Council concerning Committee proposals to develop specific allocations of six groundfish stocks to the recreational and commercial components of the fishery. The Committee will also discuss the implications of a recent Council proposal for managing Annual Catch Limits (ACLs) on these allocations. Other recreational issues that may be addressed include rationale for basing the allocation on different time periods, monitoring of recreational ACLs, and Accountability Measures (AMs) for the recreational fishery. The Committee will discuss several issues related to the commercial component of the fishery. These include monitoring requirements and a review of accountability measures for the commercial fishery. The Committee may also further discuss an effort control option raised at the June 2, 2008 Committee meeting an option that is based on a twenty-four hour clock and trip limits.

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 identified in this notice 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 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 (see **ADDRESSES**) at least 5 days prior to the meeting date.

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

Dated: June 19, 2008.

**Tracey L. Thompson,**

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

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