

acoustic trauma as recommended by the SRG. A new report was added this year for the Western North Atlantic stock of rough-toothed dolphins, which is a non-strategic stock.

Extensive revision was made to the report on the Atlantic coastal stocks of bottlenose dolphins. The revisions incorporate new information on structure and migratory pattern, which indicate a second (southern) migratory stock that inhabits waters off the coast of NC and VA in summer and migrates to areas off the coasts of SC to northern FL during winter. The revised report excludes dolphins inhabiting bays, sounds, and estuaries from the coasts and does not contain stock-specific mortality estimates. A separate report for the bay, sound, estuary stocks and stock-specific mortality estimates are expected to appear in revisions for 2009.

Pacific Reports

Revisions for 2008 include 27 Pacific marine mammal stocks under NMFS jurisdiction, including nine "strategic" stocks and 18 "non-strategic" stocks (see summary table). Thirty-seven reports were not revised. New abundance estimates are available for 20 stocks, including five endangered species of large whales, the Hawaiian monk seal, and southern resident killer whales.

False killer whales in the Hawaii Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) have been divided into two separate stocks based upon recent sighting and genetic data indicating that false killer whales within 25–75 nmi of the main Hawaiian Islands are demographically independent of false killer whales further offshore. Accordingly, the 2008 draft SAR recognizes Hawaii pelagic and Hawaii insular stocks within the Hawaii EEZ. As included since the 2007 final SAR, there is a third stock of false killer whales found in the EEZ surrounding Palmyra Atoll. The Hawaii pelagic stock is a strategic stock, and the other two stocks are non-strategic.

The status of one U.S. west coast cetacean stock ('California long-beaked common dolphin') has changed from "strategic" to "non-strategic", based on new estimates of abundance, a revised PBR, and updates of incidental fishery mortality levels. A SAR for the Eastern Tropical Pacific stock of Bryde's whale will no longer be prepared, as recommended by the Pacific SRG, because whales of this stock rarely enter U.S. waters; however, the SAR for the Hawaiian stock of Bryde's whales will be retained in the 2008 and subsequent reports.

Dated: July 8, 2008.

Helen M. Golde,

Deputy Director, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.
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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[Docket No. 080612761-8762-01]

Draft of the Education Strategic Plan for NOAA: Engaging Educators, Students and the Public To Meet NOAA's Mission Goals

AGENCY: Education Council, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of availability and request for public comment.

SUMMARY: The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is revising its Education Strategic Plan (Plan). NOAA recently received broad legislative authority from Congress through the America COMPETES Act to develop, support, promote, and coordinate education activities to enhance public awareness and understanding of the ocean, coastal, Great Lakes, and atmospheric science. The draft Plan establishes goals for NOAA education for the next twenty years as specified by the America COMPETES Act. NOAA encourages all stakeholders and users to review the Plan and provide comments.

DATES: Comments on this draft Plan must be received by 5 p.m. EDT on August 29, 2008.

ADDRESSES: The draft Plan will be available on the following Web site http://www.oesd.noaa.gov/draft_ed_plan.html.

Comments should be submitted electronically by e-mailing to Education.Plan@noaa.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Steve Storck, Education Analyst, NOAA Office of Education, Phone: 202-482-2226, e-mail: Steve.Storck@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Throughout its two-hundred year history, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has imparted scientific knowledge of the Earth's natural systems to benefit society. During this time, education was guided by the vision of leadership, the findings of researchers, the mandates of legislation for programs within NOAA, and to respond to the needs of society.

In 2007, Congress officially recognized the role of education in NOAA with the passage of the *America COMPETES Act* (Pub. L. 110-69). This legislation mandates NOAA to "conduct, develop, support, promote, and coordinate formal and informal educational activities at all levels to enhance public awareness and understanding of ocean, coastal, Great Lakes, and atmospheric science and stewardship by the general public and other coastal stakeholders, including underrepresented groups in ocean and atmospheric science and policy careers. In conducting those activities, the Administrator shall build upon the educational programs and activities of the agency.

The Administrator, appropriate National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration programs, ocean atmospheric science and education experts, and interested members of the public shall develop a science education plan setting forth education goals and strategies for the Administration, as well as programmatic actions to carry out such goals and priorities over the next 20 years, and evaluate and update such plan every 5 years."

In support of these priorities, the legislation provides a mandate for the entire NOAA community to advance education efforts, focus them, coordinate them, and engage a broad community of partners in creating an environmentally literate society and a skilled workforce of scientists, managers and administrators in support of a sustainable economic future.

NOAA is revising its Education Strategic Plan as specified in the America COMPETES Act.

The Plan was developed through a collaborative effort led by educators across NOAA to guide the implementation of this new mandate and to advance the long standing educational mission of the agency.

NOAA welcomes all comments on the content of the draft Plan and requests comments on any inconsistencies perceived within the Plan, and possible omissions of important topics or issues. This draft Plan is being issued for comment only and is not intended for interim use. For any shortcoming noted within the draft Plan, please propose specific remedies. Suggested changes will be incorporated where appropriate, and a final Plan will be posted on the NOAA Web site.

Please follow the format guidance for preparing and submitting comments. Using the format guidance will facilitate the processing of comments and assure that all comments are appropriately considered.

Overview comments should be provided first and should be numbered. Comments that are specific to particular pages, paragraphs or lines of the section should identify the page and line numbers to which they apply. Please number each page of your comments.

Dated: July 8, 2008.

Louisa Koch,

Director of Education, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-AW83

Atlantic Highly Migratory Species (HMS); Caribbean Management Measures

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

ACTION: Notice of availability; notice of public scoping meetings.

SUMMARY: NMFS previously published, on May 27, 2008, a notice of intent (NOI) to initiate an amendment to the 2006 Consolidated Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Fishery Management Plan (FMP), including preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement. NMFS now announces the availability of an issues and options document describing potential measures for inclusion in the proposed Amendment 4 to the Consolidated HMS FMP and provides details for five scoping meetings to discuss and collect comments on the issues described in the issues and options document. Comments received by NMFS on the NOI and issues and options document as well as in the scoping meetings will be used in the development of Amendment 4 to the Consolidated HMS FMP.

DATES: Scoping meetings for Amendment 4 will be held in August

and September 2008. See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** for meeting dates, times, and locations. Written comments regarding the issues and options document and the May 27, 2008 (73 FR 30381), NOI must be received by October 31, 2008.

ADDRESSES: Scoping meetings will be held in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI). See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** for dates, times, and locations. The issues and options document is available on the HMS website (<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/>).

Written comments should be sent to Greg Fairclough, Highly Migratory Species Management Division, by any of the following methods:

- E-mail:

noi.hms.caribbean@noaa.gov. Include the following identifier in the subject line: "NOI HMS Caribbean."

- Written: 263 13th Avenue South, Saint Petersburg, FL 33701. Please mark the outside of the envelope "Scoping Comments on Amendment 4 to the Consolidated HMS FMP."

- Fax: (727) 824-5398.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Greg Fairclough at (727) 824-5399.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Atlantic shark fisheries are managed under the authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act), and the Atlantic tuna, swordfish, and billfish fisheries are managed under the Magnuson-Stevens Act and the Atlantic Tunas Convention Act (ATCA). Management of these species is described in the 2006 Consolidated HMS FMP, which is implemented by regulations at 50 CFR part 635. Copies of the Consolidated HMS FMP are available from NMFS on request (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**).

On May 27, 2008 (73 FR 30381), NMFS published an NOI that summarized its rationale for considering modifications to the current HMS permitting and reporting regime in the U.S. Caribbean. As such, NMFS is taking steps to amend current HMS management measures via an FMP

amendment. The comment period for the NOI ends on October 31, 2008.

Request for Comments

Five scoping meetings will be held in Puerto Rico and the USVI (see Table 1 for meeting dates, times, and locations) to provide the opportunity for public comment on potential management measures. These comments will be used to assist in the development of the upcoming amendment to the Consolidated HMS FMP. Specifically, NMFS requests comments on the following issues and options: creating a small commercial vessel Caribbean HMS permit (valid for sharks, tunas, and swordfish); combining commercial Caribbean vessel and dealer permits (allowing vessels to sell/retail catch); modifying authorized gears [authorizing buoy gear in the Caribbean bigeye, albacore, yellowfin, and skipjack (BAYS) tuna fishery and allowing the presence of fish traps onboard a fishing vessel when retaining HMS]; and developing methods to improve reporting and data collection. NMFS also requests comments on any other fishery management issue pertaining to Caribbean HMS fisheries that the public believes should be further examined by NMFS.

Comments received on this action will assist NMFS in determining the scope of the EIS and the options for rulemaking to conserve and manage HMS resources and fisheries, consistent with the Magnuson-Stevens Act, ATCA, and the Consolidated HMS FMP.

NMFS also will present an issues and options presentation to the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, South Atlantic, Mid-Atlantic, and New England Fishery Management Councils. Please see the Councils' meeting notices for the times and locations of their summer meetings (see <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov> for Council links). Finally, NMFS also expects to present an issues and options presentation at the fall 2008 HMS Advisory Panel (AP) meeting. The date and location of the HMS AP meeting will be announced in a future **Federal Register** notice.

TABLE 1. DATES, TIMES AND LOCATIONS OF THE SCOPING MEETINGS

Date	Time	Meeting Locations	Address
August 14, 2008	5:30 pm – 7:30 pm	St. Thomas, VI	USVI Department of Planning and Natural Resources, Cyril E. King Airport, Terminal Building, 2 nd Floor, St. Thomas, VI 00802
September 8, 2008	3 pm – 5 pm	San Juan, PR	Biblioteca Carnegie, Ave. Ponce de León #7, San Juan, PR 00901-2010