

ACTION: Notice; receipt of application for modification

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that Dr. Boyd Kynard, S.O. Conte Anadromous Fish Research Center (USGS-BRD), Box 796, One Migratory Way, Turners Falls, MA 01376, has requested a modification to scientific research Permit No. 1549.

DATES: Written, telefaxed, or e-mail comments must be received on or before September 3, 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)427-2521; and Northeast Region, NMFS, One Blackburn Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930-2298; phone (978)281-9300; fax (978)281-9394.

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)427-2521, 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. 1549.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Malcolm Mohead or Kate Swails, (301)713-2289.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The subject modification to Permit No. 1549, issued on February 1, 2007 (72 FR 5680), 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. 1549 currently authorizes the permit holder to determine up and downstream migrations, habitat use, spawning periodicity, seasonal movements, and growth of shortnose sturgeon in the Connecticut River (from

Agawan to Montague, MA), and in the Merrimack River (at Haverhill, MA), and in the Androscoggin River (ME). In addition, Dr. Kynard is authorized to take a total of 1,000 fertilized eggs annually from each of the following rivers: Kennebec River and Androscoggin River (ME); Merrimack River (MA); Hudson River (NY); Delaware River (DE); Potomac River (MD); and Santee-Cooper River (SC).

The permit holder is now requesting to conduct new research in the Merrimack River authorizing him: (1) to take 200 adult/large juvenile and 100 small juvenile (0-3 years) shortnose sturgeon; (2) to use trawls for capture of smaller juveniles; (3) to telemetry tag 15 adults/large juveniles and 15 early juveniles; (4) to change the action area to include the Estuary to I-495 at Haverhill, Massachusetts; and (5) to increase incidental mortality of shortnose sturgeon to a total of three fish. The purpose of the proposed modification is to provide a mark/recapture population estimate for the river and to provide evidence for recolonization verses recruitment to explain an apparent recent increase in abundance of shortnose sturgeon found in the river. This modification would be valid through the expiration date of the original permit, January 31, 2012.

Dated: July 28, 2008.

P. Michael Payne,

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

[FR Doc. E8-17818 Filed 8-1-08; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XJ45

New England Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

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

ACTION: Notice of a public meeting.

SUMMARY: The New England Fishery Management Council (Council) is scheduling a public meeting of its Skate Committee in August, 2008 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: This meeting will be held on Monday, August 25, 2008, at 9 a.m.

ADDRESSES: This meeting will be held at the Holiday Inn, One Newbury Street, Peabody, MA 01960; telephone: (978) 535-4600; fax: (978) 535-8238.

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 Committee will review and finalize the Draft Amendment 3 document, which is scheduled for public hearings in October. The Plan Development Team (PDT) will also recommend a rebuilding schedule and plan for smooth skate that NMFS recently determined has become overfished. Amendment 3 proposes catch limits, time/area closures, and possession limits to reduce skate landings and mortality to levels that are consistent with rebuilding smooth, thorny and winter skate biomass while preventing overfishing.

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: July 29, 2008.

Tracey L. Thompson,

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

[FR Doc. E8-17734 Filed 8-1-08; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-S

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XJ46

New England Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and

Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of a public meeting.

SUMMARY: The New England Fishery Management Council (Council) is scheduling a public meeting of its Scallop Advisory Panel, in August, 2008, 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: This meeting will be held on Wednesday, August 20, 2008, at 8:30 a.m.

ADDRESSES: This meeting will be held at the Radisson Airport Hotel, 2081 Post Road, Warwick, RI 02886; telephone: (401) 739-3000; fax: (401) 732-9309.

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 committee will review public scoping comments on Amendment 15 and provide initial input on a range of alternatives developed by the Scallop Committee to date. The scoping issues included: implementation of annual catch limits (ACLs); measures to rationalize the limited access scallop fishery; revision of the overfishing definition; modifications to specific aspects of the general category limited entry program implemented by Amendment 11; measures to address essential fish habitat (EFH) closed areas in the Scallop Fishery Management Plan (FMP) if the EFH Omnibus Amendment is delayed; alternatives to improve the research set-aside program; and modifying the start date of the scallop fishing year. Other issues may also be discussed based on input from scoping hearings and a previous Scallop Committee meeting on July 8, 2008. The committee will also review Scallop Plan Development Team (PDT) discussion of Section 7 Endangered Species Act Consultation for the Scallop FMP (Biological Opinion). Overall, the biological opinion concluded that the scallop fishery may adversely affect, but is not likely to jeopardize, continued existence of four sea turtle species. Thus, NMFS is required to identify and implement reasonable and prudent measures (RPMs) necessary to minimize impacts of any incidental take. The Advisors may review PDT recommendations for how best to comply with these measures and

provide input for the Scallop Committee to consider. The committee may discuss other topics at their discretion.

Although non-emergency issues not contained in this agenda may come before this group for discussion, in accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act), those issues may not be the subject of formal action during this meeting. Actions 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 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: July 29, 2008.

Tracey L. Thompson,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.
[FR Doc. E8-17735 Filed 8-1-08; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XJ48

Marine Mammals; File No. 605-1904

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

ACTION: Notice; receipt of application for amendment.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that the Whale Center of New England (WCNE) (Mason Weinrich, Principal Investigator), P.O. Box 159, Gloucester, MA 01930, has requested an amendment to scientific research Permit No. 605-1904.

DATES: Written, telefaxed, or e-mail comments must be received on or before September 3, 2008.

ADDRESSES: The amendment 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)427-2521;

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

Southeast Region, NMFS, 263 13th Avenue South, Saint Petersburg, Florida 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 amendment request would be appropriate.

Comments may also be submitted by facsimile at (301)427-2521, 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. 605-1904-01.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Amy Hapeman or Kristy Beard, (301)713-2289.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The subject amendment to Permit No. 605-1904, issued on February 21, 2008 (73 FR 10744) is requested 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 (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. 605-1904 authorizes the permit holder to harass humpback (*Megaptera novaengliae*), fin (*Balaenoptera physalus*), and sei (*Balaenoptera borealis*) whales along the U.S. Atlantic coast during close approaches for vessel surveys, photo-identification, tracking, and incidental harassment annually. During approaches, researchers may suction-cup tag and/or biopsy sample whales greater than six months of age. A subset of approached humpback and fin whale