

SUMMARY: NMFS is convening a meeting of the Atlantic Pelagic Longline Take Reduction Team (PLTRT). The PLTRT will discuss the proposed Atlantic Pelagic Longline Take Reduction Plan (RIN 0648-AV65) and provide updates to team members on recent research and actions.

DATES: The meeting will be held on September 8, 2008, from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m., and on September 9, 2008, from 8:30 a.m. to 5:15 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The PLTRT meeting will be held at the Pier 5 Hotel, 711 Eastern Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21202. Phone: (410) 539-2000, Fax: (410) 783-1469.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Erin Fougères: (727) 824-5312 or Kristy Long: (301) 713-2322.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Bycatch Reduction Requirements in the MMPA

Section 118(f)(1) of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) requires NMFS to develop and implement take reduction plans to assist in the recovery or prevent the depletion of each strategic marine mammal stock that interacts with Category I and II fisheries. It also provides NMFS discretion to develop and implement a take reduction plan for any other marine mammal stocks that interact with a Category I fishery, which the agency determines, after notice and opportunity for public comment, has a high level of mortality and serious injury across a number of such marine mammal stocks.

The MMPA defines a strategic stock as a marine mammal stock: (1) for which the level of direct human-caused mortality exceeds the potential biological removal (PBR) level; (2) which is declining and is likely to be listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) in the foreseeable future; or (3) which is listed as threatened or endangered under the ESA or as a depleted species under the MMPA (16 U.S.C. 1362(2)). PBR is the maximum number of animals, not including natural mortalities, that can be removed annually from a stock, while allowing that stock to reach or maintain its optimum sustainable population level. Category I or II fisheries are fisheries that, respectively, have frequent or occasional incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammals. The immediate goal of a take reduction plan for a strategic stock is to reduce, within six months of its implementation, the incidental serious injury or mortality of marine mammals from commercial fishing to levels less than PBR. The long-term goal is to reduce, within five years of its implementation, the

incidental serious injury and mortality of marine mammals from commercial fishing operations to insignificant levels approaching a zero serious injury and mortality rate, taking into account the economics of the fishery, the availability of existing technology, and existing state or regional fishery management plans. The insignificance threshold, or upper limit of annual incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammal stocks by commercial fisheries, has been defined at 50 CFR 229.2 as 10 percent of the PBR for a stock of marine mammals.

History of the PLTRT

The PLTRT was first convened on June 29, 2005 (70 FR 36120, June 22, 2005) to address the incidental serious injury and mortality of short- and long-finned pilot whales (*Globicephala macrorhynchus* and *Globicephala melas*) in the Atlantic region of the Pelagic Longline Fishery. Because the two species of pilot whales are difficult to differentiate at sea, abundance and total fishery-related mortality and serious injury cannot be estimated separately for each species. Therefore, in the U.S. Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico, these estimates are combined for both *Globicephala* species (i.e., *Globicephala spp.*). *Globicephala spp.* is then split into the western North Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico stocks. The western North Atlantic stocks of *Globicephala spp.* were identified as strategic in the 2003 Marine Mammal Stock Assessments report (SAR). However, NMFS revised the abundance estimates for pilot whales in the 2005 SAR and, just prior to convening the PLTRT, these stocks were no longer classified as strategic. More recently, the 2007 SAR also reports that the estimated average annual human-related mortality and serious injury for the last five years does not exceed PBR and the stocks remain non-strategic.

The Atlantic Pelagic Longline Fishery also incidentally seriously injures and kills Risso's dolphins (*Grampus griseus*). For Risso's dolphins and long-finned and short-finned pilot whales, estimated serious injury and mortality levels in the pelagic longline fishery exceed the insignificance threshold but do not exceed the PBR level for each stock. Because these species are below PBR and considered non-strategic stocks but interact with a Category I fishery, NMFS directed the PLTRT to develop and submit a draft Take Reduction Plan to the agency within 11 months. In accordance with the long-term goal of MMPA section 118, this draft Take Reduction Plan would focus on reducing incidental mortalities and

serious injuries of pilot whales and Risso's dolphins to a level approaching a zero mortality and serious injury rate within five years of implementation of the plan.

As required under section 118 (f)(8) of the MMPA, the PLTRT developed a draft Take Reduction Plan (TRP) by consensus, and submitted this draft to NMFS. NMFS then published the TRP and implementing regulations proposed by the team in the **Federal Register** on June 24, 2008 (73 FR 35623) for a public comment period of 90 days, ending on September 22, 2008. NMFS is convening a meeting of the PLTRT during the public comment period, which will be facilitated by Scott McCreary and Bennett Brooks, CONCUR, Inc., Berkeley, California. This meeting will occur September 8-9, 2008 in Baltimore, MD (see **DATES** and **ADDRESSES**). Take Reduction Teams are not subject to the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.). Meetings are open to the public.

Dated: August 27, 2008.

Helen Golde,

Deputy Director, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.
[FR Doc. E8-20419 Filed 9-2-08; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XJ92

Permanent Advisory Committee to the U.S. National Section to the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC); Meeting Announcement

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

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces a meeting of the Permanent Advisory Committee to the U.S. National Section to the WCPFC from 17-19 September, 2008, in Honolulu, Hawaii. Meeting topics are provided under the SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION section of this notice.

DATES: The meeting of the Permanent Advisory Committee will be held on September 17-19, 2008, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (or until business is concluded), Hawaii Standard Time.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Hilton Hawaiian Village in the Sea Pearl Meeting Room, 2005 Kalia Road, Honolulu, HI 96814.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Rhea Moss at 808-944-2161 (voice) or 808-973-2941 (fax).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In accordance with the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Convention Implementation Act, the Secretary of Commerce has appointed 20 members to the WCPFC Permanent Advisory Committee. Four additional members are mandated by the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Convention Implementation Act, who are (1) the chair of the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council's Advisory Committee or the chair's designee; and (2) officials of the fisheries management authorities of American Samoa, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands (or their designees). The Committee is established to support the work of the U.S. National Section to the WCPFC in an advisory capacity with respect to U.S. participation in the WCPFC. NMFS, Pacific Islands Region, provides administrative and technical support to the Committee.

As this is the first meeting of the Permanent Advisory Committee, it will set its agenda and consider its organization, prescribe its practices and procedures, as well as elect a chairperson.

The Permanent Advisory Committee will also receive information on: (1) 2006 and 2007 WCPFC activities; (2) status of the stocks and fisheries in 2006 and 2007; (3) issues related to the development of conservation and management measures for bigeye and yellowfin tuna and other species for 2008 and beyond; (4) implementation of the WCPFC's Regional Observer Programme and Vessel Monitoring System and other compliance mechanisms; (5) issues related to the impacts of fishing on non-target, associated and dependent species, such as sea turtles, seabirds and sharks; and (6) other issues, as necessary.

Special Accommodations

The meeting location is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Rhea Moss, NMFS, 808-944-2161(voice) or 808-973-2941 (fax), at least 7 days prior to the meeting date.

Authority: P.L. 109-479, Sec. 501, *et seq.*

Dated: August 28, 2008.

Emily H. Menashes,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.
[FR Doc. E8-20407 Filed 8-28-08; 4:15 pm]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Science Advisory Board

AGENCY: Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce (DOC).

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: This notice sets forth the schedule and proposed agenda of a forthcoming meeting of the NOAA Science Advisory Board. The members will discuss and provide advice on issues outlined in the agenda below.

DATES: The meeting is scheduled for: September 10, 2008 from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time.

ADDRESSES: Conference call. Public access is available at SSMC 3, Room # 12836, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Cynthia Decker, Executive Director, Science Advisory Board, NOAA, Rm. 11230, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910. (Phone: 301-734-1156, Fax: 301-713-1459, *E-mail:* Cynthia.Decker@noaa.gov).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Science Advisory Board (SAB) was established by a Decision Memorandum dated September 25, 1997, and is the only Federal Advisory Committee with responsibility to advise the Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere on strategies for research, education, and application of science to operations and information services. SAB activities and advice provide necessary input to ensure that National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) science programs are of the highest quality and provide optimal support to resource management.

Matters to be Considered: The agenda for the meeting is as follows:

Date and Time: September 10, 2008 from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. ET.

Agenda

1. Discussion and consideration of the Draft Report on the Review of the NOAA Climate Research and Modeling Program, submitted to the SAB by the Climate Working Group.

2. SAB Strategic Planning—for future meetings and for the upcoming Administration transition.

3. Discussion and consideration of the way forward for the SAB on Oceans and Human Health.

Dated: August 27, 2008.

Mark E. Brown,

Chief Financial Officer, Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XK05

Schedules for Atlantic Shark Identification Workshops and Protected Species Safe Handling, Release, and Identification Workshops

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

ACTION: Notice of public workshops.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces free Atlantic Shark Identification Workshops and Protected Species Safe Handling, Release, and Identification Workshops to be held in October, November, and December 2008. Certain fishermen and shark dealers are required to attend a workshop to meet new regulatory requirements and maintain valid permits. Specifically, the Atlantic Shark Identification Workshop is mandatory for all federally permitted Atlantic shark dealers. Also, the Protected Species Safe Handling, Release, and Identification Workshop is mandatory for vessel owners and operators who use bottom longline, pelagic longline, or gillnet gear, and have also been issued shark or swordfish limited access permits. Additional free workshops will be held in 2009 and announced in the **Federal Register**.

DATES: The Atlantic Shark Identification Workshops will be held October 9, November 6, and December 4, 2008.

The Protected Species Safe Handling, Release, and Identification Workshops will be held October 14, November 19 and 25, and December 17, 2008.

See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** for further details.

ADDRESSES: The Atlantic Shark Identification Workshops will be held in Norfolk, VA; Dania Beach, FL; and Panama City, FL.

The Protected Species Safe Handling, Release, and Identification Workshops will be held in Kenner, LA; Kitty Hawk, NC; Indian Rocks Beach, FL; and Dedham, MA.

See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** for further details on workshop locations.