

File No. 13599: The NOS Lab has been issued a permit authorizing the receipt, importation, exportation, transfer, archive, and analysis of marine mammal and endangered species parts. This permit includes all cetaceans, pinnipeds (except for walrus), sea turtles (in the water), smalltooth sawfish (*Pristis pectinata*), shortnose sturgeon (*Acipenser brevirostrum*) and white abalone (*Haliotis sorenseni*) under NMFS jurisdiction. No live animal takes or incidental harassment of animals would be authorized under this permit. Samples will be archived at the NOS Lab and used to support law enforcement actions, research studies (primarily genetics), and outreach education. This permit is valid for five years.

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), a final determination has been made that the activities proposed are categorically excluded from the requirement to prepare an environmental assessment or 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: December 16, 2008.

P. Michael Payne,

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

[FR Doc. E8-30369 Filed 12-22-08; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN: 0648-XM34

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 Committee, in January, 2009, 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 Thursday, January 22, 2009 at 9 a.m.

ADDRESSES: This meeting will be held at the Crowne Plaza, 801 Greenwich Avenue, Warwick, RI 02886; telephone: (401) 732-6000; fax: (401) 732-0261

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 make final recommendations to the Council on the range of alternatives that should be analyzed under Scallop Amendment 15. The primary goal of Amendment 15 is to consider alternatives to comply with new requirements of the reauthorized Magnuson-Stevens Conservation and Management Act, specifically implementing annual catch limits. In addition, this action is considering alternatives to address excess capacity in the limited access scallop fishery. Alternatives are being considered that are designed to provide more flexibility for efficient use of the resource such as permit stacking and leasing of days at sea and/or access area trips. Lastly, this action is considering a number of alternatives to adjust several aspects of the overall scallop management program such as revising the overfishing definition, specific adjustments to the general category management program, a specific alternative to address essential fish habitat (EFH) closures on Georges Bank, adjustments to the current scallop research set-aside program, and changing the scallop fishing year from March 1 to May 1.

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: December 17, 2008.

Tracey L. Thompson,

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

[FR Doc. E8-30362 Filed 12-22-08; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XL41

Marine Mammals; File No. 10080

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

ACTION: Notice; issuance of permit amendment.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that Dr. Kathryn A. Ono, Department of Biological Sciences, University of New England, Biddeford, ME has been issued a major amendment to Permit No. 10080-02.

ADDRESSES: The permit amendment and related documents are available for review upon written request or by appointment in the following office(s): 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, 55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930; phone (978)281-9300; fax (978) 281-9333.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Tammy Adams or Kate Swails, (301)713-2289.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On October 27, 2008, notice was published in the **Federal Register** (73 FR 63697) that a request for an amendment Permit No. 10080-02, to conduct research on gray seals (*Halichoerus grypus*) in the Gulf of Maine, had been submitted by the above-named applicant. The requested permit amendment has been issued under the authority of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*), and the regulations governing the taking and importing of marine mammals (50 CFR part 216).

The amended permit includes authorization to: (1) remotely mark the pelage of adult gray seals of both sexes (200 per year) using the various dyes and paints already permitted for use on pups; (2) use an additional type of marking agent, an alcohol based-dye (Rhodamine B 500%), on pups and adults; (3) disturb an additional 400 non-target gray seals per year during the additional marking activities; and (4) disturb an additional 300 gray seals annually during field camp operations associated with conduct of the research. The amendment also authorizes the incidental research-related mortality of up to four gray seal pups annually.