

musculus), fin whale (*B. physalus*), humpback whale (*Megaptera novaeangliae*), right whale (*Eubalaena japonica*), sei whale (*B. borealis*), beluga whale (*Delphinapterus leucas*) Cook Inlet stock, killer whale (*Orcinus orca*) southern resident stock, and sperm whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*). The false killer whale (*Pseudorca crassidens*) Hawaiian insular stock is proposed for listing under the ESA. Seven species of pinnipeds may be incidentally harassed from research activities, including three species listed as endangered: Steller sea lions (*Eumetopias jubatus*), Guadalupe fur seals (*Arctocephalus townsendi*), and Hawaiian monk seals (*Monachus schauinslandi*). The purposes of the proposed research are to study: (1) Population size and structure, (2) range and movement patterns, (3) diving and night-time behavior, (4) social organization, (5) feeding ecology, and (6) disease monitoring. Harassment of all species of cetaceans may occur through vessel approach for sighting surveys, photographic identification, behavioral research, opportunistic sampling (breath, sloughed skin, fecal material, and prey remains), and aerial over-flights for the purpose of locating animals and conducting aerial validation studies. All cetaceans species (except harbor porpoise, right whales, and Cook Inlet beluga whales) and unidentified mesoplodon and baleen species would be dart and/or suction-cup tagged. Import and export of marine mammal prey specimens, sloughed skin, fecal and breath samples obtained is requested for research purposes. Research would occur over a five-year period.

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), a draft environmental assessment (EA) has been prepared to examine whether significant environmental impacts could result from issuance of the proposed scientific research permit. The draft EA is available for review and comment simultaneous with the scientific research permit application.

Concurrent with the publication of this notice in the **Federal Register**, NMFS is forwarding copies of the application to the Marine Mammal Commission and its Committee of Scientific Advisors.

Documents may be reviewed in the following locations:

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;

Northwest Region, NMFS, 7600 Sand Point Way NE, BIN C15700, Bldg. 1, Seattle, WA 98115-0700; phone (206) 526-6150; fax (206) 526-6426;

Alaska Region, NMFS, P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802-1668; phone (907) 586-7221; fax (907) 586-7249;

Southwest Region, NMFS, 501 West Ocean Blvd., Suite 4200, Long Beach, CA 90802-4213; phone (562) 980-4001; fax (562) 980-4018; and

Pacific Islands Region, NMFS, 1601 Kapiolani Blvd., Rm 1110, Honolulu, HI 96814-4700; phone (808) 973-2935; fax (808) 973-2941.

Dated: February 18, 2011.

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-XA248

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 Research Steering Committee (Committee), in March, 2011, 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: The meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 16, 2011 at 9:30 a.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Crowne Plaza, 50 Ferncroft Road, Danvers, MA 01923; *telephone:* (978) 777-2500; *fax:* (978) 750-7959.

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 all funded cooperative research projects in the Northeast over the last several years, including those approved through

NOAA Fisheries, the Council's research set-aside programs, and both the Northeast Consortium and the Southern New England Research Collaborative Initiative. Information about project topic, level of funding and results will be organized in a format that will allow a clearer understanding of regional accomplishments and information gaps. The Research Steering Committee will have the opportunity to make recommendations about how to make the information collected more relevant to management, how to use research results more effectively, and also to comment on future research priorities.

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: February 22, 2011.

Tracey L. Thompson,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XA249

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council; Public Meetings

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

ACTION: Notice of a public meeting.

SUMMARY: The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) will convene its Law Enforcement Advisory Panel in conjunction with the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission's Law Enforcement Committee.