

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

RIN 0648-XS00

Endangered and Threatened Species; Recovery Plans; Recovery Plan for the Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce; Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability.

SUMMARY: We, NMFS and USFWS, announce the availability of the Bi-National Recovery Plan (Recovery Plan) for the Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle (*Lepidochelys kempii*). The Recovery Plan is a bi-national plan developed by the NMFS and USFWS and the Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources, Mexico. The revised Recovery Plan includes specific recovery objectives and criteria to be met in order to down and delist this species under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended.

ADDRESSES: The Bi-National Recovery Plan for the Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle (*Lepidochelys kempii*) is available on the Internet at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/recovery/plans.htm> or <http://www.fws.gov/kempstridley/>. Copies also may be obtained by contacting NMFS Office of Protected Resources 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13535, Silver Spring, MD 20910 or USFWS 6300 Ocean Drive, Unit 5837, Corpus Christi, TX 78412.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Therese Conant (ph. 301-427-8456, fax 301-713-0376) or Tom Shearer (ph. 361-994-9005, fax 361-994-8626).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**Availability of the Recovery Plan**

Interested persons may obtain the Recovery Plan for review on the Internet at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/recovery/plans.htm> or <http://www.fws.gov/kempstridley/> or by contacting Therese Conant or Tom Shearer [see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT.**]

Background

The Endangered Species Act of 1973 (15 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) requires that NMFS and USFWS develop and implement recovery plans for the conservation and survival of threatened and endangered species under their jurisdiction, unless it is determined that such plans would not promote the

conservation of the species. This Recovery Plan discusses the natural history, current status, and the known and potential threats to the Kemp's ridley. The Recovery Plan lays out a recovery strategy to address the potential threats based on the best available science and includes recovery goals and criteria. The Recovery Plan is not a regulatory action, but presents guidance for use by agencies and interested parties to assist in the recovery of Kemp's ridley turtles. The Recovery Plan identifies substantive actions needed to achieve recovery by addressing the threats to the species. Recovery of Kemp's ridleys has and will continue to be a long-term effort between the U.S. and Mexico and will require cooperation and coordination of Federal, state, local government agencies and nongovernment organizations.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*

Dated: September 14, 2011.

Angela Somma,

Chief, Endangered Species Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

RIN 0648-XA717

Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for the Establishment of Annual Quotas for the Subsistence Harvest of Bowhead Whales by Alaska Natives

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

ACTION: Notice of intent; announcement of public scoping period; request for written comments.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces its intent to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), in order to assess the impacts of issuing annual quotas for the subsistence harvest of bowhead whales by Alaska Natives from 2013 through 2017. Publication of this document begins the official scoping period that will help identify issues and alternatives to be considered in the EIS. The scoping process will end October 31, 2011.

ADDRESSES: To request inclusion on a mailing list of persons interested in the EIS, please contact Steve Davis, NMFS, 222 W 7th Avenue, Box 43, Anchorage, AK 99513. Comments on this action and the scoping process for this action must be submitted by one of the following methods to ensure that the comments are received, documented, and considered by NMFS. Comments sent by any other method, to any other address or individual, or received after the end of the comment period, may not be considered. Any comments on this document must be identified by [NOAA-NMFS-2011-0225]. All comments received are a part of the public record and will generally be posted for public viewing on <http://www.regulations.gov> without change. All personal identifying information (*e.g.*, name, address, *etc.*) submitted voluntarily by the sender will be publicly accessible. Do not submit confidential business information, or otherwise sensitive or protected information. NMFS will accept anonymous comments (enter "N/A" in the required fields if you wish to remain anonymous). Attachments to electronic comments will be accepted in Microsoft Word or Excel, WordPerfect, or Adobe PDF file formats only.

- *Mail:* P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802-1668.

- *Hand Delivery to the Federal Building:* 709 West 9th Street, Room 420A, Juneau, AK.

- *Fax:* 907-586-7557.

- *Electronic Submission:* Submit all electronic public comments via the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal <http://www.regulations.gov>. To submit comments via the e-Rulemaking Portal, first click the "submit a comment" icon, then enter [NOAA-NMFS-2011-0225] in the keyword search. Locate the document you wish to comment on from the resulting list and click on the "Submit a Comment" icon on the right of that line. Include in the subject line the following document identifier: Bowhead Whale Quota EIS.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Steve Davis or Brad Smith, NMFS Alaska Region, Anchorage Field Office, (907) 271-5006.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NMFS is initiating this EIS process in order to comprehensively assess impacts of the subsistence harvest of Western Arctic bowhead whales by Alaska Natives from 2013 through 2017.

Background

Eskimos have hunted bowhead whales for over 2,000 years as the whales migrate in the spring and fall