

release of threatened and endangered marine mammals under NMFS jurisdiction (Cetacea and Pinnipedia [excluding walrus]), and disentanglement of all marine mammals under NMFS jurisdiction, pursuant to sections 109(h), 112(c), and Title IV of the MMPA; and, carry out such activities as enhancement pursuant to section 10(a)(1)(A) of the ESA; (2) Conduct health-related, bona fide scientific research studies on marine mammals and marine mammal parts under NMFS jurisdiction pursuant to sections 104(c) and Title IV of the MMPA and section 10(a)(1)(A) of the ESA, including research related to emergency response that may involve compromised animals, and research on healthy animals that have not been subject to emergency response (*e.g.*, baseline health studies); (3) Conduct Level B harassment on all marine mammal species under NMFS jurisdiction incidental to MMHSRP activities in the U.S.; and (4) Collect, salvage, receive, possess, transfer, import, export, analyze, and curate marine mammal specimens under NMFS jurisdiction for purposes delineated in numbers (1) and (2) above.

Procedures proposed to carry out the activities include but are not limited to: Close approach via ground, vessel, and aerial surveys (manned and unmanned); hazing and attractants; capture, restraint, and handling; administration of drugs including anesthesia, medical treatments, vaccinations; attachment of scientific instruments; marking (temporary and permanent including freeze- and hot-branding); disentanglement and de-hooking; rehabilitation, transport, and release; biological sampling and analyses; auditory brainstem response/auditory evoked potential; active acoustic playbacks; unintentional mortality and euthanasia; and import and export activities. The permit is requested for a 5-year period.

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA; 42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), an initial determination has been made that the majority of activities proposed are consistent with the Preferred Alternative in the 2009 Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) for the Marine Mammal Health and Stranding Response Program. Also, a draft environmental assessment (EA) has been prepared in compliance with NEPA to examine whether significant environmental impacts could result from permitting new activities (hot branding, UAS, and vaccinations), which were not considered in the Final

PEIS. The draft EA is available for review and comment simultaneously with the 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.

Dated: April 28, 2015.

Julia Harrison,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

New England Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

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

ACTION: Notice; public meeting.

SUMMARY: The New England Fishery Management Council (Council) is scheduling a public meeting of its Scientific & Statistical Committee 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, May 20, 2015 at 9 a.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Four Points by Sheraton, 407 Squire Road, Revere, MA 02151; telephone: (781) 284-7200; fax: (781) 289-3176.

Council address: New England Fishery Management Council, 50 Water Street, Mill 2, Newburyport, MA 01950.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Thomas A. Nies, Executive Director, New England Fishery Management Council; telephone: (978) 465-0492.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Agenda Items

The Committee will review the results of the recent operational stock assessment for Atlantic herring and develop recommendations for acceptable biological catch (ABC) for the 2016-18 fishing years, as well as other related recommendations. The Committee may not develop all of the recommendations for this stock at one meeting.

They will review/discuss progress of Ecosystem-Based Fisheries Management (EBFM) Plan Development Team (PDT) towards developing ecological guidance for the Council to consider when developing alternatives for the Atlantic herring ABC control rule in Amendment 8 to the Herring FMP. The committee may review and add to the comments it provided the Council on the proposed revisions to the Magnuson-Stevens Act National Standard Guidelines 1, 3, 5 and 7. They will address other business as necessary.

Although non-emergency issues not contained in this agenda may come before these groups 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 Thomas A. Nies, Executive Director, at (978) 465-0492, at least 5 days prior to the meeting date.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: April 28, 2015.

Tracey L. Thompson,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

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

ACTION: Notice; public meeting.

SUMMARY: The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) will hold a meeting of its Standing and Special Reef Fish Scientific and Statistical Committees (SSC).

DATES: The meeting will convene on Wednesday, May 20, 2015, from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Astor Crowne Plaza New Orleans