

the South Atlantic Council and the WFL stock managed by the Gulf of Mexico Council. These boundary demarcations will aid in enforcing regulations and in tracking the annual catch limits (ACLs) and annual catch targets (ACTs) for each stock.

On February 17, 2015, NMFS notified the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico Councils that the FLK/EFL stock is overfished and undergoing overfishing, based on the results of the 2014 benchmark stock assessment. Within two years of such a notification, the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act) requires an FMP amendment or proposed regulations be prepared and implemented to end overfishing immediately and to rebuild the affected stock. Therefore, Amendment 37 and the associated EIS also contain rebuilding plan alternatives to increase the biomass of the FLK/EFL stock to a sustainable level within a specified time period.

Finally, for both the FLK/EFL and GA-NC stocks, Amendment 37 and the associated EIS also contain alternatives for management reference points (optimum yield and maximum sustainable yield), status determination criteria (overfishing limit and minimum stock size threshold), ACLs (including by sector), ACTs, accountability measures, and new or modified commercial and recreational minimum size limits, commercial trip limits, and recreational bag limits.

In accordance with NOAA's Administrative Order 216-6, Section 5.02(c), Scoping Process, NMFS, in collaboration with the South Atlantic Council, is conducting scoping to help identify significant environmental issues related to these proposed actions and alternatives. The public is invited to attend the scoping meeting (date and address below) and provide written comments on the actions and alternatives in the Amendment 37 scoping document. A copy of the Amendment 37 scoping document is available at http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/s_atl/sg/index.html. The preliminary actions and alternatives included in the scoping document may not represent the full range of actions and alternatives that will be considered and evaluated in Amendment 37 and the associated EIS. The South Atlantic Council will review scoping comments at their September meeting.

After the draft EIS (DEIS) associated with Amendment 37 is completed, it will be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). After filing,

the EPA will publish a notice of availability of the DEIS for public comment in the **Federal Register**. NMFS will solicit public comment on the DEIS for 45 days pursuant to regulations issued by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) for implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA; 40 CFR parts 1500-1508) and to NOAA's Administrative Order 216-6 regarding NOAA's compliance with NEPA and the CEQ regulations.

The South Atlantic Council and NMFS will consider public comments received on the DEIS in developing the final EIS (FEIS), and before the South Atlantic Council votes to submit Amendment 37 to NMFS for Secretarial review, approval, and implementation under the Magnuson-Stevens Act. NMFS will announce in the **Federal Register** the availability of the final amendment and proposed implementing regulations for public review during the Magnuson-Stevens Act Secretarial review period. The EPA will announce the availability of the FEIS for public review. NMFS will consider all public comments received during the Secretarial review period, whether they are on the final amendment, the proposed regulations, or the FEIS, prior to final agency action.

Scoping Meeting

The scoping meeting will be held via webinar on August 10, 2015. The scoping meeting will begin at 6 p.m. and will be accessible via the internet from the South Atlantic Council's Web site at www.safmc.net. Registration for the webinar is required. Registration information will be posted on the South Atlantic Council's Web site at www.safmc.net as it becomes available. Webinar registrants may test or confirm their computer setup for the webinar one hour prior to the meeting and contact Mike Collins at 843-763-1050 to address any questions regarding webinar setup.

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

Dated: July 27, 2015.

Emily H. Menashes,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.
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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XC969

Draft Guidance for Assessing the Effects of Anthropogenic Sound on Marine Mammal Hearing—Acoustic Threshold Levels for Onset of Permanent and Temporary Threshold Shifts

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

ACTION: Notice; request for comments.

SUMMARY: The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), on behalf of NMFS and the National Ocean Service (referred collectively here as the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)), announces the availability of a revised version of draft guidance for assessing the effects of anthropogenic sound on marine mammal species under NOAA's jurisdiction. The guidance provides updated received levels, or thresholds, above which individual marine mammals are predicted to experience changes in their hearing sensitivity (either temporary or permanent) for all underwater anthropogenic sound sources. NOAA solicits public comment on the revised draft guidance based on updated scientific information and comments received during the first public comment period.

DATES: Comments must be received by September 14, 2015.

ADDRESSES: The revised draft guidance is available in electronic form via the Internet at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/acoustics/>.

You may submit comments, which should be identified with NOAA-NMFS-2013-0177, by any of the following methods:

Electronic Submissions: Submit all electronic public comments via the Federal eRulemaking Portal <http://www.regulations.gov>.

Mail: Send comments to: Chief, Marine Mammal and Sea Turtle Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910-3226, Attn: Acoustic Guidance.

Instructions: All comments received are a part of the public record and will generally be posted to <http://www.regulations.gov> without change. All Personal Identifying Information (*e.g.*, name, address, etc.) voluntarily

submitted by the commenter may 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). You may submit attachments to electronic comments in Microsoft Word, Excel, WordPerfect, or Adobe PDF file formats only.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Amy Scholik-Schlomer, Office of Protected Resources, 301-427-8449, Amy.Scholik@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NOAA has developed draft guidance for assessing the effects of anthropogenic sound on the hearing of marine mammal species under NOAA's jurisdiction (*i.e.*, whales, dolphins, porpoises, seals and sea lions). Specifically, the guidance identifies the received levels, or thresholds, above which individual marine mammals are predicted to experience changes in their hearing sensitivity (either temporary or permanent) for all underwater anthropogenic sound sources. This guidance is intended to be used by NOAA analysts and managers and other relevant user groups and stakeholders, including other federal agencies, when seeking to determine whether and how their activities are expected to result in particular types of impacts to marine mammals via acoustic exposure. The document outlines NOAA's updated acoustic threshold level, describes in detail how the thresholds were developed, and explains how they will be updated in the future. NOAA published a **Federal Register** Notice on December 27, 2013, announcing the availability of the draft guidance and a 30-day public comment period (78 FR 78822), which was extended another 45 days based upon public request on January 29, 2014 (79 FR 4672). Please refer to these **Federal Register** Notices for additional background about the draft guidance.

While NOAA was in the process of evaluating and addressing public comments, the U.S. Navy updated its methodology for the development of marine mammal auditory weighting functions and acoustic threshold levels. NOAA evaluated the proposed methodology and preliminarily determined that it reflects the best available science. Accordingly, we have incorporated it into our draft guidance. NOAA also re-evaluated its methods for defining threshold usage for sources characterized as "impulsive" or "non-impulsive" based on comments received

during the initial public comment period. As a result, NOAA is now soliciting public comment, via this second public comment period, on this revised version of the draft guidance that incorporates these changes.

Updated sections can be found in the following locations: (1) A summary of the updated draft acoustic threshold levels and marine mammal auditory weighting functions is in the main body of the document, with additional details provided in Appendix A (Navy Technical Report); (2) NOAA's proposed methodology for defining threshold usage for sources characterized as "impulsive" or "non-impulsive" is in Section 2.3.1 of the main document, with additional details in Appendix C; (3) a new appendix identifying research recommendations and data gaps in response to comments submitted during the initial public comment period is Appendix D; and a new appendix providing optional alternative methodology for user groups unable to apply the guidance's more complex acoustic threshold levels and auditory weighting functions is Appendix E.

Before the guidance is finalized, NOAA will address substantive public comments received from the initial public comment period, as well as from this second public comment period. Therefore, NOAA encourages the public to currently focus comments on the revised and new sections of the document. We are particularly interested in identification of any additional datasets for inclusion in the assessment, comments on our proposed methodology for transitioning from "impulsive" to "non-impulsive" acoustic threshold levels, and evaluation of the methodology associated with updated marine mammal auditory weighting functions and acoustic thresholds.

The guidance is classified as a Highly Influential Scientific Assessment by the Office of Management and Budget. As such, independent peer review is required prior to broad public dissemination by the Federal Government. NOAA recently conducted two independent peer reviews in association with the revised draft guidance (in addition to the peer review on the first draft of the guidance). Details of both peer reviews can be found within the draft guidance and at the following Web site: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/acoustics/>.

Dated: July 27, 2015.

Perry F. Gayaldo,

Deputy Director, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Establishment of the Advisory Committee for the Sustained National Climate Assessment and Solicitation for Nominations for Membership

AGENCY: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of establishment of the Advisory Committee for the Sustained National Climate Assessment and solicitation for nominations for membership.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that the Secretary of Commerce has determined that the establishment of the Advisory Committee for the Sustained National Climate Assessment (Committee) is necessary and in the public interest. Accordingly, NOAA has chartered the Advisory Committee for the Sustained National Climate Assessment. NOAA is also soliciting nominations for membership on the Committee.

The Committee's mission is to provide advice on sustained National Climate Assessment activities and products to the Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere (Under Secretary) who will forward the advice to the Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP). The Committee's scope is—as requested by the Under Secretary—to advise on the engagement of stakeholders and on sustained assessment activities and the quadrennial National Climate Assessment report.

Points of View: Individuals are sought with expertise in communications, engagement, and education; risk management and risk assessment; economics and social sciences; technology, tools, and data systems; and other disciplines relevant to the sustained National Climate Assessment process. In addition, individuals are sought with expertise in climate change and variability, spanning the range from climate science (physical, biological, chemical) to impacts and societal responses. Individuals with experience in the private sector, academia, public sector, non-governmental organizations,