

River, in northern California, for consideration pursuant to limit 5 of the ESA 4(d) rule for salmon and steelhead.

The hatchery program that is the subject of the NMFS evaluation would operate to provide steelhead for harvest in freshwater recreational fisheries in the Mad River. The program would propagate steelhead that are derived from the local steelhead population in the Mad River, ensuring that at least half of the MRH winter-run steelhead spawning pairs are hatchery spawned natural-origin and to match natural-origin steelhead with their natural counterparts whenever possible. Measures would be applied in the hatchery program to reduce the risk of incidental adverse genetic, ecological, and demographic effects on natural-origin steelhead and salmon populations.

As specified in the July 10, 2000, ESA 4(d) rule for salmon and steelhead (65 FR 42422) and updated June 28, 2005 (70 FR 37160), NMFS may approve an HGMP if it meets criteria set forth in 50 CFR 223.203(b)(5)(i)(A) through (K). Prior to final approval of an HGMP, NMFS must publish notification announcing its availability for public review and comment.

Authority

Under section 4 of the ESA, the Secretary of Commerce is required to adopt such regulations as she deems necessary and advisable for the conservation of species listed as threatened. The ESA salmon and steelhead 4(d) rule (65 FR 42422, July 10, 2000, as updated in 70 FR 37160, June 28, 2005) specifies categories of activities that contribute to the conservation of listed salmonids and sets out the criteria for such activities. Limit 5 of the updated 4(d) rule (50 CFR 223.203(b)(5)) further provides that the prohibitions of paragraph (a) of the updated 4(d) rule (50 CFR 223.203(a)) do not apply to activities associated with artificial propagation programs provided that an HGMP has been approved by NMFS to be in accordance with the salmon and steelhead 4(d) rule (65 FR 42422, July 10, 2000, as updated in 70 FR 37160, June 28, 2005).

Dated: April 28, 2016.

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-XE581

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Stock Assessment of Eastern Bering Sea Pollock; Peer Review Meeting

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

ACTION: Notice of a public meeting.

SUMMARY: NMFS has requested the Center for Independent Experts (CIE) to conduct a peer review of the agency's stock assessment of Eastern Bering Sea walleye pollock (*Theragra chalcogramma*). The CIE is a group affiliated with the University of Miami that provides independent peer reviews of NMFS science nationwide, including reviews of stock assessments for fish and marine mammals. The Eastern Bering Sea pollock stock assessment is reviewed annually by the Alaska Fisheries Science Center, the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) Plan Team, and the NPFMC Scientific and Statistical Committee. The CIE review will examine whether the assessment incorporates the best available scientific information and provides a reasonable approach to understanding the population dynamics and stock status of Eastern Bering Sea pollock. The public is invited to attend and observe the presentations and discussions between the CIE panel and the NMFS scientists who collected and processed the data, and designed the underlying model.

DATES: The public meeting will be held from May 16 through May 19, 2016, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Pacific Daylight Time.

ADDRESSES: The review will be held at the NMFS Alaska Fisheries Science Center, 7600 Sand Point Way NE., Building 4, Seattle, WA 98115. Photo identification is required to enter this facility.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: James Ianelli, 206-526-6510.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The CIE panel will consist of three peer reviewers who will assess materials related to the topic, participate in a review workshop with the NMFS scientists who developed the model and the analytical approach, and produce a report. This review will be highly technical in nature and will cover mathematical details of the analytical approach. More information about the

CIE is available on its Web site at www.ciereviews.org.

Members of the public are invited to observe, and will be provided opportunities to contribute each day from May 16 through May 19, 2016. The final report will be available prior to the September NPFMC Plan Team meetings and will consist of individual reports from each panelist and a summary report. The results of the review will be presented during the September 2016 NPFMC Plan Team meeting, which will be announced at a later time in the **Federal Register**.

Special Accommodations

These workshops will be physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Ron Felthoven, 206-526-4114, at least 10 working days prior to the meeting date.

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

Dated: April 29, 2016.

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-XE592

Endangered and Threatened Species; Take of Anadromous Fish

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

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement; request for comments.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), this notice announces that NMFS intends to obtain information necessary to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for 10 Hatchery and Genetic Management Plans (HGMPs) for salmon and steelhead hatchery programs jointly submitted by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) with the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe and the Suquamish Tribe (referred to as the co-managers), for NMFS's evaluation and determination under Limit 6 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) 4(d) Rule for threatened salmon and steelhead. The HGMPs specify the propagation of salmon and steelhead in

the Duwamish-Green River basin in Washington State.

NMFS provides this notice to advise other agencies and the public of its plans to analyze effects related to the action, and obtain suggestions and information that may be useful to the scope of issues and alternatives to include in the EIS.

DATES: Written or electronic scoping comments must be received at the appropriate address or email mailbox (see **ADDRESSES**) no later than 5 p.m. Pacific Time June 3, 2016.

ADDRESSES: Written comments may be sent by any of the following methods:

- Email to the following address: *GreenHatcheriesEIS.wcr@noaa.gov* with the following identifier in the subject line: Green Hatcheries EIS.

- Mail or hand-deliver to NMFS Sustainable Fisheries Division, 510 Desmond Drive SE., Suite 103, Lacey, WA 98503.

- Fax to (360) 753-9517.

Comments received will be available for public inspection, by appointment, during normal business hours at the above address. All Personal Identifying Information (for example, name, address, etc.) voluntarily submitted by the commenter may be publicly accessible. Do not submit Confidential Business Information or otherwise sensitive or protected information.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Steve Leider, NMFS, by phone at (360) 753-4650, or email to *steve.leider@noaa.gov*.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

ESA-Listed Species Covered in This Notice

Steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*): threatened, naturally and artificially produced in Puget Sound.

Chinook salmon (*O. tshawytscha*): threatened, naturally and artificially produced in Puget Sound.

Chum salmon (*O. keta*): threatened, naturally and artificially produced Hood Canal summer-run.

Bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*): threatened Puget Sound/Washington Coast.

Background

The WDFW, Muckleshoot Indian Tribe, and Suquamish Tribe have jointly submitted to NMFS HGMPs for 10 hatchery programs in the Duwamish-Green River basin in Washington State. The HGMPs were submitted to NMFS from 2013 to 2015, pursuant to limit 6 of the 4(d) Rule for salmon and steelhead. The hatchery programs include releases of ESA-listed Chinook salmon and winter-run steelhead into

the Duwamish-Green River basin. The hatchery programs also release non-listed coho and fall-run chum salmon and summer-run steelhead into the Duwamish-Green River basin. One hatchery program releases coho salmon into marine waters adjacent to the Duwamish-Green River basin. Seven of the programs are currently operating, and three are new.

NEPA requires Federal agencies to conduct environmental analyses of their proposed major actions to determine if the actions may affect the human environment. NMFS's action of determining under Limit 6 of the 4(d) Rule for salmon and steelhead that implementation of the co-managers' HGMPs would not appreciably reduce the likelihood of survival and recovery of affected threatened ESUs is a major Federal action subject to environmental review under NEPA. Therefore, NMFS is seeking public input on the scope of the required NEPA analysis, including the range of reasonable alternatives, recommendations for relevant analysis methods, and information associated with impacts of the alternatives to the resources listed below or other relevant resources.

NMFS will perform an environmental review of the HGMPs and prepare an EIS that will identify potentially significant direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts on the following resources identified to have a potential for effect from the proposed action:

- Listed and Non-listed Species and their habitats
- Water Quantity
- Socioeconomics
- Environmental Justice
- Cumulative Impacts

NMFS will rigorously explore and objectively evaluate a full range of reasonable alternatives in the EIS, including the proposed action and a no-action alternative. Other alternatives may include a decreased production alternative.

For all potentially significant impacts, the EIS will identify measures to avoid, minimize, and mitigate the impacts, where feasible.

Request for Comments

NMFS provides this notice to: (1) Advise other agencies and the public of its plans to analyze effects related to the action, and (2) obtain suggestions and information that may be useful to the scope of issues and the full range of alternatives to include in the EIS.

NMFS invites comment from all interested parties to ensure that the full range of issues related to the 10 salmon and steelhead HGMPs is identified.

Comments should be as specific as possible.

Written comments concerning the proposed action and the environmental review should be directed to NMFS as described above (see **ADDRESSES**). All comments and materials received, including names and addresses, will become part of the administrative record and may be released to the public.

Authority

The environmental review of the 10 salmon and steelhead HGMPs in the Duwamish-Green River basin of Washington State will be conducted in accordance with requirements of the NEPA of 1969 as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), NEPA Regulations (40 CFR parts 1500 through 1508), other appropriate Federal laws and regulations, and policies and procedures of NMFS for compliance with those regulations. This notice is being furnished in accordance with 40 CFR 1501.7 to obtain suggestions and information from other agencies and the public on the scope of issues and alternatives to be addressed in the EIS.

Dated: April 29, 2016.

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-XE601

Magnuson-Stevens Act Provisions; General Provisions for Domestic Fisheries; Application for Exempted Fishing Permits

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

ACTION: Notice; request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Assistant Regional Administrator for Sustainable Fisheries, Greater Atlantic Region, NMFS, has made a preliminary determination that an Exempted Fishing Permit application contains all of the required information and warrants further consideration. This Exempted Fishing Permit would allow eight commercial fishing vessels to fish outside of the limited access sea scallop regulations in support of a study on seasonal bycatch distribution and optimal scallop meat yield on Georges Bank.