

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

RIN 0648-XE812

**Pacific Island Fisheries; Aquaculture**

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

**ACTION:** Notice of intent to prepare a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement; public meetings; request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS, in coordination with the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council, intends to prepare a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) to analyze the potential environmental impacts of a proposed Pacific Islands Region aquaculture management program and alternatives. The PEIS would support offshore aquaculture development, including appropriate management unit species for aquaculture, reasonably foreseeable types of offshore aquaculture operations, and permitting and reporting requirements for persons conducting aquaculture activities in Federal waters.

**DATES:** NMFS must receive written comments by October 31, 2016. The meeting dates are:

1. October 18, 2016, 6 p.m. to 9 p.m., Saipan.
2. October 20, 2016, 6 p.m. to 9 p.m., Guam.

**ADDRESSES:** The meeting locations are:

1. Saipan—October 18, 2016, 6 p.m. to 9 p.m., Northern Marianas College, As Terlaje Campus, Building S, Room S-1, Saipan, MP 96950.
2. Guam—October 20, 2016, 6 p.m. to 9 p.m., Hilton Guam Resort & Spa, 202 Hilton Road, Tumon Bay, Guam 96913.

You may submit comments on this action, identified by NOAA-NMFS-2016-0111, by any of the following methods:

- **Electronic Submission:** Submit all electronic public comments via the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal. Go to <http://www.regulations.gov/docket?D=NOAA-NMFS-2016-0111>, click the "Comment Now!" icon, complete the required fields, and enter or attach your comments.

- **Mail:** Send written comments to Michael D. Tosatto, Regional Administrator, NMFS Pacific Islands Regional Office, 1845 Wasp Blvd., Bldg. 176, Honolulu, HI 96818.

- **Scoping Meeting:** Submit written comments at a scoping meeting held by NMFS for this action.

**Instructions:** You must submit comments by the above methods to ensure that NMFS receives, documents, and considers your comments. NMFS may not consider comments sent by any other method, to any other address or individual, or received after the end of the comment period. NMFS will consider all comments received as part of the public record and will generally post comments for public viewing on [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) without change. All personal identifying information (e.g., name, address) 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).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** David Nichols, NMFS, Pacific Islands Regional Office, (808) 725-5180.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** NMFS previously published a Notice of Intent to prepare a PEIS to analyze the potential environmental impacts of a proposed Pacific Islands aquaculture management program and alternatives (81 FR 57567, August 23, 2016). Details regarding development of the PEIS may be found in that Notice of Intent, and are not repeated here.

NMFS is holding two additional public scoping meetings in Guam and Saipan (see **DATES** and **ADDRESSES**) to help identify alternatives and determine the scope of environmental issues for consideration in the PEIS.

NMFS will again ask for additional public comments once NMFS publishes the Draft PEIS, probably in late spring 2017. You may find more information about the NMFS aquaculture program and the progress of the PEIS at [www.fpir.noaa.gov/SFD/SFD\\_aq.html](http://www.fpir.noaa.gov/SFD/SFD_aq.html).

Dated: September 27, 2016.

**Emily H. Menashes,**

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

[FR Doc. 2016-23691 Filed 9-29-16; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3510-22-P**

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

RIN 0648-XE916

**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 Scallop 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 Monday, October 17, 2016 at 10:30 a.m.

**ADDRESSES:** The meeting will be held at the Hilton Garden Inn, Boston Logan, 100 Boardman Street, Boston, MA 02128; phone: (617) 567-6789; fax: (617) 461-0798.

**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**

The Committee will review Framework 28 (FW28) alternatives and analyses. The Committee will review any concepts or recommendations that come out of the joint Scallop PDT/AP meeting being held on October 13, 2016. The primary focus of this meeting will be to provide input on the range of specification alternatives. FW28 will set specifications including ABC/ACLs, DAS, access area allocations for LA and LAGC, hard-TAC for NGOM management area, target-TAC for LAGC incidental catch and set-asides for the observer and research programs for fishing year 2017 and default specifications for fishing year 2018. Management measures in FW28 include: (1) Measures to restrict the possession of shell stock inshore of 42°20' N.; (2) measures to apply spatial management to fishery specifications (ACL flowchart); (3) measures to modify the Closed Area I access area boundary, consistent with potential changes to habitat and groundfish mortality closed areas. The Committee may discuss scallop related issues under consideration in groundfish Framework 56. Other business will be discussed as necessary.

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 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: September 27, 2016.

**Tracey L. Thompson,**

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

[FR Doc. 2016-23698 Filed 9-29-16; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3510-22-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XE671

#### Taking of Marine Mammals Incidental to Specified Activities; Construction of the East Span of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge

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

**ACTION:** Notice; issuance of an incidental harassment authorization.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the regulations implementing the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) as amended, notification is hereby given that we have issued an incidental harassment authorization (IHA) to California Department of Transportation (CALTRANS) to incidentally harass, by Level B harassment only, seven species of marine mammals during activities associated with the East Span of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge (SFOBB) in the San Francisco Bay (SFB), California.

**DATES:** This authorization is effective from September 19, 2016 through September 18, 2017.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Shane Guan, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, (301) 427-8401.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

#### Background

Sections 101(a)(5)(A) and (D) of the MMPA (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*) direct the Secretary of Commerce to allow,

upon request, the incidental, but not intentional, taking of small numbers of marine mammals by U.S. citizens who engage in a specified activity (other than commercial fishing) within a specified geographical region if certain findings are made and either regulations are issued or, if the taking is limited to harassment, a notice of a proposed authorization is provided to the public for review.

An authorization for incidental takings shall be granted if NMFS finds that the taking will have a negligible impact on the species or stock(s), will not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of the species or stock(s) for subsistence uses (where relevant), and if the permissible methods of taking and requirements pertaining to the mitigation, monitoring and reporting of such takings are set forth. NMFS has defined "negligible impact" in 50 CFR 216.103 as ". . . an impact resulting from the specified activity that cannot be reasonably expected to, and is not reasonably likely to, adversely affect the species or stock through effects on annual rates of recruitment or survival."

Section 101(a)(5)(D) of the MMPA established an expedited process by which citizens of the U.S. can apply for a one-year authorization to incidentally take small numbers of marine mammals by harassment, provided that there is no potential for serious injury or mortality to result from the activity. Section 101(a)(5)(D) establishes a 45-day time limit for NMFS review of an application followed by a 30-day public notice and comment period on any proposed authorizations for the incidental harassment of marine mammals. Within 45 days of the close of the comment period, NMFS must either issue or deny the authorization.

#### Summary of Request

On March 11, 2016, CALTRANS submitted a request to NMFS for the potential harassment of a small number of marine mammals incidental to the dismantling of the East Span of the original SFOBB in SFB, California, between July 16, 2016, and July 15, 2017. On May 16, 2016, CALTRANS submitted a revision of its IHA application based on NMFS comments. NMFS determined that the IHA application was complete on May 19, 2016.

#### Description of the Specified Activity

CALTRANS proposes removal of the East Span of the original SFOBB by mechanical dismantling and by use of controlled charges to implode the pier into its open cellular chambers below

mudline. Activities associated with dismantling the original East Span potentially may result in incidental take of marine mammals. These activities include vibratory pile driving, vibratory pile extraction/removal, impact pile driving, and the use of highly controlled charges to dismantle the Pier E4 and Pier E5 marine foundations.

A one-year IHA was previously issued to CALTRANS for pile driving/removal and mechanical dismantling activities on July 17, 2015 (80 FR 43710; July 23, 2015), based on activities described on CALTRANS' IHA application dated April 13, 2013. This IHA is valid until July 16, 2016. On September 9, 2015, NMFS issued another IHA to CALTRANS for demolition of Pier E3 of the original SFOBB by highly controlled explosives (80 FR 57584; September 24, 2015). This IHA expired on December 30, 2015. Since the construction activities related with the original SFOBB dismantling will last for another two years, CALTRANS is requesting an IHA that covers take of marine mammals from both pile driving/removal and confined explosion.

Construction activities for the replacement of the SFOBB east span commenced in 2002 and are expected to be completed in 2016 with the completion of the bike/pedestrian path and eastbound on ramp from Yerba Buena Island. The new east span is now open to traffic. On November 10, 2003, NMFS issued the first project-related IHA to CALTRANS, authorizing the take of small numbers of marine mammals incidental to the construction of the SFOBB Project. Over the years, CALTRANS has been issued a total of nine IHAs for the SFOBB Project to date, excluding the application currently under review.

The demolition of Piers E4 and E5 through controlled implosion are planned to occur in October, November, or December 2016, and pile driving and pile removal activities may occur at any time of the year.

The SFOBB project area is located in the central San Francisco Bay (SFB or Bay), between Yerba Buena Island (YBI) and the city of Oakland. The western limit of the project area is the east portal of the YBI tunnel, located in the city of San Francisco. The eastern limit of the project area is located approximately 1,312 ft (400 m) west of the Bay Bridge toll plaza, where the new and former spans connect with land at the Oakland Touchdown in the city of Oakland. Detailed description of CALTRANS East Span Removal Project is provided in the **Federal Register** notice for the proposed IHA (81 FR 48745; July 24, 2016). No changes have been made since the