

- Sets inside and outside of the two sub-areas of the EFC PLL Closed Area would be equipped with hook timers, in accordance with protocols established by NMFS, to determine when animals were captured and when mortality occurs. This will help determine appropriate PLL soak time to minimize dusky and other shark mortality.

- To assist in current research efforts on shortfin mako sharks, observers are requested to place a specified number of pop-up satellite archival tags (PSATS) on shortfin mako sharks that are released alive.

- NMFS will closely monitor the catches during the project duration and has the ability to modify the conditions of the EFP, and end the research project, to address bycatch as warranted.

**Authority:** 16 U.S.C. 971 *et seq.* and 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: August 4, 2017.

**Emily H. Menashes,**

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

[FR Doc. 2017-16990 Filed 8-10-17; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3510-22-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XF592

#### Marine Mammals; File No. 21158

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

**ACTION:** Notice; receipt of application.

**SUMMARY:** Notice is hereby given that Robert Garrott, Ph.D., Montana State University, 310 Lewis Hall, Bozeman, MT 59717, has applied in due form for a permit to conduct research on Weddell seals (*Leptoncychoes weddellii*).

**DATES:** Written, telefaxed, or email comments must be received on or before September 11, 2017.

**ADDRESSES:** The application and related documents are available for review by selecting "Records Open for Public Comment" from the "Features" box on the Applications and Permits for Protected Species (APPS) home page, <https://apps.nmfs.noaa.gov>, and then selecting File No. 21158 from the list of available applications.

These documents are also available upon written request or by appointment in the Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room

13705, Silver Spring, MD 20910; phone (301) 427-8401; fax (301) 713-0376.

Written comments on this application should be submitted to the Chief, Permits and Conservation Division, at the address listed above. Comments may also be submitted by facsimile to (301) 713-0376, or by email to [NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov](mailto:NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov). Please include the File No. in the subject line of the email comment.

Those individuals requesting a public hearing should submit a written request to the Chief, Permits and Conservation Division at the address listed above. The request should set forth the specific reasons why a hearing on this application would be appropriate.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Sara Young or Carrie Hubbard, (301) 427-8401.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The subject permit is requested under the authority of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (MMPA; 16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*) and the regulations governing the taking and importing of marine mammals (50 CFR part 216).

The applicant proposes to continue long-term studies of the Erebus Bay, Antarctica, Weddell seal population to evaluate how temporal variation in the marine environment affects individual life histories and the population dynamics of long-lived mammal. Research involves the annual capture of up to 675 Weddell seal pups at 1-4 days after birth, flipper tagging, and release. A maximum of 150 of these pups would also receive a temperature recording flipper tag, be physically weighed, and have a skin biopsy taken for genetics when initially tagged. These pups would be re-captured again at 20 days of age to be weighed, and again at weaning for weighing and to remove the temperature tags. The applicant also proposes to capture up to 285 adults Weddell seals using the head-bagging technique to flipper tag previously untagged seals or replace lost or damaged tags of previously tagged individuals. An additional 100 previously tagged adult Weddell seals would be captured to obtain a skin biopsy for genetics. Up to 75 adult female Weddell seals would be photographed on the 3 occasions when their pup is weighed to obtain an estimate of the mother's mass through photogrammetry. An additional 15 females would be physically weighed when their pups were initially tagged and weighed. The applicant proposes to conduct up to eight mark-resight surveys, approaching animals to read their flipper tags. The applicant also

requests incidental take of crabeater seals (*Lobodon carcinophagus*) and leopard seals (*Hydrurga leptonyx*) that may be unintentionally harassed. This permit would be valid for five years.

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), an initial determination has been made that the activity proposed is categorically excluded from the requirement to prepare an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement.

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: August 8, 2017.

**Julia Harrison,**

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

[FR Doc. 2017-16985 Filed 8-10-17; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3510-22-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XF596

#### Fisheries of the Gulf of Mexico; Southeast Data, Assessment, and Review (SEDAR); Post Data-Workshop Webinar Gulf of Mexico Gray Snapper; Public Meetings

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

**ACTION:** Notice of SEDAR 51 assessment webinar II for Gulf of Mexico gray snapper.

**SUMMARY:** The SEDAR 51 assessment process of Gulf of Mexico gray snapper will consist of a Data Workshop, a series of assessment webinars, and a Review Workshop.

**DATES:** The SEDAR 51 assessment webinar II will be held August 21, 2017 from 1 p.m.-3 p.m. Eastern Time.

**ADDRESSES:** The meeting will be held via webinar. The webinar is open to members of the public. Those interested in participating should contact Julie A. Neer at SEDAR (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**) to request an invitation providing webinar access information. Please request webinar invitations at least 24 hours in advance of each webinar. SEDAR address: 4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201, North Charleston, SC 29405.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Julie A. Neer, SEDAR Coordinator; (843) 571-4366. Email: [Julie.neer@safmc.net](mailto:Julie.neer@safmc.net).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Gulf of Mexico, South Atlantic, and Caribbean Fishery Management Councils, in conjunction with NOAA Fisheries and the Atlantic and Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commissions have implemented the Southeast Data, Assessment and Review (SEDAR) process, a multi-step method for determining the status of fish stocks in the Southeast Region. SEDAR is a multi-step process including: (1) Data Workshop, (2) a series of assessment webinars, and (3) A Review Workshop. The product of the Data Workshop is a report that compiles and evaluates potential datasets and recommends which datasets are appropriate for assessment analyses. The assessment webinars produce a report that describes the fisheries, evaluates the status of the stock, estimates biological benchmarks, projects future population conditions, and recommends research and monitoring needs. The product of the Review Workshop is an Assessment Summary documenting panel opinions regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the stock assessment and input data. Participants for SEDAR Workshops are appointed by the Gulf of Mexico, South Atlantic, and Caribbean Fishery Management Councils and NOAA Fisheries Southeast Regional Office, HMS Management Division, and Southeast Fisheries Science Center. Participants include data collectors and database managers; stock assessment scientists, biologists, and researchers; constituency representatives including fishermen, environmentalists, and NGO's; International experts; and staff of Councils, Commissions, and state and federal agencies.

The items of discussion during the assessment webinar I are as follows:

1. Using datasets and initial assessment analysis recommended from the Data Workshop, panelists will employ assessment models to evaluate stock status, estimate population benchmarks and management criteria, and project future conditions.
2. Participants will recommend the most appropriate methods and configurations for determining stock status and estimating population parameters.

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 identified in this notice and any issues

arising after publication of this notice that require emergency action under section 305(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, provided the public has been notified of the intent to take final action to address the emergency.

#### Special Accommodations

These meetings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to the Council office (see **ADDRESSES**) at least 2 business days prior to each workshop.

**Note:** The times and sequence specified in this agenda are subject to change.

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

Dated: August 7, 2017.

**Tracey L. Thompson,**

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

[FR Doc. 2017-16933 Filed 8-10-17; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3510-22-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

**RIN 0648-XF518**

#### Marine Conservation Plan for Pacific Insular Areas Other Than American Samoa, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands; Western Pacific Sustainable Fisheries Fund

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

**ACTION:** Notice of agency decision.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS announces approval of a Marine Conservation Plan (MCP) for Pacific Insular Areas other than American Samoa, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands.

**DATES:** This agency decision is valid from August 4, 2017, through August 3, 2020.

**ADDRESSES:** You may obtain a copy of the MCP, identified by NOAA-NMFS-2017-0077, from the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal, <http://www.regulations.gov/#!docketDetail;D=NOAA-NMFS-2017-0077>, or from the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council), 1164 Bishop St., Suite 1400, Honolulu, HI 96813, tel 808-522-8220, [www.wpcouncil.org](http://www.wpcouncil.org).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Melanie Brown, Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS Pacific Islands Regional Office, 808-725-5171.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Section 204(e) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act) authorizes the Secretary of State, with the concurrence of the Secretary of Commerce (Secretary), and at the request and in consultation with the Council, to negotiate and enter into a Pacific Insular Area fishery agreement (PIAFA). A PIAFA would allow foreign fishing within the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) adjacent to a Pacific Insular Area other than American Samoa, Guam, or the Northern Mariana Islands, that is, in the EEZ around the Pacific Remote Island Areas (PRIA). The PRIA are Baker Island, Howland Island, Jarvis Island, Johnston Atoll, Kingman Reef, Midway Island, Wake Island, and Palmyra Atoll. Before entering into a PIAFA for the PRIA, the Council must develop and submit to the Secretary a 3-year MCP that details the uses for funds collected by the Secretary under the PIAFA. NMFS is the designee of the Secretary for MCP review and approval.

The Magnuson-Stevens Act requires any payments received under a PIAFA, and any funds or contributions received in support of conservation and management objectives for the PRIA MCP, to be deposited into the Western Pacific Sustainable Fisheries Fund (Fund) for use by the Council. Additionally, amounts received by the Secretary attributable to fines and penalties imposed under the Magnuson-Stevens Act for violations by foreign vessels occurring in the EEZ off the PRIA are deposited into the Fund for use by the Council. Section 204(e)(7)(C) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act also authorizes the Council to use the Fund to meet conservation and management objectives in the State of Hawaii, if funds remain after implementing the PRIA MCP.

An MCP must be consistent with the Council's fishery ecosystem plans (FEPs), identify conservation and management objectives (including criteria for determining when such objectives have been met), and prioritize planned marine conservation projects. Although no foreign fishing in the PRIA is being considered at this time, the Council reviewed and approved the draft MCP for PRIA in June 2017 and sent the MCP to NMFS for review on July 7, 2017.

The PRIA MCP contains five conservation and management objectives, consistent with the PRIA and Pelagic FEPs:

1. Support quality research and monitoring to obtain the most complete scientific information available to assess