

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that NMFS Northeast Fisheries Science Center, Woods Hole, MA (Responsible Party: John Hare), has applied in due form for a permit to conduct research on four species of pinnipeds.

DATES: Written, telefaxed, or email comments must be received on or before July 5, 2018.

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. 21719 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. 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 Shasta McClenahan, (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.*), the regulations governing the taking and importing of marine mammals (50 CFR part 216).

The applicant requests a five-year permit to take harbor seals (*Phoca vitulina*), gray seals (*Halichoerus grypus*), harp seals (*Pagophilus groenlandicus*), and hooded seals (*Cystophora cristata*) during stock assessment research, including estimation of distribution and abundance, determination of stock structure, habitat requirements, foraging ecology, health assessment, and effects of natural and anthropogenic factors. Types of take include harassment during ground, vessel, or aerial surveys, and scat collection; and capture with tissue sampling and instrument or tag

attachment. The applicant proposes to capture up to 200 harbor seals, 400 gray seals, five harp seals, and five hooded seals annually for measurement of body condition, biological sampling (*e.g.*, blood, blubber biopsy, skin, hair, swab samples, and vibrissae), and attachment of telemetry devices. Up to 27,175 harbor seals and 66,700 gray seals could be harassed annually incidental to surveys, scat collections, and capture operations. The applicant also requests research-related mortalities of up to 5 gray seals, 5 harbor seals, 1 harp seal, and 1 hooded seal per year. Permission is also sought to import and export pinniped specimen material (including soft and hard tissue, blood, extracted DNA, and whole dead animals or parts thereof) worldwide. The study area includes waters within or proximal to the U.S. EEZ from North Carolina northward to Maine, and Canadian waters in the Gulf of Maine.

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: May 31, 2018.

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

[FR Doc. 2018-12001 Filed 6-4-18; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XG270

Pacific Island Fisheries; Western Pacific Stock Assessment Review; Public Meeting

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

ACTION: Notice of a public meeting.

SUMMARY: NMFS and the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) will convene a Western Pacific Stock Assessment Review (WPSAR) of a draft 2018 benchmark

stock assessment for main Hawaiian Islands Kona crab.

DATES: See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** for meeting dates and times and daily agenda.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council office at 1164 Bishop St., Suite 1400, Honolulu, HI 96813.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Michael Seki, Director—NMFS Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center (PIFSC), telephone: (808) 725-5360.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The PIFSC conducted a draft 2018 benchmark stock assessment for main Hawaiian Islands Kona crab (*Ranina ranina*). The assessment provides the basis for management of this culturally important species. Previously, non-NOAA scientists conducted stock assessments for Kona crab in 1978 and, in collaboration with PIFSC scientists, in 2010–2011. The draft 2018 benchmark assessment incorporates data from 1948 through 2016 and uses a production model, incorporating improvements to data standardization and model assumptions. Specifically, catch per unit effort (CPUE) in the model includes new standardization coefficients split into two time series (1948–2005 and 2006–2016), due to passage of Hawaii state law prohibiting the taking of female Kona crab in 2006. The assessment model accounts for unreported catch by evaluating the use of published estimates of non-reporting ratios estimated for other fisheries in the main Hawaiian Islands, and by incorporating estimates of fishing effort specific to crustaceans from ancillary surveys. Stock status is evaluated against MSY-based reference points set in the Fishery Ecosystem Plan for the Hawaii Archipelago. Projections are provided to inform management setting of annual catch limits.

Section 301(a)(2) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act) requires that fishery conservation and management measures be based upon the best scientific information available. Magnuson-Stevens Act Section 302(g)(1)(E) provides that the Secretary of Commerce (Secretary) and each regional fishery management council may establish a peer review process for that Council for scientific information used to advise the Council about the conservation and management of a fishery. Consistent with this provision, the Council, PIFSC, and the NMFS Pacific Islands Regional Office have established the WPSAR process in

an effort to improve the quality, timeliness, objectivity, and integrity of stock assessments and other scientific information used in managing fishery resources in the Pacific Islands Region.

Meeting Agenda for WPSAR Review

The meeting schedule and agenda follow. The WPSAR panel will meet from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day. The agenda order may change and the meeting will run as late as necessary to complete scheduled business.

Day 1 Monday June 25, 2018

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Background information—Objectives and Terms of Reference
3. Fishery operation and management
4. History of stock assessments and reviews
5. Data
 - a. State of Hawaii fishery data reporting system
 - b. Post-release mortality and sex ratio
6. Presentation and review of stock assessment
 - a. Life history
 - b. Catch (reported and unreported)
 - c. Catch per unit effort
 - d. Assessment model
 - i. Base case model and priors
 - ii. Base case results
 - e. Retrospective analysis
 - f. Sensitivities
 - g. Projections

Day 2 Tuesday June 26, 2018

7. Continue presentation and review of stock assessment

Day 3 Wednesday June 27, 2018

8. Continue review of stock assessment

Day 4 Thursday June 28, 2018

9. Continue review of stock assessment
10. Public comment period
11. Panel discussions (Closed)

Day 5 Friday June 29, 2018

12. Panel discussions (Closed)
13. Panel presents recommendations (afternoon)
14. Adjourn

Special Accommodations

This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Please direct requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aides to Michael Seki, Director, PIFSC, tel (808) 725-5360, fax (808) 725-5360, at least 5 days prior to the meeting date.

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

Dated: May 30, 2018.

Jennifer M. Wallace,

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

[FR Doc. 2018-11977 Filed 6-4-18; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XG249

Public Meeting on the Definition of Fish Aggregating Devices

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

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces a public meeting to seek input on the definition of fish aggregating devices (FADs) that could be applied for conservation measures by international fishery management organizations in which the United States participates.

DATES: The meeting will be held on Friday June 29, 2018 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. PDT.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held in the Pacific Conference Room (Room 300) at NMFS, Southwest Fisheries Science Center, 8901 La Jolla Shores Drive, La Jolla, California 92037-1508. Please notify Dawn Graham (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**) by June 22, 2018, if you plan to attend the meeting in person or remotely. The meeting will be accessible by webinar—instructions will be emailed to meeting participants who provide notice.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Rachael Wadsworth by email at rachael.wadsworth@noaa.gov, or by phone at (562) 980-4036; or Dawn Graham by email at dawn.graham@noaa.gov, or by phone at (858) 546-7081.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NMFS would like to meet with interested members of the public to discuss and receive public input on the various definitions of FADs used in regional fishery management organizations (RFMOs) in which the United States participates. This could include the effect of the definitions on the management of FAD fishing, tropical tuna stock health, and U.S. fishing interests; whether NMFS should pursue efforts to adopt a common definition of FADs that could be applied across organizations; and if so, the scope and content of that definition. Additionally, NMFS requests public input on defining non-entangling FADs and active beacons on FADs. NMFS is also interested in any public input on alternative approaches to addressing stakeholder concerns related to the management of FAD fishing, tropical tuna stock health, and U.S. fishing

interests across RFMOs in which the United States participates.

Special Accommodations

The meeting location is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Dawn Graham (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**) by June 15, 2018.

Dated: May 31, 2018.

Samuel D. Rauch, III,

Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 2018-12029 Filed 6-4-18; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Submission for OMB Review; Comment Request

The Department of Commerce will submit to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for clearance the following proposal for collection of information under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35).

Agency: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Title: Fishery Capacity Reduction Program Buyback Requests.

OMB Control Number: 0648-0376.

Form Number(s): None.

Type of Request: Regular (extension of a currently approved information collection).

Number of Respondents: 1,000.

Average Hours per Response:

Implementation plan, 6,634 hours; referenda votes, bids, seller/buyer reports and annual fee collection reports, 4 hours each; completion of fish ticket, 10 minutes; monthly fee collection report, 2 hours; advising holder/owner of conflict with accepted bidders' representations, 1 hour; potentially 270 hours-state approval/review of plans.

Burden Hours: 15,579.

Needs and Uses: This request is for an extension of a current information collection.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) established programs to reduce excess fishing capacity by paying fishermen to surrender their vessels/permits. These fishing capacity reduction programs, or buybacks, are conducted pursuant to the Magnuson-