

in the near-term (1 to 2 years), mid-term (3 to 5 years) and/or long-term (more than 5 years). More specifically,

a. Specific solutions available to address the needs of working groups/communities of practice;

b. Specific solutions available to address the more immediate needs of individual practitioners and management;

c. How information is best disseminated to the leadership and staff of organizations within a network, and whether this would be applicable for the integrated MEP National Network;

(3) Cultural and technical barriers that need to be addressed by any system(s) of knowledge management;

(4) Complementary services, including information services, that are and/or will be needed by NIST MEP and the MEP Centers to take full advantage of any knowledge management system and culture;

(5) Any other critical issues that NIST MEP should consider in its strategic planning for investments in this area that are not covered by the first four issues. Further information on the MEP program is available at: <https://www.nist.gov/mep>.

Authority: 15 U.S.C. 278k.

Kevin A. Kimball,
Chief of Staff.

[FR Doc. 2018-15265 Filed 7-17-18; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-13-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee; Public Meeting

AGENCY: Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS), National Ocean Service (NOS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce (DOC).

ACTION: Notice of open meeting.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given of a virtual meeting of the Marine Protected Areas Federal Advisory Committee (MPA FAC) via teleconference.

DATES: The meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 19, 2018, from 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Pacific Time (2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Eastern Time). These times and the agenda topics described below are subject to change. Please refer to the Committee's webpage for the most up-to-date meeting agenda. <http://marineprotectedareas.noaa.gov/fac>.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held virtually via teleconference. Register by

contacting Nicole Capps at Nicole.Capps@noaa.gov or 831-647-6451 at least one working day in advance of the meeting.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Charles M. Wahle, Ph.D., Designated Federal Officer, MPA FAC, National Marine Protected Areas Center, 99 Pacific St., Suite 100-F, Monterey, CA 93940. (Phone: 831-647-6460; Fax: 831-647-1732; email: charles.wahle@noaa.gov; or visit the National MPA Center website at <http://marineprotectedareas.noaa.gov/fac>).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Committee, composed of external, knowledgeable representatives of stakeholder groups, was established by the Department of Commerce (DOC) to provide advice to the Secretaries of Commerce and the Interior on implementation of Section 4 of Executive Order 13158, on marine protected areas (MPAs). The MPA FAC was continued via Presidential Executive Order on September 29, 2017. The meeting is open to the public, and public comment will be accepted from 12:15 p.m. to 12:30 p.m. Pacific Time on Wednesday, September 19, 2018. In general, each individual or group will be limited to a total time of three (3) minutes. If members of the public wish to submit written statements, they should be submitted to the Designated Federal Officer by Friday, September 14, 2018.

Matters to be Considered: This meeting will focus on: (i) Approving the Committee's final findings and recommendations on Sustaining MPA Benefits in a Changing Ocean; and, (ii) approving updates to the Cultural Resources Toolkit developed previously by the Committee and published on the MPA Center website (<https://marineprotectedareas.noaa.gov/toolkit/>). The agenda is subject to change. The latest version will be posted at <http://marineprotectedareas.noaa.gov/fac>.

Dated: June 14, 2018.

John A. Armor,

Director, Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, National Ocean Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

[FR Doc. 2018-15340 Filed 7-17-18; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XG257

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 Regional Administrator, West Coast Region, NMFS, has made a preliminary determination that an application for an Exempted Fishing Permit warrants further consideration. The application, submitted by the California Wetfish Producers Association, requests an exemption from the prohibition of primary directed fishing for Pacific sardine for the 2018-2019 fishing year to collect Pacific sardine as part of an industry-based scientific survey. NMFS requests public comment on the application.

DATES: Comments must be received by August 2, 2018.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments on this document, identified by NOAA-NMFS-2018-0072, by any of the following methods:

- *Electronic Submissions:* Submit all electronic public comments via the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal. Go to www.regulations.gov/#/docketDetail;D=NOAA-NMFS-2018-0072, click the "Comment Now!" icon, complete the required fields, and enter or attach your comments. The EFP application will be available under Relevant Documents through the same link.

- *Mail:* Submit written comments to Joshua Lindsay, West Coast Region, NMFS, 501 W. Ocean Blvd., Ste. 4200, Long Beach, CA 90802-4250.

- *Instructions:* Comments must be submitted by one of the above methods to ensure that the comments are received, documented, and considered by NMFS. Comments sent by any other method, to any other address or individual, or received after the end of the comment period, may not be considered. All comments received are a part of the public record and will generally be posted for public viewing on www.regulations.gov without change. All personal identifying information (e.g., name, address, etc.) 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:

Joshua Lindsay, West Coast Region, NMFS, (562) 980-4034, joshua.lindsay@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On June 25, 2018, NMFS published a final rule (83 FR 29461) to implement Pacific sardine harvest specifications for the 2018-2019 fishing year off the U.S. West Coast, which began on July 1. This final rule imposed a 7,000 metric ton (mt) annual catch limit (ACL) and a prohibition on primary directed fishing for Pacific sardine off the coasts of Washington, Oregon, and California. This prohibition against "primary directed fishing" covers any targeting of Pacific sardine, except very small-scale artisanal harvests, live bait harvests, and harvests by the Quinault Indian Nation. At the April 2018 Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) meeting, the Council voted in support of two exempted fishing permit (EFP) proposals requesting an exemption from the prohibition on primary directed fishing for Pacific sardine. The Council structured the 2018-2019 Pacific sardine harvest specifications so that up to 610 mt (the combined total of the anticipated harvests under the two EFP proposals the Council reviewed) of the ACL could be harvested under EFPs. The California Wetfish Producers Association (CWPA) requested an EFP to directly harvest up to 600 mt of Pacific sardine for its Coastal Pelagic Species Near-shore Cooperative Survey (CPS-NCS).

Since 2012 the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, in partnership with the CWPA, has been conducting aerial surveys to estimate the biomass and distribution of sardine and certain other CPS species in nearshore waters in the Southern California Bight, and in the Monterey-San Francisco area since the summer of 2017. Currently, there is uncertainty in the biomass estimates from aerial spotter pilots. The CPS-NCS survey under the proposed EFP is part of a research project designed to quantify that level of uncertainty by capturing CPS schools identified by aerial spotter pilots and validating the biomass and species composition of the schools. A portion of each point set (*i.e.* an individual haul of fish captured with a purse seine net) will be retained for biological sampling, and the remainder will be sold by the participating fishermen and processors to offset

research costs and avoid unnecessary discard. This research is part of a broader effort to understand the biomass of CPS located in shallower, nearshore areas that NOAA's CPS offshore acoustic trawl survey is unable to access.

If NMFS issues this EFP, the CPS-NCS will survey nearshore waters of the Southern California Bight for 7 days in late August 2018. Any harvest under this EFP would count against the ACL for Pacific sardine. If NMFS does not issue this EFP, then the 600 mt that might have been harvested under this EFP would still be available for harvest under the ACL.

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

Dated: July 13, 2018.

Margo B. Schulze-Haugen,

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

[FR Doc. 2018-15342 Filed 7-17-18; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XG343

Marine Mammals; File No. 22272

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

ACTION: Notice; receipt of application.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that the Shaw Institute, 55 Main Street, Blue Hill, ME 04614 (Responsible Party: Susan Shaw), has applied in due form for a permit receive, import, and export marine mammal parts for scientific research.

DATES: Written, telefaxed, or email comments must be received on or before August 17, 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. 22272 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. 22272 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:

Shasta McClenahan or Jennifer Skidmore, (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 Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA; 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), the regulations governing the taking, importing, and exporting of endangered and threatened species (50 CFR parts 222-226), and the Fur Seal Act of 1966, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1151 *et seq.*).

The applicant proposes to receive, import, and export biological samples for scientific research from up to 700 individual cetaceans and pinnipeds (excluding walrus) annually for a multi-year international study to measure the combined stress of man-made pollutants and climate change on marine sentinel species. The requested duration of the permit is 5 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: July 13, 2018.

Julia Marie Harrison,

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

[FR Doc. 2018-15345 Filed 7-17-18; 8:45 am]

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