

owners who have not already attended a workshop and received a NMFS certificate, or vessel owners whose certificate(s) will expire prior to the next permit renewal, must attend a workshop to fish with, or renew, their swordfish and shark limited-access permits. Additionally, new shark and swordfish limited-access permit applicants who intend to fish with longline or gillnet gear must attend a Safe Handling, Release, and Identification Workshop and submit a copy of their workshop certificate before either of the permits will be issued. Approximately 340 free Safe Handling, Release, and Identification Workshops have been conducted since 2006.

In addition to certifying vessel owners, at least one operator on board vessels issued a limited-access swordfish or shark permit that uses longline or gillnet gear is required to attend a Safe Handling, Release, and Identification Workshop and receive a certificate. Vessels that have been issued a limited-access swordfish or shark permit and that use longline or gillnet gear may not fish unless both the vessel owner and operator have valid workshop certificates onboard at all times. Vessel operators who have not already attended a workshop and received a NMFS certificate, or vessel operators whose certificate(s) will expire prior to their next fishing trip, must attend a workshop to operate a vessel with swordfish and shark limited-access permits that uses longline or gillnet gear.

Workshop Dates, Times, and Locations

1. April 1, 2020, 9 a.m.–5 p.m., Hilton Garden Inn, 5353 North Virginia Dare Trail, Kitty Hawk, NC 27949.

2. April 3, 2020, 9 a.m.–5 p.m., Hampton Inn, 230 Lee Burbank Highway, Revere MA 02151,

3. May 1, 2020, 9 a.m.–5 p.m., Holiday Inn, 99701 Overseas Highway, Key Largo, FL 33037.

4. May 4, 2020, 9 a.m.–5 p.m., Hilton Hotel, 901 Airline Drive, Kenner, LA 70062.

5. June 1, 2020, 9 a.m.–5 p.m., Hilton Garden Inn, 55 Town Center Boulevard, Palm Coast, FL 32164.

6. June 11, 2020, 9 a.m.–5 p.m., Residence Inn, 300 Seabay Lane, Ocean City, MD 21842.

Registration

To register for a scheduled Safe Handling, Release, and Identification Workshop, please contact Angler Conservation Education at (386) 682–0158. Pre-registration is highly recommended, but not required.

Registration Materials

To ensure that workshop certificates are linked to the correct permits, participants will need to bring the following specific items with them to the workshop:

- Individual vessel owners must bring a copy of the appropriate swordfish and/or shark permit(s), a copy of the vessel registration or documentation, and proof of identification.
- Representatives of a business-owned or co-owned vessel must bring proof that the individual is an agent of the business (such as articles of incorporation), a copy of the applicable swordfish and/or shark permit(s), and proof of identification.
- Vessel operators must bring proof of identification.

Workshop Objectives

The Safe Handling, Release, and Identification Workshops are designed to teach longline and gillnet fishermen the required techniques for the safe handling and release of entangled and/or hooked protected species, such as sea turtles, marine mammals, smalltooth sawfish, Atlantic sturgeon, and prohibited sharks. In an effort to improve reporting, the proper identification of protected species and prohibited sharks will also be taught at these workshops. Additionally, individuals attending these workshops will gain a better understanding of the requirements for participating in these fisheries. The overall goal of these workshops is to provide participants with the skills needed to reduce the mortality of protected species and prohibited sharks, which may prevent additional regulations on these fisheries in the future.

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

Dated: February 24, 2020.

Karyl K. Brewster-Geisz,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648–BI58

Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement

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

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), this notice announces that NMFS is preparing a Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) to supplement information in the 2015 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) on the Makah Tribe Request to Hunt Gray Whales, which was prepared in response to the Makah Indian Tribe's request that NMFS authorize a limited ceremonial and subsistence hunt of eastern North Pacific (ENP) gray whales in the Makah Tribe's usual and accustomed (U&A) fishing grounds off the coast of Washington State.

DATES: Because NMFS has previously requested (80 FR 13373, March 13, 2015; 80 FR 30676, May 29, 2015) and received information from the public on issues addressed in the DEIS, and because the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations for implementing the NEPA do not require additional scoping for this DSEIS process (40 CFR 1502.9(c)(4)), NMFS is not asking for further public scoping information and comment at this time. Upon release of the DSEIS, NMFS will provide a 45-day public review/comment period.

ADDRESSES: The DEIS is available in electronic form on the internet at the following address: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/west-coast/makah-tribal-whale-hunt>. The DEIS also may be viewed at various libraries identified at this internet address or at the following NMFS offices:

(1) NMFS Protected Resources Division, 1201 NE Lloyd Blvd., Suite 1100, Portland, OR 97232. Contact Steve Stone at 503–231–2317; and

(2) NMFS, Protected Resources Division, 7600 Sand Point Way NE, Building 1, Seattle, WA 98115–6349. Contact Lesley Kilp at 206–526–6150.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Grace Ferrara, NMFS Protected Resources Division, by email at grace.ferrara@noaa.gov or by phone at 206–526–6172.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

On February 14, 2005, the Makah Indian Tribe submitted to NMFS a request to resume treaty-based hunting of eastern North Pacific (ENP) gray whales in the coastal portion of the Tribe's usual and accustomed fishing grounds (U&A). The Tribe's request stems from the 1855 Treaty of Neah Bay, which expressly secures the Makah Tribe's right to hunt whales. To exercise

that right, the Makah Tribe is seeking authorization from NMFS under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) and Whaling Convention Act. The MMPA imposes a general moratorium on the taking of marine mammals but authorizes the Secretary of Commerce to waive the moratorium and issue regulations governing the take of marine mammals if certain statutory criteria are met. The decision to waive the moratorium and issue regulations must be made on the record after an opportunity for an agency hearing on both the waiver and regulations (16 U.S.C. 1373(d)).

On May 9, 2008, NMFS released a DEIS but later terminated that DEIS in 2012 (77 FR 29967, May 21, 2012) because of new scientific information. In that 2012 notice the agency announced its intent to prepare a new DEIS and open a scoping process (77 FR 29967, May 21, 2012). On March 13, 2015, NMFS released a new DEIS (80 FR 13373) for public comment that included a no-action alternative and five action alternatives. On April 5, 2019, NMFS published a proposed rule (84 FR 13604) and notice of hearing (84 FR 13639) to issue a waiver under the MMPA and propose regulations governing the hunting of ENP gray whales by the Makah Tribe for a 10-year period. The hunt proposal as set forth in the proposed rule represents a composite alternative that combines certain elements from the five DEIS action alternatives.

As required under the MMPA, NMFS convened a hearing before an Administrative Law Judge regarding the proposed waiver and regulations (16 U.S.C. 1373(d)). The hearing took place from November 14, 2019 through November 21, 2019 in Seattle, Washington. In addition to NMFS, five parties participated at the hearing. Following the hearing, the Administrative Law Judge will issue a recommended decision regarding the proposed waiver and regulations, NMFS will provide notice of a 20-day public comment period, and then the NMFS Assistant Administrator will make a final decision on the proposed regulations and waiver in accordance with the regulations at 50 CFR part 228.

NEPA regulations at 40 CFR 1502.9 provide for supplementing a DEIS if the agency determines that there are significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns and bearing on the proposed action or its impacts. An agency may also prepare a supplement when it determines that the purposes of NEPA will be furthered by doing so. A new issue of fact that occurred after issuance

of the 2015 DEIS but was addressed at the agency hearing is the Unusual Mortality Event (UME) for ENP gray whales declared by NMFS in May 2019 (see information posted <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/marine-life-distress/2019-gray-whale-unusual-mortality-event-along-west-coast>). Because information concerning the ongoing 2019 UME was presented at the agency hearing but not expressly addressed in the 2015 DEIS, NMFS has determined that it would now benefit both the public and agency decision making to prepare a supplement to the DEIS. NMFS expects that the supplement will incorporate the information presented at the hearing regarding the 2019 UME and any additional relevant information and will take into consideration the Administrative Law Judge's recommended decision. NMFS also intends to expressly identify the hunt proposal, as described in the proposed rule and addressed at the agency hearing, as a separate action alternative in the supplement. Previously, NMFS determined that because the hunt proposal comprises elements and outcomes within the scope of the DEIS action alternatives and does not substantially change the proposed action in a manner relevant to environmental concerns, a supplement to the DEIS was not warranted based on the consideration of the composite alternative alone. Given our determination that NEPA's purposes would be furthered through a DSEIS addressing the 2019 UME, we will also separately evaluate the composite alternative/hunt proposal in the DEIS.

Authority

The environmental review of the Makah Tribe's request to resume treaty-based hunting of ENP gray whales will be conducted under the authority and in accordance with the requirements of the NEPA of 1969 as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (40 CFR parts 1500–1508), the MMPA (16 U.S.C. 1361–1421h), other applicable Federal laws and regulations, and policies and procedures of NMFS for compliance with those regulations.

Dated: February 24, 2020.

Donna S. Wieting,

Director, Office of Protected Resources,
National Marine Fisheries Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Proposed Information Collection; Comment Request; Coastal and Marine Ecological Classification Standard Solicitation for Revisions

AGENCY: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Commerce, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, invites the general public and other Federal agencies to take this opportunity to comment on proposed and/or continuing information collections, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995.

DATES: Written comments must be submitted on or before April 27, 2020.

ADDRESSES: Direct all written comments to Adrienne Thomas, PRA Officer, NOAA, 151 Patton Avenue, Room 159, Asheville, NC 28801 (or via the internet at PRAComments@doc.gov). All comments received are part of the public record. Comments will generally be posted without change. All Personally Identifiable Information (for example, name and address) 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: Requests for additional information or copies of the information collection instrument and instructions should be directed to Becky Allee, Office for Coastal Management, 1021 Balch Blvd., Suite 1003, Stennis Space Center, MS 39529, (228) 688-1701, becky.allee@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Abstract

This is a request for review of a new information collection.

NOAA's Office of Coastal Management (OCM) is proposing a new information collection that will allow interested parties to submit requests for revisions to update the Coastal and Marine Ecological Classification Standard (CMECS). CMECS was approved by the Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) in August 2012 and provides a national standard for consistent descriptions of coastal and marine ecological features. The primary uses of CMECS are in mapping and