

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

[RTID 0648–XW026]

Magnuson-Stevens Act Provisions; General Provisions for Domestic Fisheries; Application for Exempted Fishing Permits; West Coast Pelagic Conservation Group

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 West Coast Pelagic Conservation Group (a non-profit fishing industry group), requests an exemption from the expected prohibition on primary directed fishing for Pacific sardine for the 2020–2021 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 July 7, 2020.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments on this document, identified by NOAA–NMFS–2020–0069, by the following method:

Electronic Submissions: Submit all public comments via the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal. Go to www.regulations.gov / #!docketDetail;D=NOAA-NMFS-2020-0069, click the “Comment Now!” icon, complete the required fields, and enter or attach your comments. The Exempted Fishing Permit application will be available under Supporting and Related Materials through the same link.

Instructions: Comments must be submitted by the above method to ensure that the comments are received, documented, and considered by NMFS. Comments sent by any other method 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: Lynn Massey, West Coast Region, NMFS, (562) 436–2462, lynn.massey@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This action is authorized by the Coastal Pelagic Species (CPS) Fishery Management Plan (FMP) and regulations at 50 CFR 600.745, which allow NMFS Regional Administrators to authorize exempted fishing permits (EFPs) to test fishing activities that would otherwise be prohibited.

On May 27, 2020, NMFS published a proposed rule (85 FR 31733) to implement Pacific sardine harvest specifications for the 2020–2021 fishing year off the U.S. West Coast. This proposed rule included a 4,288 metric ton (mt) annual catch limit (ACL), a 4,000-mt annual catch target (ACT) and a prohibition on directed fishing for Pacific sardine off the coasts of Washington, Oregon, and California, except as part of the live bait or minor directed fisheries, or as part of EFP fishing activities.

On April 21, 2020, the West Coast Pelagic Conservation Group (WCPCG) submitted an EFP application to NMFS requesting to directly harvest up to 5 mt of Pacific sardine as part of their “Collaborative “Proof of Concept Project” for Nearshore Surveillance Acoustic Trawl Methodology Survey of North West Coastal Waters” survey during the 2020–2021 fishing year. At the April 2020 Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) meeting, although formal Council review and approval of EFPs was removed from the Council’s agenda, the Council expressed support for this EFP proposal during their discussion of sardine management measures.

Since 2017, the WCPCG has been working with NMFS Southwest Fisheries Science Center (SWFSC) and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife to survey CPS in nearshore Oregon/Washington coastal waters. The purpose of the EFP is to collect biological samples in areas inshore of the 2020 NMFS SWFSC acoustic trawl survey to better assess species composition and CPS distribution and abundance. The collections under the EFP would take place in nearshore waters of Oregon and Washington over a 14-day period between approximately mid-June through August, 2020. Any harvest under this EFP would count against the 2020–2021 ACL and ACT for Pacific sardine. If NMFS does not issue this EFP, then this 5-mt portion of the

ACL would be available for harvest by other permissible fishing activities.

After publication of this document in the **Federal Register**, NMFS may approve and issue permits to participating vessels after the close of the public comment period. NMFS will consider comments submitted in deciding whether to approve the application as requested. NMFS may approve the application in its entirety or may make any alterations needed to achieve the goals of the EFP project.

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

Dated: June 17, 2020.

Hélène M.N. Scalliet,

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

[FR Doc. 2020–13378 Filed 6–19–20; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–22–P

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

[RTID 0648–XA237]

Endangered Species; File Nos. 21111, 23683, and 23851

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

ACTION: Notice; receipt of applications for permits and a permit modification.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that three applicants have applied in due form for a permit or permit modification to take green (*Chelonia mydas*), hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), Kemp’s ridley (*Lepidochelys kempii*), leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*), loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*), and olive ridley (*L. olivacea*) sea turtles for purposes of scientific research.

DATES: Written, telefaxed, or email comments must be received on or before July 22, 2020.

ADDRESSES: Each 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 the applicable File No. 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 the application would be appropriate.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Amy Hapeman or Erin Markin, (301) 427-8401.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The subject permits and permit modification are requested under the authority of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) and the regulations governing the taking, importing, and exporting of endangered and threatened species (50 CFR parts 222-226).

File No. 21111-02: NMFS, Southwest Fisheries Science Center, 8901 La Jolla Shores Drive, La Jolla, California 92037, (Responsible Party: Robin LeRoux), proposes to modify Permit No. 21111-01. The permit, originally issued on February 15, 2018 (83 FR 13731, March 30, 2018), authorizes researchers to conduct long-term monitoring of leatherback sea turtles off the coasts of California, Oregon, and Washington. Researchers may conduct vessel-based research on leatherbacks including captures, observation, transmitter attachment, marking, measurements, imaging, and biological sampling. The permit holder requests authorization to (1) use a manned 'spotter' aircraft and unmanned aircraft system (UAS) to assist leatherback capture efforts, (2) increase the number of animals captured from 15 to 20 animals annually in line 1 of the take table, (3) attach an acoustic tag to animals to evaluate fine-scale leatherback movements and habitat use, (4) analyze the microbiome of collected cloacal and fecal samples to evaluate leatherback health and body condition, and (5) add personnel to conduct the request aerial methods. The permit is valid through September 30, 2027.

File No. 23683: Guam Division of Aquatic and Wildlife Resources, 163 Dairy Road, Mangilao, Guam 96913, (Responsible Party: Jay Gutierrez), proposes to obtain information on green and hawksbill sea turtle movement, distribution, abundance, genetics, and health status in waters around Guam.

Up to 45 green and 10 hawksbill sea turtles would be captured by hand or tangle net, tagged (flipper, passive integrated transponder [PIT]), biologically sampled (skin), measured, weighed, and photographed/videoed, annually, prior to release. A subset of turtles may receive a satellite tag (epoxy attachment). The permit would be valid for 10 years from the date of issuance.

File No. 23851: Michael Arendt, South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, Marine Resources, 217 Fort Johnson Road, Charleston, South Carolina, proposed to assess the abundance, distribution, demographic structure, genetics, and health of green, Kemp's ridley, leatherback, loggerhead, and olive ridley sea turtles in waters off the coasts of South Carolina, Georgia, and northern Florida. Up to 3 green, 30 Kemp's ridley, 1 leatherback, 130 loggerhead, and 2 olive ridley sea turtles would be captured by trawl, tagged (flipper, PIT), biologically sampled (blood, lesion, scute), measured, weighed, and photographed/videoed, annually, prior to release. A subset of turtles may receive a satellite or acoustic tag (epoxy attachment). Up to 12 green, 1 Kemp's ridley, and 1 loggerhead sea turtles may be captured under another authority, tagged (flipper, PIT), biologically sampled (blood, lesion, scute), measured, weighed, photographed/videoed, and receive a satellite or acoustic tag (epoxy attachment), annually, prior to release. Unintentional mortality of one green, one Kemp's ridley, one leatherback, and two loggerhead sea turtles could happen over the life of the permit. The permit would be valid for up to 10 years from the date of issuance.

Dated: June 16, 2020.

Julia Marie Harrison,

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

[FR Doc. 2020-13358 Filed 6-19-20; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648-XW025]

Magnuson-Stevens Act Provisions; General Provisions for Domestic Fisheries; Coastal Pelagic Species Fishery; Application for Exempted Fishing Permits; California Wetfish Producers Association

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 expected prohibition on primary directed fishing for Pacific sardine for the 2020-2021 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 July 7, 2020.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments on this document, identified by NOAA-NMFS-2020-0067, by the following method:

Electronic Submissions: Submit all public comments via the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal. Go to www.regulations.gov/ *#!docketDetail;D=NOAA-NMFS-2020-0067*, click the "Comment Now!" icon, complete the required fields, and enter or attach your comments. The EFP application will be available under Supporting and Related Materials through the same link.

Instructions: Comments must be submitted by the above method to ensure that the comments are received, documented, and considered by NMFS. Comments sent by any other method 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: Lynn Massey, West Coast Region, NMFS, (562) 436-2462, lynn.massey@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This action is authorized by the Coastal Pelagic Species (CPS) Fishery Management Plan (FMP) and regulations at 50 CFR 600.745, which allow NMFS Regional Administrators to authorize exempted fishing permits