

Dated: February 18, 2021.

Christian Marsh,

Acting Assistant Secretary for Enforcement and Compliance.

[FR Doc. 2021-03902 Filed 2-24-21; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648-XA844]

Fisheries of the U.S. Caribbean; Southeast Data, Assessment, and Review (SEDAR); Public Meeting; Cancellation

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

ACTION: Notice of cancellation of SEDAR 80 Life History Topical Working Group Webinar I for U.S. Caribbean Queen Triggerfish.

SUMMARY: The SEDAR 80 stock assessment of U.S. Caribbean queen triggerfish will consist of a series of data webinars. See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**.

DATES: The SEDAR 80 Life History Topical Working Group Webinar I was scheduled for March 10, 2021.

ADDRESSES:

Meeting address: The meeting was to be held via 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.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The meeting notice published on February 3, 2021 (86 FR 8003). This notice announces that the meeting is cancelled.

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

Dated: February 19, 2021.

Tracey L. Thompson,

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

[FR Doc. 2021-03856 Filed 2-24-21; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648-XA853]

Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Exempted Fishing Permits

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

ACTION: Notice of receipt of an application for exempted fishing permit; request for comments.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces the receipt of an application for an exempted fishing permit (EFP) from Dr. David Portnoy, Texas A&M University, Corpus Christi. If granted, the EFP would allow a limited harvest of speckled hind in South Atlantic Federal waters by select commercial fishermen. The samples collected would be used to assess the speckled hind population structure, genetic diversity, and life history in the South Atlantic.

DATES: Written comments must be received on or before March 12, 2021.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments on the application, identified by “NOAA-NMFS-2021-0007” by any of the following methods:

- *Electronic Submission:* Submit all electronic public comments via the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal. Go to <https://www.regulations.gov> and enter “NOAA-NMFS-2021-0007” in the Search box. Click on the “Comment” icon, complete the required fields, and enter or attach your comments.
- *Mail:* Submit written comments to Frank Helies, Southeast Regional Office, NMFS, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, FL 33701.

Instructions: 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 by NMFS. 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), confidential business information, or otherwise sensitive information submitted voluntarily by the sender will be publicly accessible. NMFS will accept anonymous comments (enter “N/A” in the required fields if you wish to remain anonymous).

Electronic copies of the EFP application may be obtained from the Southeast Regional Office website at

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/southeast/about-us/south-atlantic-speckled-hind-exempted-fishing-permit-application/>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Frank Helies, 727-824-5305; email: frank.helies@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The EFP is requested under the authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act; 16 U.S.C 1801 *et seq.*), and regulations at 50 CFR 600.745(b) concerning exempted fishing.

Currently, Federal regulations at 50 CFR 622.181 (b)(3) prohibit the harvest and possession of speckled hind in or from South Atlantic Federal waters. Speckled hind are sedentary, long-lived, deep-water groupers and are considered to be undergoing overfishing in the U.S. South Atlantic. There are no known data regarding the stock structure of speckled hind in South Atlantic waters and little is known about their biology; consequently, there are not enough data to accurately determine whether the species is overfished.

Dr. Portnoy was awarded a Marine Fisheries Initiative grant to assess the population structure, genetic diversity, and life history of speckled hind in the U.S. South Atlantic. Beginning in 2018, Dr. Portnoy has already acquired some of his project’s needed speckled hind samples from fishery independent surveys conducted by NMFS and the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources. However, as a result of low encounter rates with the species since 2018, and reduced fishery independent survey effort in 2020, additional samples will need to be collected through this EFP to obtain a sufficient number of samples for the project.

If granted, the EFP would be valid through August 31, 2022, and would allow a limited harvest of up to 40 speckled hind per calendar year (up to 80 total for the duration of the EFP) in the Federal waters of the South Atlantic. The EFP would exempt select commercial fishermen from Federal regulations prohibiting the harvest and possession of speckled hind in Federal waters of the South Atlantic at 50 CFR 622.181(b)(3). Because speckled hind would be harvested incidentally during routine commercial fishing trips, NMFS does not expect that any additional environmental impacts would occur through the issuance of the EFP.

Dr. Portnoy proposes to collect speckled hind from select commercial fishermen who occasionally encounter speckled hind in South Atlantic Federal waters during routine commercial

fishing operations. Currently, two commercial fishermen have volunteered to participate in the EFP while using hook-and-line gear fishing in South Atlantic Federal waters in depths ranging from 70 ft (21 m) to 600 ft (183 m). If the fishermen encounter a speckled hind, a fin clip would be taken from the harvested speckled hind and shipped to the Marine Genomics Laboratory at Texas A&M University, Corpus Christi, Texas. The sampled fin clip would be used for genetic studies. All sampled speckled hind carcasses would be shipped to the NMFS Southeast Fisheries Science Center for otolith extraction to determine age and growth parameters. The results of the EFP are expected to contribute to improved understanding of speckled hind population structure, genetic diversity, and life history in the U.S. South Atlantic. The EFP results could help support future scientific and management decisions for the speckled hind stock in the South Atlantic.

NMFS finds the application warrants further consideration based on a preliminary review. Possible conditions the agency may impose on the permit, if granted, include but are not limited to, a prohibition on fishing within marine protected areas, marine sanctuaries, or special management zones without additional authorization. A final decision on issuance of the EFP will depend on NMFS' review of public comments received on the application, consultations with the appropriate fishery management agencies of the affected states, the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, and the U.S. Coast Guard, and a determination that the activities to be taken under the EFP are consistent with all other applicable laws.

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

Dated: February 22, 2021.

Jennifer M. Wallace,

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

[FR Doc. 2021-03889 Filed 2-24-21; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648-XA884]

Endangered and Threatened Species; Initiation of 5-Year Review for Cook Inlet Beluga Whale (*Delphinapterus leucas*) Distinct Population Segment

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and

Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of initiation of 5-year review; request for information.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces its intent to conduct a 5-year review of the endangered Cook Inlet beluga whale (*Delphinapterus leucas*) distinct population segment (DPS). NMFS is required by the Endangered Species Act (ESA) to conduct 5-year reviews to ensure that listing classifications of species are accurate. The 5-year review must be based on the best scientific and commercial data available at the time of the review. We request submission of any such information on the Cook Inlet beluga whale DPS, particularly information on its status, threats, and recovery, that has become available since the previous 5-year review was issued in February 2017.

DATES: To allow us adequate time to conduct this review, we must receive your information no later than April 26, 2021. However, we will continue to accept new information about any listed species at any time.

ADDRESSES: Submit your information, identified by docket number NOAA-NMFS-2021-0010, by either of the following methods:

- *Federal e-Rulemaking Portal:* Go to www.regulations.gov. In the Search box, enter the above docket number for this notice. Then, click on the Search icon. On the resulting web page, click the "Comment Now!" icon, complete the required fields, and enter or attach your comments.

- *Mail:* Submit written information to Jon Kurland, Assistant Regional Administrator for Protected Resources, Alaska Region NMFS, Attn: Records Office. Mail comments to P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802-1668.

Instructions: NMFS may not consider comments or other information if sent by any other method, to any other address or individual, or received after the comment period ends. All comments and information received are a part of the public record and NMFS will post the comments for public viewing on www.regulations.gov without change. All personal identifying information (*e.g.*, name, address, etc.), confidential business information, or otherwise sensitive information submitted voluntarily by the sender is publicly accessible. NMFS will accept anonymous comments (enter "N/A" in the required fields if you wish to remain anonymous).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jill Seymour, NMFS Alaska Region, jill.seymour@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Section 4(c)(2)(A) of the ESA requires that the Secretary, through NMFS, conduct a review of listed species at least once every 5 years. The regulations in 50 CFR 424.21 require that we publish a notice in the **Federal Register** announcing species currently under active review. Based on such reviews, we determine whether a listed species should be delisted, or be reclassified from endangered to threatened or from threatened to endangered (16 U.S.C. 1533(c)(2)(B)). As described by the regulations in 50 CFR 424.11(e), the Secretary shall delist a species if the Secretary finds that, after conducting a status review based on the best scientific and commercial data available: (1) the species is extinct; (2) the species does not meet the definition of an endangered species or a threatened species; or (3) the listed entity does not meet the statutory definition of a species. Any change in Federal classification would require a separate rulemaking process.

The Cook Inlet beluga whale DPS was listed as endangered under the ESA on October 22, 2008 (73 FR 62919).

Background information on the DPS is available on the NMFS website at: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/species/beluga-whale>.

Determining if a Species Is Threatened or Endangered

Section 4(a)(1) of the ESA requires that we determine whether a species is endangered or threatened based on one or more of the five following factors: (1) The present or threatened destruction, modification, or curtailment of its habitat or range; (2) overutilization for commercial, recreational, scientific, or educational purposes; (3) disease or predation; (4) the inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms; or (5) other natural or manmade factors affecting its continued existence. Section 4(b) also requires that our determination be made on the basis of the best scientific and commercial data available after conducting a review of the status of the species and after taking into account those efforts, if any, being made by any State or foreign nation to protect such species.

Public Solicitation of New Relevant Information

To ensure that the 5-year review is complete and based on the best scientific and commercial data available, we are soliciting new information from the public, governmental agencies, Tribes, the scientific community, industry, environmental entities, and any other