

must complete the registration process by June 1, 2023, if you plan to attend the meeting (see **ADDRESSES**).

**ADDRESSES:** If you plan to attend the meeting, which will be held by webinar, please register at <https://forms.gle/ejQ6t8K5RqGBX6iv7>. Instructions for attending the meeting will be emailed to meeting participants before the meeting occurs. This meeting may be audio recorded for the purposes of generating notes of the meeting. As public comments will be made publicly available, participants and public commenters are urged not to provide personally identifiable information (PII) at this meeting. Participation in the meeting, in person, by web conference, or by telephone constitutes consent to the audio recording.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Amanda Munro, NMFS West Coast Region, at [amanda.munro@noaa.gov](mailto:amanda.munro@noaa.gov) or (619) 407-9284.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The timing of U.S. SAS and GAC meetings are adjusted based on the dates of the IATTC Annual Meeting. This year, the IATTC will convene its 14th Meeting of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) in May 2023, and the 101st Annual Meeting of the IATTC will be held on August 7–11, 2023. For 2023, the combined U.S. SAS and GAC Meeting will be held on June 15th, after the IATTC SAC Meeting and before the IATTC Annual Meeting. This timing allows for scientific topics presented at the IATTC SAC Meeting, including stock assessments, to be discussed and used to inform U.S. positions at the combined U.S. SAS and GAC Meeting. This meeting will also include updates from IATTC working groups and is expected to include presentations of draft U.S. proposals to be submitted to the IATTC. An executive session may be called in order to discuss sensitive information, including possible U.S. negotiating positions for the upcoming IATTC Annual Meeting.

In accordance with the Tuna Conventions Act (16 U.S.C. 951 *et seq.*) (TCA), the U.S. Department of Commerce, in consultation with the Department of State (the State Department), appoints a GAC to the U.S. Section to the IATTC and a SAS that advises the GAC. The U.S. Section consists of the four U.S. Commissioners and alternate U.S. Commissioners to the IATTC and representatives of the State Department, NOAA, Department of Commerce, other U.S. Government agencies, and stakeholders. The GAC provides recommendations to the U.S. section of the IATTC. The purpose of the SAS is to advise the GAC on

scientific matters and provide recommendations to the GAC. Per the TCA, the SAS advises the GAC on matters including the conservation of ecosystems, the sustainable uses of living marine resources related to the tuna fishery in the eastern Pacific Ocean, and the long-term conservation and management of stocks of living marine resources in the eastern tropical Pacific Ocean. NMFS West Coast Region staff provides administrative and technical support services as necessary for the effective functioning of the SAS and GAC.

The meetings of the SAS and GAC are open to the public, unless in executive session. The time and manner of public comment will be at the discretion of the Chairs for the SAS and GAC. For more information and updates on these upcoming meetings, please visit the IATTC's website: <https://www.iattc.org/MeetingsENG.htm>.

#### SAS and GAC Meeting Topics

Given the virtual nature of these meetings, the agenda will be concise. The SAS and GAC meeting to prepare for the 101st IATTC Annual Meeting is expected to cover a broad spectrum of topics including but not limited to:

- (1) Outcomes of the most recent IATTC stock assessments and updates for tuna, tuna-like species, and other species caught in association with those fisheries in the eastern Pacific Ocean;
- (2) Evaluation of the IATTC Staff's Recommendations to the Commission for 2023;
- (3) Potential proposal(s) to the IATTC;
- (4) Updates for upcoming Joint IATTC-Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission Northern Committee Working Group on Pacific Bluefin Tuna meeting;
- (5) Recommendations and evaluations by the SAS and GAC; and
- (6) Other issues as they arise.

#### Special Accommodations

Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Amanda Munro (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**).

*Authority:* 16 U.S.C. 951 *et seq.*

Dated: March 21, 2023.

**Jennifer M. Wallace,**

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

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**BILLING CODE 3510-22-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648-XC869]

#### New England Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

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

**ACTION:** Notice of public meeting.

**SUMMARY:** The New England Fishery Management Council (Council) is scheduling a public meeting of its Groundfish Committee via webinar to consider actions affecting New England fisheries in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ). Recommendations from this group will be brought to the full Council for formal consideration and action, if appropriate.

**DATES:** This webinar will be held on Thursday, April 13, 2023, at 9 a.m.

**ADDRESSES:** Webinar registration URL information: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4228038253685367648>.

*Council address:* New England Fishery Management Council, 50 Water Street, Mill 2, Newburyport, MA 01950.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Thomas A. Nies, Executive Director, New England Fishery Management Council; telephone: (978) 465-0492.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### Agenda

The Groundfish Committee will meet receive recommendations from the Recreational Advisory Panel and Groundfish Advisory Panel. They will also receive an update on progress to develop metrics and indicators in Amendment 23. The Committee will receive an update on progress to revise the Council's ABC control rule for groundfish stocks and the plan for a facilitated process between the Scientific and Statistical Committee, Groundfish Committee, and Groundfish Plan Development Team as well as receive an update on developing a transition plan for Atlantic cod management from the current two management units to up to five management units, including addressing allocation issues and considering potential new measures to protect Atlantic cod spawning. The Committee will also receive an update on developing alternatives on how to address impacts of large swings in Canadian halibut catch in U.S. halibut management as well as make

recommendations to the Council, as appropriate. They will discuss Gulf of Maine haddock and other items, as necessary.

Although non-emergency issues not contained on the agenda may come before this Council for discussion, those issues may not be the subject of formal action during this meeting. Council action will be restricted to those issues specifically listed in this notice and any issues arising after publication of this notice that require emergency action under section 305(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, provided the public has been notified of the Council's intent to take final action to address the emergency. The public also should be aware that the meeting will be recorded. Consistent with 16 U.S.C. 1852, a copy of the recording is available upon request.

### Special Accommodations

This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Thomas A. Nies, Executive Director, at (978) 465-0492, at least 5 days prior to the meeting date.

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

Dated: March 22, 2023.

### Key Israel Marquez,

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

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648-XC739]

### Taking and Importing Marine Mammals; Taking Marine Mammals Incidental to Geophysical Surveys Related to Oil and Gas Activities in the Gulf of Mexico

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

**ACTION:** Notice of modification to expiration date of Letter of Authorization.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), as amended, its implementing regulations, and NMFS' MMPA Regulations for Taking Marine Mammals Incidental to Geophysical Surveys Related to Oil and Gas Activities in the Gulf of Mexico, notification is hereby given that a Letter

of Authorization (LOA) to Anadarko Petroleum Corporation (Anadarko), for the take of marine mammals incidental to geophysical survey activity in the Gulf of Mexico, has been modified to reflect a new expiration date.

**DATES:** This Letter of Authorization is effective April 1, 2023 through June 1, 2023.

**ADDRESSES:** The LOA, LOA request, and supporting documentation are available online at: [www.fisheries.noaa.gov/marine-mammal-protection/issued-letters-authorization-oil-and-gas-industry-geophysical-survey](http://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/marine-mammal-protection/issued-letters-authorization-oil-and-gas-industry-geophysical-survey). In case of problems accessing these documents, please call the contact listed below (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Rachel Wachtendonk, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, (301) 427-8401.

### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

#### Background

Sections 101(a)(5)(A) and (D) of the MMPA (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*) direct the Secretary of Commerce to allow, upon request, the incidental, but not intentional, taking of small numbers of marine mammals by U.S. citizens who engage in a specified activity (other than commercial fishing) within a specified geographical region if certain findings are made and either regulations are issued or, if the taking is limited to harassment, a notice of a proposed authorization is provided to the public for review.

An authorization for incidental takings shall be granted if NMFS finds that the taking will have a negligible impact on the species or stock(s), will not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of the species or stock(s) for subsistence uses (where relevant), and if the permissible methods of taking and requirements pertaining to the mitigation, monitoring and reporting of such takings are set forth. NMFS has defined "negligible impact" in 50 CFR 216.103 as an impact resulting from the specified activity that cannot be reasonably expected to, and is not reasonably likely to, adversely affect the species or stock through effects on annual rates of recruitment or survival.

Except with respect to certain activities not pertinent here, the MMPA defines "harassment" as: any act of pursuit, torment, or annoyance which (i) has the potential to injure a marine mammal or marine mammal stock in the wild (Level A harassment); or (ii) has the potential to disturb a marine mammal or marine mammal stock in the wild by causing disruption of behavioral patterns, including, but not limited to,

migration, breathing, nursing, breeding, feeding, or sheltering (Level B harassment).

On January 19, 2021, we issued a final rule with regulations to govern the unintentional taking of marine mammals incidental to geophysical survey activities conducted by oil and gas industry operators, and those persons authorized to conduct activities on their behalf (collectively "industry operators"), in Federal waters of the U.S. Gulf of Mexico (GOM) over the course of 5 years (86 FR 5322; January 19, 2021). The rule was based on our findings that the total taking from the specified activities over the 5-year period will have a negligible impact on the affected species or stock(s) of marine mammals and will not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of those species or stocks for subsistence uses. The rule became effective on April 19, 2021.

Our regulations at 50 CFR 217.180 *et seq.* allow for the issuance of LOAs to industry operators for the incidental take of marine mammals during geophysical survey activities and prescribe the permissible methods of taking and other means of effecting the least practicable adverse impact on marine mammal species or stocks and their habitat (often referred to as mitigation), as well as requirements pertaining to the monitoring and reporting of such taking. Under 50 CFR 217.186(e), issuance of an LOA shall be based on a determination that the level of taking will be consistent with the findings made for the total taking allowable under these regulations and a determination that the amount of take authorized under the LOA is of no more than small numbers.

NMFS issued an LOA to Anadarko on September 27, 2022, for the take of marine mammals incidental to one of the following vertical seismic profile (VSP) survey types: Zero Offset, Two-Dimensional (2D), or Three-Dimensional (3D) in the vicinity of the Horn Mountain field in the Mississippi Canyon area, around block MC-81. Please see the **Federal Register** notice of issuance (87 FR 59783; October 3, 2022) for additional detail regarding the LOA and the survey activity.

Anadarko initially anticipated that the activity would occur at some point between October 1, 2022 and April 1, 2023. Anadarko subsequently informed NMFS that a shift in their drillship schedule is likely to cause the associated VSP survey to occur later than previously expected. Anadarko has requested modification to the effectiveness end date of the LOA (from April 1, 2023, to June 1, 2023) to