

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

[RTID 0648-XE130]

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

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

ACTION: Notice of a public meeting.

SUMMARY: The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) will hold a two-hour webinar meeting of its Ecosystem Technical Committee (ETC).

DATES: The webinar meeting will be held Friday, August 9, 2024, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., EDT.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will take place via webinar. Registration information will be available on the Council's website by visiting www.gulfcouncil.org and clicking on the "meeting tab".

Council address: Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, 4107 W Spruce Street, Suite 200, Tampa, FL 33607; telephone: (813) 348-1630.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Verena Wang, Fishery Biologist, Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council; verena.wang@gulfcouncil.org; telephone: (813) 348-1630.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Friday, August 9, 2024; 1 p.m.–3 p.m. EDT

The meeting will begin with Introductions and Adoption of Agenda, Approval of Minutes and Meeting Summary from the September 2023 meeting and a review of Scope of Work. The committee will review and discuss the Ecosystem Based Fisheries Management Road Map Update along with receiving a presentation and review of a draft comment letter to National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

The Committee will receive public comment at the end of the day and discuss any items under Other Business.—Meeting Adjourns

The meeting will be broadcast via webinar. You may register for the webinar by visiting www.gulfcouncil.org and clicking on the Technical meeting on the calendar.

The agenda is subject to change, and the latest version along with other meeting materials will be posted on www.gulfcouncil.org as they become available.

Although other non-emergency issues not on the agenda may come before the

Committee for discussion, in accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, those issues may not be the subject of formal action during this meeting. Actions of the Committee will be restricted to those issues specifically identified in the agenda and any issues arising after publication of this notice that require emergency action under Section 305(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, provided the public has been notified of the Council's intent to take action to address the emergency.

Special Accommodations

The meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aid should be directed to Kathy Pereira, (813) 348-1630, at least 5 days prior to the meeting date.

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

Dated: July 18, 2024.

Rey 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-XE136]

Marine Mammals; File No. 27867

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 NMFS Southeast Fisheries Science Center, 75 Virginia Beach Drive, Miami, FL 33149 (Responsible Party: Mridula Srinivasan, Ph.D.), has applied in due form for a permit to conduct research on cetaceans, and import, export, and receive cetacean parts for scientific research.

DATES: Written comments must be received on or before August 23, 2024.

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 home page, <https://apps.nmfs.noaa.gov>, and then selecting File No. 27867 from the list of available applications. These documents are also available upon written request via email to NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov.

Written comments on this application should be submitted via email to NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov. Please include File No. 27867 in the subject line of the email comment.

Those individuals requesting a public hearing should submit a written request via email to NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov. The request should set forth the specific reasons why a hearing on this application would be appropriate.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Shasta McClenahan, Ph.D., 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 (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.*), and the regulations governing the taking, importing, and exporting of endangered and threatened species (50 CFR parts 222-226).

The applicant requests a 5-year permit to conduct research in the western North Atlantic Ocean, Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Sea. The objectives are to study cetacean stock structure, geographic range, population size, habitat, movement, vocalizations, reproduction, health status, and behavior. Up to 33 species of cetaceans may be targeted including the following ESA-listed species: blue (*Balaenoptera musculus*), fin (*B. physalus*), North Atlantic right (*Eubalaena glacialis*), Rice's (*B. ricei*), sei (*B. borealis*), and sperm (*Physeter macrocephalus*) whales. Research may occur year-round during vessel or aircraft surveys, including unmanned aircraft systems, for counts, photography, video recording (above and underwater), photogrammetry, thermal imaging, observations, passive acoustics, biological sampling (sloughed skin, exhaled air, feces, and skin and blubber biopsy), and tagging (suction-cup, dart, and deep-implant). In addition, the applicant is requesting authority to receive, import, and export cetacean parts. See the application for complete numbers of animals requested by species, age-class, and procedure.

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**,