

(GARFO), liaisons from the Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC) and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, representatives from NOAA General Counsel and the Office of Law Enforcement, and staff from the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and U.S. Coast Guard. Next, the Council will hear from its Skate Committee. The Council is expected to take final action on Framework Adjustment 6 to the Northeast Skate Complex Fishery Management Plan (FMP), which was developed to consider alternatives for prolonging the skate wing fishery. The Council then will discuss the Council Program Review Panel's final report and potentially take action on next steps to improve operations based on the panel's recommendations. The Observer Policy/ Industry-Funded Monitoring Committee will be up next. The Council will consider and potentially adopt the committee's comments on NMFS's draft policy directive for allocating costs in electronic monitoring programs for federally managed U.S. fisheries.

After the lunch break, members of the public will have the opportunity to speak during an open comment period on issues that relate to Council business but are not included on the published agenda for this meeting. The Council asks the public to limit remarks to 3–5 minutes. Following public comment, the Atlantic Herring Committee will provide a report on two items. First, the committee will discuss and present its recommendation on whether or not river herring and shad should be added as stocks in the Atlantic herring fishery. The Council may take action based on the committee's advice. Next, the Council will receive an initial overview of the 2019–2021 specifications process. The Council also may consider options for mitigating impacts of potentially lower catch limits through appropriate adjustments authorized by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. The Council then will adjourn for the day. Immediately thereafter and in the same room, the Council will conduct a public hearing on Amendment 8 to the Atlantic Herring FMP, which proposes alternatives to: (1) Establish an acceptable biological catch (ABC) control rule for Atlantic herring; and (2) address potential localized depletion and user conflicts in the fishery.

Wednesday, June 13, 2018

The second day of the meeting will begin with a report on NMFS's Fisheries Allocation Policy Directive and two associated Procedural Directives. The Council will discuss these directives for reviewing fisheries allocations, which

include identifying "triggers" to initiate an allocation review. Next, the Council will receive an update from NEFSC staff on the Northeast Fisheries Observer Program and the 2018 fishing year sea day schedule. The Groundfish Committee report will follow. The Council will initiate Framework Adjustment 58 to the Northeast Multispecies FMP, which will include: (1) 2019 Total allowable catches for U.S./Canada stocks of Eastern Georges Bank (GB) cod, Eastern GB haddock, and GB yellowtail flounder; (2) rebuilding plans for several groundfish stocks; and (3) other measures. Groundfish Monitoring Amendment 23 will be taken up next. The Council will view video footage of electronic monitoring in operation on fishing vessels. It then will receive an update on the potential range of alternatives in the amendment, which is being developed to improve the overall catch and discard monitoring program in the Northeast multispecies fishery. The Council may select the range of alternatives for further analysis at this meeting. The Council also will receive a progress report from its Fishery Dependent Data Working Group.

Following a lunch break, the Council will continue with and conclude its work on the groundfish items. Then, the Council will receive a short update on the Research Set-Aside (RSA) Program Review Panel Report, which is being prepared by representatives from the Council, GARFO, and NEFSC. Next, the Scallop Committee will provide a list of recommended 2019–2020 scallop RSA priorities. The Council will discuss and approve a final list of research priorities for the program. The Scallop Committee also will provide an initial overview of the 2019–2020 scallop specifications process. In its final item of business before adjourning for the day, the Council will finalize the list of proposals being prepared for NMFS to address regulatory reform as mandated by Executive Orders 13777, 13771, and 13565.

Thursday, June 14, 2018

The third day of the meeting will begin with Ecosystem-Based Fishery Management (EBFM). The Council will receive a summary report on the Center for Independent Experts EBFM Strategy Review from the peer review panel chair. The Council also will receive an update on future EBFM Committee activities. The Habitat Committee will be up next with two items. First will be the Clam Dredge Framework, which is being developed to consider continued surfclam dredge fishery access to the new Great South Channel Habitat

Management Area and possible consideration of a mussel dredge exemption. The Council is expected to select the framework's range of alternatives for further analysis at this meeting. The Council also will receive an update on ongoing offshore energy activities in the Northeast and discuss any needed consultations with federal agencies. After that, the Council will receive an update on efforts by the Northeast Regional Coordinating Council to improve timing and scheduling of stock assessments and stock assessment research. The Council will close out the meeting with "other business."

Although non-emergency issues not contained on this agenda may come before the 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 Fishery Conservation and Management 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 (see **ADDRESSES**) at least 5 days prior to the meeting date.

Dated: May 17, 2018.

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

[FR Doc. 2018–10896 Filed 5–21–18; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–22–P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648–XG252

Western Pacific Fishery Management Council; Public Meetings

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

ACTION: Notice of public meetings.

SUMMARY: The Western Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) will

hold its 129th Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) meeting and, 173rd Council and associated meetings to take actions on fishery management issues in the Western Pacific Region.

DATES: The meetings will be held between June 6 and June 13, 2018. For specific times and agendas, see

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION.

ADDRESSES: The 129th SSC, the Council's Executive & Budget and Legislative Standing Committees, and the 173rd Council meetings will be held at the Marriott Wailea Beach Resort, 3700 Wailea Alanui Drive, Wailea, Maui, HI 96753. The Fishers Forum will be held at the Maui Beach Hotel Ballroom, 170 W. Kaahumanu Ave, Kahului, Maui, HI 96732, phone: (808) 877-0051.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Kitty M. Simonds, Executive Director, Western Pacific Fishery Management Council; phone: (808) 522-8220.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The 129th SSC meeting will be held between 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. on June 6-8, 2018. The joint Executive & Budget and Legislative Standing Committees will meet on June 10, 2018, from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. The 173rd Council meeting will be held between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. on June 11, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. on June 12 and between 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. on June 13, 2018. On June 11, 2018, the Council will host a Fishers Forum between 6 p.m. and 9 p.m. All times listed are local island times.

Agenda items noted as "Final Action Items" refer to actions that result in Council transmittal of a proposed fishery management plan, proposed plan amendment, or proposed regulations to the U.S. Secretary of Commerce, under Sections 304 or 305 of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA). In addition to the agenda items listed here, the Council will hear recommendations from Council advisors. Opportunities to submit public comment will be provided throughout the agendas. The order in which agenda items are addressed may change and will be announced in advance at the Council meeting. The meetings will run as late as necessary to complete scheduled business. Background documents will be available from and written comments should be sent to Kitty M. Simonds, Executive Director; Western Pacific Fishery Management Council, 1164 Bishop Street, Suite 1400, Honolulu, HI 96813, phone: (808) 522-8220 or fax: (808) 522-8226.

Agenda for 129th SSC Meeting

Wednesday, June 6, 2018, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

1. Introductions
2. Approval of Draft Agenda and Assignment of Rapporteurs
3. Status of the 128th SSC Meeting Recommendations
4. Report from the Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center
5. Insular Fisheries
 - A. Main Hawaiian Islands (MHI) Deep 7 Bottomfish Fishery
 1. P* Working Group Report
 2. Specification of Acceptable Biological Catch for the MHI Deep 7 Bottomfish (Action Item)
 3. Social, Economic, Ecological, and Management (SEEM) Working Group Report
 - B. Report on State of Hawaii Kahekili Herbivore Fisheries Management Area
 - C. Public Comment
 - D. SSC Discussion and Recommendations
6. Program Planning and Research
 - A. 2017 Annual Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) Report and Recommendations
 1. Archipelagic SAFE Report Overview and Highlights
 2. Pelagic SAFE Report Overview and Highlights
 - B. Evaluation of 2017 Catch to the 2017 Annual Catch Limits (ACL) (Action Item)
 - C. Updates to the Council's Research Priorities
 1. Five-year Research Priorities
 2. Cooperative Research Priorities
 3. Management Strategy Evaluation Priorities
 - D. Report on the Best Scientific Information Available Framework
 - E. Public Comment
 - F. SSC Discussion and Recommendations

Thursday, June 7, 2018, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

7. Pelagic Fisheries
 - A. Hawaii Shallow-Set Longline Fisheries
 1. Status of the Hawaii Shallow-set Longline ESA Consultation
 2. Loggerhead and Leatherback Turtle Population Vulnerability Assessments
 3. Framework for Managing Sea Turtle Interactions in the Hawaii Shallow-set Longline Fishery (Action Item)
 - B. Pelagic Fisheries Research Plan
 - C. Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission Pre-Assessment Workshop
 - D. Report on Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission 2017 Stock

- Assessments
- E. Public Comment
- F. SSC Discussion and Recommendations
8. Protected Species
 - A. Report of the False Killer Whale Take Reduction Team Meeting
 - B. Updates on Endangered Species Act and Marine Mammal Protection Act Actions
 - C. Public Comment
 - D. SSC Discussion and Recommendations

Friday, June 8, 2018, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

9. Other Business
 - A. 130th SSC Meeting
10. Summary of SSC Recommendations to the Council

Agenda for the Executive and Budget and Legislative Standing Committees

Sunday, June 10, 2018, 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

1. Administrative Report
2. Financial Report
3. Sustainable Fisheries Fund 10 Scope of Projects
4. Report on Legislation
5. Meetings and Workshops
6. Council Family Changes
7. Pacific Island Regional Planning Body Representative
8. Commission Appointments to the North Pacific Fisheries Commission and South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organization
9. Standard Operating Policies and Procedure Changes
10. Other Issues
11. Public Comment
12. Discussion and Recommendations

Agenda for 173rd Council Meeting

Monday, June 11, 2018, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Approval of the 173rd Agenda
3. Approval of the 172nd Meeting Minutes
4. Executive Director's Report
5. Agency Reports
 - A. National Marine Fisheries Service
 1. Pacific Islands Regional Office
 2. Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center
 3. Pacific Islands Ecosystem Based Regional Implementation Plan
 - B. NOAA Office of General Counsel, Pacific Islands Section
 - C. U.S. State Department
 - D. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 1. Pacific Marine Monument Management Plan
 - E. Enforcement
 1. U.S. Coast Guard
 2. NOAA Office of Law Enforcement
 3. NOAA Office of General Counsel, Enforcement Section

- F. Public Comment
- G. Council Discussion and Action
- 6. Hawaii Archipelago & Pacific Remote Island Areas
 - A. Moku Pepa
 - B. Legislative Report
 - C. Enforcement Issues
 - D. Community Issues
 - E. Main Hawaiian Islands (MHI) Deep 7 Bottomfish Fishery
 - 1. Report on the P* Working Group
 - 2. Report of the SEEM Working Group
 - 3. Specification of the ACLs for the MHI Deep 7 Bottomfish Fishery in Fishing Year 2018–19 to 2020–21 (Final Action Item)
 - F. Education and Outreach Initiatives
 - G. Advisory Group Report and Recommendations
 - 1. Hawaii Archipelago Fishery Ecosystem Plan (FEP) Advisory Panel (AP)
 - 2. Archipelagic Plan Team
 - 3. Scientific & Statistical Committee (SSC)
 - H. Public Comment
 - I. Council Discussion and Action
- 7. Program Planning and Research
 - A. Overview of the Western Pacific Council Programs and Research
 - B. Ecosystem Component Species Classification (Final Action Item)
 - C. Evaluation of 2017 Catch to the 2017 ACLs (Final Action Item)
 - D. Omnibus Amendment to Establish an Aquaculture Management Program (Final Action Item)
 - E. 2017 Annual Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation Reports
 - F. Updates to the Council's Research Priorities
 - 1. Magnuson-Stevens Reauthorization Act Five-year Research Priorities
 - 2. Cooperative Research Priorities
 - 3. Pelagic Fisheries Research Plan
 - 4. Management Strategy Evaluation Priorities
 - G. Regional, National and International Outreach and Education
 - H. Advisory Group Report and Recommendations
 - 1. Advisory Panels
 - 2. Archipelagic Plan Team
 - 3. Pelagic Plan Team
 - 4. Protected Species Advisory Committee
 - 5. Marine Planning and Climate Change Committee
 - 6. Fishery Data Collection and Research Committee (FDCRC)—Technical Committee
 - 7. SSC
 - I. Public Comment
 - J. Council Discussion and Action

Monday, June 11, 2018, 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.
Fishers Forum—Going Deep: Hawaii's Bottomfish Story

- Tuesday, June 12, 2018, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.*
- 8. Pelagic & International Fisheries
 - A. Overview of the Western Pacific Pelagic Fisheries
 - B. Hawaii Shallow-Set Longline Fisheries Management
 - 1. Status of the Hawaii Shallow-set Longline Endangered Species Act (ESA) Consultation
 - 2. Loggerhead and Leatherback Turtle Population Vulnerability Assessments
 - 3. Industry Initiatives for Managing Sea Turtle Interactions in the Hawaii Shallow-set Longline Fishery
 - 4. Framework for Managing Sea Turtle Interactions in the Hawaii Shallow-set Longline Fishery (Final Action Item)
 - C. American Samoa Large Vessel Prohibited Area (Final Action Item)
 - D. Modification to US Participating Territory Catch and Effort Limit Amendment 7 Framework (Final Action Item)
 - E. International Fisheries Meetings
 - 1. Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission Stock Pre-assessment Workshop
 - 2. Status of the Eastern Pacific Ocean Tuna Stocks
 - F. Advisory Group Report and Recommendations
 - 1. Advisory Panels
 - 2. Pelagic Plan Team
 - 3. Protected Species Advisory Committee
 - 4. SSC
 - F. Public Comment
 - G. Council Discussion and Action
 - 9. American Samoa Archipelago
 - A. Motu Lipoti
 - B. Fono Report
 - C. Enforcement Issues
 - D. Report on Benefits of National marine Sanctuary of American Samoa
 - E. Report on the Benefits of the Rose Atoll Marine National Monument
 - F. Community Activities and Issues
 - G. American Samoa Marine Conservation Plan (Final Action Item)
 - H. Education and Outreach Initiatives
 - I. Advisory Group Report and Recommendations
 - 1. American Samoa FEP AP
 - 2. SSC
 - J. Public Comment
 - K. Council Discussion and Action
- Tuesday, June 12, 2018, 4 p.m.*
Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items

Wednesday, June 13, 2018, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.
10. Protected Species

- A. Report of the False Killer Whale Take Reduction Team Meeting
- B. Updates on ESA and Marine Mammal Protection Act Actions
- C. Advisory Group Report and Recommendations
 - 1. Advisory Panels
 - 2. Pelagic Plan Team
 - 4. Protected Species Advisory Committee
 - 5. SSC
 - D. Public Comment
 - E. Council Discussion and Action
- 11. Mariana Archipelago
 - A. Guam
 - 1. Isla Informe
 - 2. Legislative Report
 - 3. Enforcement Issues
 - 4. Community Activities and Issues
 - 5. Education and Outreach Initiatives
 - B. Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands
 - 1. Arongol Falú/Asunton i Tano
 - 2. Legislative Report
 - 3. Enforcement Issues
 - 4. Community Activities and Issues
 - 5. Education and Outreach Initiatives
 - C. Advisory Group Reports and Recommendations
 - 1. FEP AP
 - 2. SSC
 - D. Public Comment
 - E. Council Discussion and Action
- 13. Administrative Matters
 - A. Financial Reports
 - B. Administrative Reports
 - C. Council Family Changes
 - D. Report on the May CCC Meeting
 - E. Report on the Recreational Fisheries Summit
 - F. Legislative Standing Committee Recommendations
 - G. Meetings and Workshops
 - H. 2018 Council Member Appointments
 - I. Other Business
 - J. Executive and Budget Standing Committee Recommendations
 - K. Public Comment
 - L. Council Discussion and Action
- 13. Other Business

Non-emergency issues not contained in this agenda may come before the Council for discussion and formal Council action during the 173rd meeting. However, Council action on regulatory issues will be restricted to those issues specifically listed in this document and any regulatory issue arising after publication of this document that requires emergency action under section 305(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, provided the public has been notified of the Council's intent to take action to address the emergency.

Special Accommodations

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sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Kitty M. Simonds, (808) 522-8220 (voice) or (808) 522-8226 (fax), at least 5 days prior to the meeting date.

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

Dated: May 17, 2018.

Rey Israel Marquez,

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

[FR Doc. 2018-10895 Filed 5-21-18; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XG219

Takes of Marine Mammals Incidental to Specified Activities; Taking Marine Mammals Incidental to Seattle Multimodal Project in Seattle, Washington

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

ACTION: Proposed incidental harassment authorization (IHA); request for comments.

SUMMARY: NMFS has received a request from Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) for authorization to take marine mammals incidental to the Seattle Multimodal Project at Colman Dock in Seattle, Washington. Pursuant to the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), NMFS is requesting comments on its proposal to issue an IHA to incidentally take marine mammals during the specified activities.

DATES: Comments and information must be received no later than June 21, 2018.

ADDRESSES: Comments should be addressed to Jolie Harrison, Chief, Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service. Physical comments should be sent to 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910 and electronic comments should be sent to ITP.guan@noaa.gov.

Instructions: NMFS is not responsible for comments sent by any other method, to any other address or individual, or received after the end of the comment period. Comments received electronically, including all attachments, must not exceed a 25-megabyte file size. Attachments to electronic comments will be accepted in Microsoft Word or Excel or Adobe PDF file formats only. All comments

received are a part of the public record and will generally be posted online at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/node/23111> without change. All personal identifying information (e.g., name, 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:

Shane Guan, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, (301) 427-8401. Electronic copies of the applications and supporting documents, as well as a list of the references cited in this document, may be obtained online at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/node/23111>. In case of problems accessing these documents, please call the contact listed above.

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.

The MMPA states that the term “take” means to harass, hunt, capture, kill or attempt to harass, hunt, capture, or kill any marine mammal.

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).

National Environmental Policy Act

Issuance of an MMPA 101(a)(5)(D) authorization requires compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

NMFS preliminary determined the issuance of the proposed IHA is consistent with categories of activities identified in CE B4 (issuance of incidental harassment authorizations under section 101(a)(5)(A) and (D) of the MMPA for which no serious injury or mortality is anticipated) of NOAA’s Companion Manual for NAO 216-6A, and we have not identified any extraordinary circumstances listed in Chapter 4 of the Companion Manual for NAO 216-6A that would preclude this categorical exclusion under NEPA.

We will review all comments submitted in response to this notice prior to making a final decision as to whether application of this CE is appropriate in this circumstance.

Summary of Request

On November 21, 2017, WSDOT submitted a request to NMFS requesting an IHA for the possible harassment of small numbers of marine mammal species incidental to Seattle Multimodal Project at Colman Dock in Seattle, Washington, from August 1, 2018 to July 31, 2019. After receiving the revised project description and the revised IHA application, NMFS determined that the IHA application is adequate and complete on April 4, 2018. NMFS is proposing to authorize the take by Level A and Level B harassments of the following marine mammal species: harbor seal (*Phoca vitulina*); northern elephant seal (*Mirounga angustirostris*); California sea lion (*Zalophus californianus*); Steller sea lion (*Eumetopias jubatus*); killer whale (*Orcinus orca*); long-beaked common dolphin (*Delphinus capensis*); bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*); gray whale (*Eschrichtius robustus*); humpback whale (*Megaptera novaeangliae*); minke whale (*Balaenoptera acutorostrata*); harbor porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*); and Dall’s porpoise (*P. dalli*). Neither WSDOT nor NMFS expect mortality to result from this activity and, therefore, an IHA is appropriate.

NMFS previously issued an IHA to WSDOT for the first year of this project (FR 21579; July 7, 2017). WSDOT