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U.S. Commerce Department announces 2016 regional fishery council appointments

The U.S. Commerce Department today announced the appointment of 19 new and returning members to the eight regional fishery management councils that partner with NOAA Fisheries to manage ocean fish stocks. One at-large seat on the Mid-Atlantic Council will be announced by the Secretary at a later date. The new and reappointed council members begin their three-year terms on August 11.

The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act established the councils to prepare fishery management plans for their regions. NOAA Fisheries works closely with the councils through this process and then reviews, approves and implements the plans. Council members represent diverse groups, including commercial and recreational fishing industries, environmental organizations and academia. They are vital to fulfilling the act's requirements to end overfishing, rebuild fish stocks and manage them sustainably.

"U.S. fisheries are among the most sustainable in the world, and NOAA Fisheries is grateful for the efforts these individuals devote to our nation's fisheries management and to the resiliency of our oceans. We look forward to working with both new and returning council members," said Eileen Sobeck, assistant NOAA administrator for fisheries. "Each council faces unique challenges, and their partnership with NOAA Fisheries is integral to the sustainability of the fisheries in their respective regions, as well as to the communities that rely on those fisheries."

Each year, the Secretary of Commerce appoints approximately one-third of the total 72 appointed members to the eight regional councils. The Secretary selects members from nominations submitted by the governors of fishing states, territories and tribal governments.

Council members are appointed to both obligatory (state-specific) and at-large (regional) seats. Council members serve a three-year term and can get reappointed to serve three consecutive terms. Asterisks preceding a member's name indicate a reappointment.

New England Council

The New England Council includes members from Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Rhode Island. The appointees for 2016 will fill an obligatory seat for New Hampshire and two at-large seats.

Obligatory Seat:

Mark H. Godfroy (New Hampshire)

At-large Seat:

Richard J. Bellavance, Jr. (Rhode Island)

*Michael P. Sissenwine (Massachusetts)

Mid-Atlantic Council

The Mid-Atlantic Council includes members from the states of Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Virginia. The appointees for 2016 will fill an obligatory seat for Delaware and two at-large seats. The third vacant at-large seat will be announced by the Secretary at a later date.

Obligatory Seat:
Paul W. Townsend (Delaware)

At-large Seats:
Peter B. Hughes (New Jersey)
Roger L. Mann (Virginia)

South Atlantic Council

The South Atlantic Council includes members from Florida, Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina. The appointees for 2016 will fill obligatory seats from North Carolina and South Carolina.

Obligatory Seats:
*Christopher C. Conklin (South Carolina)
Robert T. Griner (North Carolina)

Caribbean Council

The Caribbean Council includes members from Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The appointees for 2016 will fill one at-large seat.

At-Large Seat:
*Louis A. Blanchard (U.S. Virgin Islands)

Gulf of Mexico Council

The Gulf Council includes members from Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas. The appointees for 2016 will fill obligatory seats for Mississippi and Texas and one at-large seat.

Obligatory Seats:
*Leann N. Bosarge (Mississippi)
*Douglass W. Boyd (Texas)

At-large Seat:
Thomas K. Frazer (Florida)

Pacific Council

The Pacific Council includes members from California, Idaho, Oregon and Washington. The Pacific Council also includes one Tribal seat. The appointees for 2016 will fill an obligatory seat for Idaho and one at-large seat.

Obligatory Seat:
*Herbert A. Pollard, II (Idaho)

At-Large Seat:
Marc M. Gorelnik (California)

North Pacific Council

The North Pacific Council includes members from Alaska and Washington. The appointees for 2016 will fill two obligatory seats for Alaska.

Obligatory Seats:
Michael "Buck" Laukitis (Alaska)
Theresa A. Peterson (Alaska)

Western Pacific Council

The Western Pacific Council includes members from American Samoa, Guam, Hawaii, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The appointees for 2016 will fill an obligatory seat for American Samoa and two at-large seats.

Obligatory Seat:

Archie T. Soliai (American Samoa)

At-Large Seats:

Christinna S. Lutu-Sanchez (American Samoa)

Dean C. Sensui (Hawaii)

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