

TABLE 1—SCOPING MEETINGS

January 18, 2017—6 p.m., <i>listening station</i> ..... Harvey Government Center, 1200 Truman Avenue, 2nd Floor, Key West, FL 33040.	January 19, 2017—6 p.m., <i>listening station</i> . Hyatt Place Marathon, 1996 Overseas Highway, Marathon, FL 33050.
January 23, 2017—6 p.m., <i>in-person meeting</i> ..... Lexington Hotel & Conference Center, 1515 Prudential Drive, Jacksonville, FL 32207.	January 24, 2017—6 p.m., <i>in-person meeting</i> . Hilton Cocoa Beach Oceanfront, 1550 North Atlantic Avenue, Cocoa Beach, FL 32931.
January 25, 2017—6 p.m., <i>in-person meeting</i> ..... Flagler Place, 201 SW Flagler Avenue, Stuart, FL 34994 .....	January 26, 2017—6 p.m., <i>in-person meeting</i> . Hilton Key Largo, 97000 Overseas Highway, Key Largo, FL 33037.
January 30, 2017—6 p.m., <i>in-person meeting</i> ..... Murrells Inlet Community Center, 4462 Murrells Inlet Road, Murrells Inlet, SC 29576.	January 31, 2017—6 p.m., <i>in-person meeting</i> . Crowne Plaza, 4831 Tanger Outlet Boulevard, North Charleston, SC 29418.
February 1, 2017—6 p.m., <i>in-person meeting</i> ..... Richmond Hill City Center, 520 Cedar Street, Richmond Hill, GA 31324	February 6, 2017—6 p.m., <i>in-person meeting</i> . Hilton Wilmington Riverside, 201 N. Water Street, Wilmington, NC 28401.
February 7, 2017—6 p.m., <i>in-person meeting</i> ..... Hatteras Community Center, 57689 NC Highway 12, Hatteras, NC 27943.	February 8, 2017—6 p.m., <i>in-person meeting</i> . Doubletree by Hilton, 2717 W. Fort Macon Road, Atlantic Beach, NC 28512.

After the DEIS associated with Amendment 43 is completed, it will be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). After filing, the EPA will publish a notice of availability of the DEIS for public comment in the **Federal Register**. Consistent with the CEQ regulations, the DEIS will have a 45-day public comment period.

The Council and NMFS will consider public comments received on the DEIS in developing the final environmental impact statement (FEIS) and before adopting final management measures for the amendment. NMFS will submit the consolidated final amendment and supporting FEIS to the Secretary of Commerce (Secretary) for review as required by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

NMFS will announce, through a notification in the **Federal Register**, the availability of the final amendment for public review during the Department of Commerce Secretarial review period and will consider all public comments. During Secretarial review, NMFS will also file the FEIS with the EPA, and the EPA will publish a notice of availability for the FEIS in the **Federal Register**. This public comment period is expected to be concurrent with the Secretarial review period and will end prior to final agency action to approve, disapprove, or partially approve the Amendment 43.

NMFS will announce, through a document published in the **Federal Register**, all public comment periods on the final amendment, its proposed implementing regulations, and the availability of its associated FEIS. NMFS will consider all public comments received during the Secretarial review period, whether they are on the final amendment, the proposed regulations, or the FEIS, prior to final agency action.

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

Dated: December 30, 2016.

**Alan D. Risenhoover**,  
*Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries,*  
*National Marine Fisheries Service.*

[FR Doc. 2016-32049 Filed 1-5-17; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3510-22-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

**RIN 0648-XF107**

#### Taking and Importing Marine Mammals; Taking Marine Mammals Incidental to Fishery-Independent Monitoring Activities

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

**ACTION:** Notice; receipt of application for Letters of Authorization; request for comments and information.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS has received a request from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) for authorization to take marine mammals incidental to conducting fishery-independent monitoring activities in estuarine waters of Texas, over the course of five years. Pursuant to regulations implementing the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), NMFS is announcing receipt of TPWD's request for the development and implementation of regulations governing the incidental taking of marine mammals. NMFS invites the public to provide information, suggestions, and comments on TPWD's application and request.

**DATES:** Comments and information must be received no later than February 6, 2017.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments on the application 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.Laws@noaa.gov](mailto:ITP.Laws@noaa.gov).

**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 online at [www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/permits/incidental/research.htm](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/permits/incidental/research.htm) without change. All personal identifying information (*e.g.*, name, address), confidential business information, or otherwise sensitive information submitted voluntarily by the sender will be publicly accessible. Attachments to electronic comments will be accepted in Microsoft Word, Excel, or Adobe PDF file formats only.

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

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### Availability

Electronic copies of TPWD's application may be obtained online at: [www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/permits/incidental/research.htm](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/permits/incidental/research.htm). In case of problems accessing these documents, please call the contact listed above.

##### Background

Section 101(a)(5)(A) of the MMPA (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*) directs the Secretary of Commerce (Secretary) 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) if certain findings are made and regulations are issued.

Incidental taking shall be allowed if NMFS finds that the taking will have a negligible impact on the species or stock(s) affected and will not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of the species or stock(s) for taking for subsistence uses, and if the permissible methods of taking and requirements pertaining to the mitigation, monitoring and reporting of such taking 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).”

#### Summary of Request

On July 29, 2015, NMFS received an adequate and complete application from TPWD requesting authorization for take of marine mammals incidental to fishery-independent monitoring activities in Texas. The requested regulations would be valid for five years from the date of issuance. The proposed action requires the use of gillnets in Texas bays. Use of gillnets in Texas bays presents a reasonable likelihood of interaction with bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*). Therefore, TPWD requests authorization to incidentally take bottlenose dolphins.

#### Specified Activities

TPWD conducts a long-term standardized fishery-independent monitoring program to assess the relative abundance and size of finfish and shellfish in Texas bays. This program uses gillnets deployed according to a stratified random sample design, with each Texas bay system as an independent stratum. Gillnets are set overnight during ten-week spring and fall sampling seasons, with gillnets set perpendicularly to shore.

#### Information Sought

Interested persons may submit information, suggestions, and comments concerning TPWD’s request (see

**ADDRESSES**). NMFS will consider all information, suggestions, and comments related to the request during the development of proposed regulations governing the incidental taking of marine mammals by TPWD, if appropriate.

Dated: December 27, 2016.

**Donna S. Wieting**,

*Director, Office of Protected Resources,  
National Marine Fisheries Service.*

[FR Doc. 2016-31946 Filed 1-5-17; 8:45 am]

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

**RIN 0648-XF135**

#### Pacific 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 Pacific Fishery Management Council (Pacific Council) is sponsoring a meeting to review new methods proposed to be used in groundfish stock assessments. The meeting is open to the public.

**DATES:** The Groundfish Assessment Methodology Review Meeting will commence at 8:30 a.m. PST, Wednesday, January 25, 2017, and continue until 5 p.m. or as necessary to complete business for the day. The meeting will reconvene on Thursday, January 26, 2017, starting at 8:30 a.m. PST and continue as necessary to complete business for the day.

**ADDRESSES:** On January 25, 2017, the Groundfish Assessment Methodology Review Meeting will be held in the auditorium at the NMFS Northwest Fisheries Science Center, 2725 Montlake Boulevard E, Seattle, WA 98112; telephone: (206) 860-3200. On January 26, 2017, the meeting will be held in the Heritage Room at the Seattle Yacht Club, 1807 East Hamlin Street, Seattle, WA 98112; telephone: (206) 325-1000. The Seattle Yacht Club is next door to the NMFS Northwest Fisheries Science Center.

*Council address:* Pacific Fishery Management Council, 7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101, Portland, OR 97220-1384; telephone: (503) 820-2280.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Mr. John DeVore, Pacific Council; telephone: (503) 820-2413.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The purpose of the Groundfish Assessment Methodology Review Meeting is to review proposed methods for groundfish stock assessment. The specific methodologies to be reviewed are:

- Use of the Dirichlet multinomial likelihood for compositional data;
- Application of the Generalized Linear Mixed Model (GLMM) with spatial autocorrelation to survey data;
- Application of the GLMM with spatial autocorrelation to fishery catch per unit effort data;
- Revised set of priors for natural mortality;
- Revised prior for steepness; and
- New features in the revised Stock Synthesis software.

Public comments during the meeting will be received from attendees at the discretion of the chair.

Although non-emergency issues not identified in the meeting agenda may come before the meeting participants for discussion, those issues may not be the subject of formal action during this meeting. Formal action at the meeting 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 meeting participants’ intent to take final action to address the emergency.

Visitors who are foreign nationals (defined as a person who is not a citizen or national of the United States) will require additional security clearance to access the NMFS Northwest Fisheries Science Center. Foreign national visitors should contact Ms. Stacey Miller at (541) 867-0535 at least two weeks prior to the meeting date to initiate the security clearance process.

#### Special Accommodations

This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for auxiliary aids should be directed to Mr. Kris Kleinschmidt at 503-820-2425 at least ten days prior to the meeting date.

Dated: January 3, 2017.

**Jeffrey N. Lonergan**,

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

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