

- and Pelagic Non-Longline Fisheries
6. Council's Research Priorities
    - A. Five-year Research Priorities
    - B. Cooperative Research Priorities
    - C. Discussion
  7. Public Comment

*Friday, April 20, 2018, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.*

8. Pelagic Longline Fisheries Issues
  - A. Review of the Draft 2017 FEP Annual SAFE Report
    - i. Summary of relevant fishery data: 2017 Hawaii and American Samoa Logbook Reports
    - ii. 2017 Protected species section
    - iii. 2017 Albatross Workshop Report
    - iv. Olive ridley and leatherback turtle analysis
    - v. Developing a standardized metric to monitor protected species interactions
    - vi. Discussion and synthesis
  - B. Council Fishery Actions on Pelagic Longline Fisheries
    - i. Framework for Managing Sea Turtle Interactions in the Hawaii Shallow-set Longline Fishery
      - a. Overview of the action
      - b. Characterization of loggerhead turtle interactions in the Hawaii shallow-set longline fishery
      - c. Review of sea turtle impacts assessment approaches
      - ii. Other actions
    - C. Discussion on Emerging Issues, Data Gaps and Research Needs
9. Public Comment
10. Committee Discussion and Recommendations
11. Other Business and Next Meeting

#### Special Accommodations

These meetings are accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for 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: March 27, 2018.

**Jeffrey N. Lonergan,**

*Acting Deputy 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

RIN 0648-XG123

##### South Atlantic Fishery Management Council; Public Meetings

**AGENCY:** National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and

Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

**ACTION:** Notice of public scoping meetings.

**SUMMARY:** The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) will hold two public scoping meetings via webinar pertaining to Amendment 42 to the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan (FMP) of the South Atlantic Region. The amendment addresses modifications to sea turtle release gear requirements for the snapper grouper fishery.

**DATES:** The scoping meetings will be held via webinar on April 23 and April 24, 2018.

**ADDRESSES:** *Council address:* South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, 4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201, N Charleston, SC 29405.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Kim Iverson, Public Information Officer, SAFMC; phone: (843) 571-4366 or toll free: (866) SAFMC-10; fax: (843) 769-4520; email: [kim.iverson@safmc.net](mailto:kim.iverson@safmc.net).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The scoping meetings will be conducted via webinar accessible via the internet from the Council's website at [www.safmc.net](http://www.safmc.net). The scoping meetings will begin at 6 p.m. Registration for the webinars is required. Registration information will be posted on the Council's website at [www.safmc.net](http://www.safmc.net) as it becomes available.

##### Amendment 42 to the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan

The draft amendment addresses changes to sea turtle release gear types for the commercial and for-hire components of the snapper grouper fishery. The National Marine Fisheries Service's Release Protocols for protected species were originally published in 2004, with updates in 2008 and 2010. A new update is ready for publication. In the pending update, three additional sea turtle release gears, used for handling and releasing incidentally caught sea turtles, have been approved by the Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC). The new gear requires less space on vessels while still providing the necessary function. For fishermen operating in the snapper grouper fishery to utilize the newly approved gears, they need to be listed as acceptable gear in the Snapper Grouper FMP and made a requirement in the regulations. The amendment would also revise the snapper grouper framework procedure to include modifications to protected resources release gear requirements and handling procedures after they are approved by the SEFSC to allow for

more timely modifications to these regulations.

During the scoping meetings, Council staff will present an overview of the amendment and will be available for informal discussions and to answer questions via webinar. Members of the public will have an opportunity to go on record to record their comments for consideration by the Council.

#### Special Accommodations

These meetings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for auxiliary aids should be directed to the council office (see **ADDRESSES**) 3 days prior to the meeting.

**Note:** The times and sequence specified in this agenda are subject to change.

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

Dated: March 27, 2018.

**Jeffrey N. Lonergan,**

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

[FR Doc. 2018-06483 Filed 3-29-18; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3510-22-P**

#### DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

##### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XG122

##### 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, NEFMC) will hold a three-day meeting to consider actions affecting New England fisheries in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ).

**DATES:** The meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 17, 2018 through Thursday, April 19, 2018, beginning at 9 a.m. on April 17, 8:30 a.m. on April 18, and 8:30 a.m. on April 19.

#### ADDRESSES:

*Meeting address:* The meeting will be held at the Hilton Hotel, 20 Coogan Boulevard, Mystic, CT 06355; telephone: (860) 572-0731; online at [www3.hilton.com/en/hotels/connecticut/hilton-mystic-MYSMHHF/index.html](http://www3.hilton.com/en/hotels/connecticut/hilton-mystic-MYSMHHF/index.html).

*Council address:* New England Fishery Management Council, 50 Water Street, Mill 2, Newburyport, MA 01950; telephone: (978) 465-0492; [www.nefmc.org](http://www.nefmc.org).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Thomas A. Nies, Executive Director, New England Fishery Management Council; telephone: (978) 465-0492, ext. 113.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:****Agenda**

*Tuesday, April 17, 2018*

After introductions and brief announcements, the meeting will begin with reports from the Council Chairman and Executive Director, NMFS's Regional Administrator for the Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (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, staff from the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and U.S. Coast Guard, and the Northeast Trawl Advisory Panel. Next, the Council will receive some introductory remarks from the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM), which will be holding an open house in a neighboring meeting room to collect comments and answer questions on offshore wind leasing activities. The Habitat Report will be next, beginning with an update on proposed and ongoing offshore energy projects in the Northeast. The Council then will receive a progress report on the Clam Dredge Framework, which is being developed to consider surfclam dredge fishery access to the new Great South Channel Habitat Management Area. The Council will discuss whether to consider a mussel dredge exemption in the framework within the habitat management area. The Skate Committee will report next. The Council may take final action on Framework Adjustment 6 to the Northeast Skate Complex Fishery Management Plan (FMP), which contains alternatives for prolonging the length of the skate wing fishery.

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 Scallop Committee will provide a progress report on 2018 priorities, including adjustments to General Category Individual Fishing Quota trip limits and monitoring/catch accounting provisions. The Council may discuss possible adjustments to its scallop priorities to allow consideration of standard default measures in Framework Adjustment 30. This

framework will include specifications for the 2019 scallop fishing year and default specifications for fishing year 2020, along with other measures. The Council Program Review will be next. A panel of external reviewers with scientific and management expertise met March 13–16, 2018 to independently assess the New England Council's operations and performance. The Council will review and discuss the panel's findings and recommendations for improvement. The Council then will adjourn for the day.

*Wednesday, April 18, 2018*

The second day of the meeting will begin with a report from NMFS staff on the agency's draft policy directive for allocating costs in electronic monitoring (EM) programs in federal fisheries. The Groundfish Committee report will follow. The Council will receive an update on the potential range of alternatives in Groundfish Monitoring Amendment 23, which is under development to improve the overall catch and discard monitoring program in the Northeast multispecies fishery. The Council then will discuss Northeast Fishery Sector IX. First, the Council will receive a GARFO overview on: (a) Sector IX steps to address shortcomings in meeting the requirements of its previous sector operations plan; and (b) Sector IX's proposed lease-only operations plan as submitted to GARFO. The Council will consider making recommendations to NMFS on the proposed operations plan.

Following a lunch break, the Council will be briefed on highlights from the March 28–29, 2018 Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Summit. Next, the Council will take up the issue of "best scientific information available" (BSIA). The Council will review NMFS's draft document on BSIA and then receive feedback and recommendations on the draft from its Scientific and Statistical Committee. The Council will consider making recommendations to NMFS on the BSIA draft document. The Council next will receive a presentation on the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team's recent meetings and related activities. Following any pertinent discussion, the Council will receive a presentation by NMFS staff on agency proposals to address overfishing and rebuild North Atlantic shortfin mako sharks. The Council will conclude the day with a short report on: (a) NMFS's Highly Migratory Species Advisory Panel's (AP) recent meeting, which will include the AP's comments on shortfin mako sharks; and (b) the International Commission for the Conservation of

Atlantic Tunas Advisory Committee's recent meeting.

*Thursday, April 19, 2018*

The third day of the meeting will begin with an Atlantic herring report. The Council will review and discuss an updated white paper that addresses issues related to potentially adding river herring and shad as stocks in the Atlantic herring fishery. The Council may take action related to this item. The Council also will discuss the implications of the river herring/shad bycatch accountability measures that recently were triggered in both the Atlantic herring and Atlantic mackerel fisheries. The Council then will move into its Industry-Funded Monitoring (IFM) discussion. GARFO staff will present NMFS's final report on a recent EM project conducted aboard midwater trawl vessels in the Atlantic herring and Atlantic mackerel fisheries. The Council then will debate whether EM, coupled with portside sampling, provide a sufficient alternative to at-sea monitoring in the Atlantic herring midwater trawl fishery. This discussion may lead to Council action within the Omnibus IFM Amendment.

Following a lunch break, the Council will receive the annual Ecosystem Status Report from NEFSC staff. The report summarizes the status of the Northeast Continental Shelf ecosystem. The Council then will review and discuss proposals being prepared for NMFS to address regulatory reform as mandated by Executive Orders 13777, 13771, and 13565. 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: March 27, 2018.

**Jeffrey N. Lonergan,**

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

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

**RIN 0648-XG097**

#### Meeting of the Columbia Basin Partnership Task Force of the Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee

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

**ACTION:** Notice of open public meeting.

**SUMMARY:** This notice sets forth the proposed schedule and agenda of a forthcoming meeting of the Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee's (MAFAC's) Columbia Basin Partnership Task Force (CBP Task Force). The CBP Task Force will discuss the issues outlined in the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** below.

**DATES:** The meeting will be held April 18, 2018, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and on April 19, 2018, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**ADDRESSES:** The meeting will be held at the Downtown Embassy Suites, 319 SW Pine St., Portland, OR 97204; 503-279-9000.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Katherine Cheney; NFMS West Coast Region; 503-231-6730; email: [Katherine.Cheney@noaa.gov](mailto:Katherine.Cheney@noaa.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Notice is hereby given of a meeting of MAFAC's CBP Task Force. The MAFAC was established by the Secretary of Commerce (Secretary) and, since 1971, advises the Secretary on all living marine resource matters that are the responsibility of the Department of Commerce. The MAFAC charter and summaries of prior MAFAC meetings are located online at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/partners#marine-fisheries-advisory-committee>. The CBP Task Force reports to MAFAC and is being convened to discuss and develop recommendations for long-term goals to meet Columbia Basin salmon recovery, conservation needs, and harvest opportunities. These goals will be developed in the context of habitat capacity and other factors that affect salmon mortality. More

information is available at the CBP Task Force web page: [http://www.westcoast.fisheries.noaa.gov/columbia\\_river/index.html](http://www.westcoast.fisheries.noaa.gov/columbia_river/index.html).

#### Matters To Be Considered

The meeting time and agenda are subject to change. Updated information will be available on the CBP Task Force web page above. Meeting topics include consideration of draft quantitative goals for most Columbia Basin species and discussing approaches to integrating goals across species to develop recommendations for basin-wide goals.

The meeting is open to the public as observers, and public input will be accepted on April 19, 2018, from 1:15 to 1:45 p.m., limited to the time available.

#### Special Accommodations

The meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Katherine Cheney, 503-231-6730, by April 9, 2018.

Dated: March 27, 2018.

**Jennifer L. Lukens,**

*Director, Office of Policy, National Marine Fisheries Service.*

[FR Doc. 2018-06470 Filed 3-29-18; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3510-22-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

**RIN 0648-XG127**

#### Endangered and Threatened Species; Take of Anadromous Fish

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

**ACTION:** Notice of receipt of one enhancement permit application and request for comment.

**SUMMARY:** Notice is hereby given that NMFS has received one permit application submitted by FISHBIO Environmental, LLC. (FISHBIO) to enhance the propagation and survival of species listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, as amended, for a five-year period. This document serves to notify the public of the availability of the permit application for review and comment, prior to a decision by NMFS whether to issue the permit. The permit application may be viewed online at: [https://apps.nmfs.noaa.gov/preview/preview\\_open\\_for\\_comment.cfm](https://apps.nmfs.noaa.gov/preview/preview_open_for_comment.cfm).

**DATES:** Comments or requests for a public hearing on the application must be received at the appropriate address or fax number (see **ADDRESSES**) no later than 5 p.m. Pacific standard time on April 30, 2018.

**ADDRESSES:** Written comments on the application should be submitted to the NMFS California Central Valley Office, 650 Capitol Mall, Suite 5-100, Sacramento, CA 95814. Comments may also be submitted via fax to (916) 930-3629, or by email to [Amanda.Cranford@noaa.gov](mailto:Amanda.Cranford@noaa.gov) (include the permit number in the subject line of the fax or email).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Amanda Cranford, Sacramento, CA (Phone: (916) 930-3706; Fax: (916) 930-3629; Email: [Amanda.Cranford@noaa.gov](mailto:Amanda.Cranford@noaa.gov)). Permit application instructions are available from the address above, or online at <https://apps.nmfs.noaa.gov>.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

#### ESA-Listed Species Covered in This Notice

Chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*): Threatened, naturally produced and hatchery propagated Central Valley (CV) spring-run;

Steelhead (*O. mykiss*): Threatened, naturally produced and artificially propagated California Central Valley (CCV).

North American green sturgeon (*Acipenser medirostris*): Threatened, naturally produced southern distinct population segment (SDPS).

#### Permit Application Received

Permit 21477

FISHBIO has applied for an enhancement permit under section 10(a)(1)(A) of the ESA for a period of five years that would allow take of both adult and juvenile CV spring-run Chinook salmon, CCV steelhead, and SDPS green sturgeon. Recent Federal legislation (Section 4010 of the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act (WIIN Act); December 16, 2016) requires the Oakdale Irrigation District and the South San Joaquin Irrigation District (Districts) and NMFS to jointly establish a nonnative predator research and pilot fish removal program in the Stanislaus River to investigate whether nonnative predator removal is an effective strategy to improve overall conditions for native fish, especially the survival of juvenile salmonids. The general approach of the program is intended to build off previous nonnative predator removal studies conducted in the Central Valley. The program will allow examination of the biological and ecological responses of both ESA-listed