

2018 through June 2019. Vessels would complete approximately 55 paired, 30-minute tows per trip at a standard vessel speed of 4.8 knots. In addition to open areas, tows could occur in Closed Area I, Closed Area II, or the four Nantucket Lightship Scallop Rotational Areas. The four research trips would be centralized around areas with high yellowtail and winter flounder bycatch and in areas with a high abundance of harvestable size scallops mixed with pre-recruit scallops.

Vessels would fish two, 15-foot (4.57-m) Turtle Deflector Dredges; one dredge

would be rigged with a standard apron while the other would be rigged with an extended vertical link apron. The project will alternate tows with and without the dredge over net over both dredges. Standard linking is defined as a single link between ring spaces, and the extended link is defined as two links linked together between rings. Both dredges would use 4-inch (10.16-cm) rings and a 10-inch (25.40-cm) twine top.

For all tows, the sea scallop catch would be counted into baskets and weighed. One basket from each dredge

would be randomly selected and the scallops would be measured in 5 mm increments to determine size selectivity. Finfish catch would be sorted by species and then counted, weighed, and measured in 1 mm increments.

Depending on the volume of scallops and finfish captured, the catch would be subsampled as necessary. No catch would be retained for longer than needed to conduct sampling and no finfish or scallop catch would be landed for sale. Table 1 contains an estimate of the finfish catch anticipated for the project.

TABLE 1—CFF EXTENDED LINK APRON PROJECT CATCH ESTIMATES

Species	Weight (lbs)	Weight (kg)
Sea Scallop	16,552	7,508
Yellowtail Flounder	549	249
Winter Flounder	803	364
Windowpane Flounder	2,828	1,283
Summer Flounder	943	428
Fourspot Flounder	74	34
American Plaice Flounder	90	41
Witch Flounder	12	5
Haddock	58	26
Atlantic Cod	100	45
Monkfish	8,420	3,819
Spiny Dogfish	87	39
Barndoor Skate	1,109	503
NE Skate Complex (excluding barndoor skate)	63,528	28,816

CFF needs these exemptions to allow them to conduct experimental dredge towing without being charged DAS, and to deploy gear in closed access areas where concentrations of primary bycatch species are sufficiently high to provide statistically robust results. Researchers also need mesh size and gear obstruction exemptions in order to use the dredge net cover. Utilizing the dredge net cover will allow researchers to quantify fish that would normally escape through the gear during normal fishing operations. Participating vessels need crew size waivers to accommodate science personnel, and possession waivers will enable researchers to conduct finfish sampling activities. The project would be exempt from the sea scallop observer program requirements because activities conducted on the trip are not consistent with normal fishing operations.

If approved, the applicant may request minor modifications and extensions to the EFP throughout the year. EFP modifications and extensions may be granted without further notice if they are deemed essential to facilitate completion of the proposed research and have minimal impacts that do not change the scope or impact of the initially approved EFP request. Any

fishing activity conducted outside the scope of the exempted fishing activity would be prohibited.

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

Dated: August 1, 2018.

Margo B. Schulze-Haugen,
Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.
[FR Doc. 2018–16770 Filed 8–3–18; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–22–P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648–XF696

Marine Mammals; File No. 21217

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

ACTION: Notice; receipt of application for permit amendment.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that Aaron Roberts, Ph.D., University of North Texas, Biological Sciences, 1155 Union Circle, #310559, Denton, TX 76203, has applied for an amendment to Scientific Research Permit No. 21217.

DATES: Written, telefaxed, or email comments must be received on or before September 5, 2018.

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 (APPS) home page, <https://apps.nmfs.noaa.gov>, and then selecting File No. 21217 from the list of available applications.

These documents are also available upon written request or by appointment in the Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13705, Silver Spring, MD 20910; phone (301) 427–8401; fax (301) 713–0376.

Written comments on this application should be submitted to the Chief, Permits and Conservation Division, at the address listed above. Comments may also be submitted by facsimile to (301) 713–0376, or by email to NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov. Please include the File No. 21217 in the subject line of the email comment.

Those individuals requesting a public hearing should submit a written request to the Chief, Permits and Conservation Division at the address listed above. The request should set forth the specific

reasons why a hearing on the application would be appropriate.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jennifer Skidmore or Sara Young (301) 427-8401.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The subject amendment to Permit No. 21217 is requested under the authority of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (MMPA; 16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*) and the regulations governing the taking and importing of marine mammals (50 CFR part 216).

Permit No. 21217, issued on November 6, 2017 (82 FR 60968; December 26, 2017), authorizes the permit holder to import biological samples from up to 30 harp seals (*Pagophilus groenlandicus*) and 30 hooded seals (*Cystophora cristata*) from Canada to study the effects of polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs) on the fitness and immune function in two species of phocid seals. The permit holder is requesting the permit be amended to increase the number of samples imported from each species from 30 to 60 individuals and to include the import of samples collected during the 2019 field season in Canada. All other aspects of the permitted activities would not change.

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 proposed activities are 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**, NMFS is forwarding copies of these applications to the Marine Mammal Commission and its Committee of Scientific Advisors.

Dated: July 31, 2018.

Julia Marie Harrison,
Chief, Permits and Conservation Division,
Office of Protected Resources, National
Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 2018-16719 Filed 8-3-18; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XG365

Pacific Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

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

ACTION: Notice of public meeting (webinar).

SUMMARY: The Pacific Fishery Management Council's (Pacific Council) Salmon Technical Team (STT), Salmon Advisory Subpanel (SAS), and Model Evaluation Workgroup (MEW) will hold a joint meeting to discuss and make recommendations on issues on the Pacific Council's September 2018 agenda. This meeting will be held via webinar and is open to the public.

DATES: The webinar will be held Wednesday, August 22, 2018, at 2 p.m. and will end when business for the day has been completed.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held via webinar. A public listening station is available at the Pacific Council office (address below). To attend the webinar, use this link: <https://www.gotomeeting.com/webinar> (click "Join a Webinar" in top right corner of page). (1) Enter the Webinar ID: 493-298-571. (2) Enter your name and email address (required). You must use your telephone for the audio portion of the meeting by dialing this TOLL number 1-415-930-5321. (3) Enter the Attendee phone audio access code 706-308-295. (4) Enter your audio phone pin (shown after joining the webinar). *Note:* We have disabled Mic/Speakers as an option and require all participants to use a telephone or cell phone to participate. Technical Information and System Requirements: PC-based attendees are required to use Windows® 7, Vista, or XP; Mac®-based attendees are required to use Mac OS® X 10.5 or newer; Mobile attendees are required to use iPhone®, iPad®, Android™ phone or Android tablet (see <https://www.gotomeeting.com/webinar/ipad-iphone-android-webinar-apps>). You may send an email to Mr. Kris Kleinschmidt at Kris.Kleinschmidt@noaa.gov or contact him at 503-820-2280, extension 411 for technical assistance.

Council address: Pacific Fishery Management Council, 7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101, Portland, OR 97220-1384.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Robin Ehlke, Pacific Council; telephone: (503) 820-2410.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Major topics include, but are not limited to, Salmon Methodology Review, Salmon Rebuilding Plan update, and preliminary Pacific halibut management for 2019. The groups may also address one or more of the Council's scheduled Administrative Matters and Ecosystem topics. Public comments during the webinar will be received from attendees

at the discretion of the STT, SAS, and MEW Chairs.

Although non-emergency issues not contained in the meeting agenda may be discussed, those issues may not be the subject of formal action during this meeting. Action will be restricted to those issues specifically listed in this document and any issues arising after publication of this document 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 intent to take final action to address the emergency.

Special Accommodations

The public listening station is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Mr. Kris Kleinschmidt (kris.kleinschmidt@noaa.gov; (503) 820-2411) at least 10 days prior to the meeting date.

Dated: July 31, 2018.

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

[FR Doc. 2018-16698 Filed 8-3-18; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XG374

Caribbean 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 Caribbean Fishery Management Council will hold its 163rd meeting in August to discuss the items contained in the agenda in the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**.

DATES: The meetings will be held on August 28-30, 2018, from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The meetings will be held at The Buccaneer Hotel located at 5007 Estate Shoys, Christiansted, St. Croix, USVI.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Caribbean Fishery Management Council, 270 Muñoz Rivera Avenue, Suite 401, San Juan, Puerto Rico 00918-1903, telephone: (787) 766-5926.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: