

- Delegation of management authority over salmon fisheries in the SEAK EEZ to the State of Alaska on the basis of new information regarding the effects of the action and the contemporary status of impacted ESA-listed species;

- Federal funding through grants to the State of Alaska for the State's management of commercial and sport salmon fisheries and transboundary river enhancement necessary to implement the 2019 PST Agreement; and,

- Federal funding of a conservation program to support critical Puget Sound Chinook stocks and Southern Resident Killer Whales (SRKW) related to the 2019 PST Agreement, one component of which included funding of a prey increase program for SRKW.

The Federal funding of the conservation program to support Puget Sound Chinook stocks and SRKW was a separate action from the two Federal actions related to the SEAK salmon fisheries (delegation and funding). In 2019, NMFS completed the consultation and issued the 2019 BiOp and ITS. In the 2019 BiOp, NMFS concluded that the actions were not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any of the ESA-listed species and that the actions were not likely to destroy or adversely modify designated critical habitat for any of the listed species. NMFS issued an ITS in the 2019 BiOp for take associated with the Federal actions related to the SEAK salmon fisheries, compliance with which would exempt participants in these fisheries from the ESA's prohibition on the incidental take of threatened and endangered species.

In 2020, the Wild Fish Conservancy (WFC) filed a lawsuit in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington challenging the 2019 BiOp (*Wild Fish Conservancy v. Quan*, No. 2:20-CV-417-RAJ-MLP (W.D. Wash.)). WFC alleged NMFS violated the ESA and NEPA. On August 8, 2022, the district court found that NMFS violated both the ESA and NEPA (*Wild Fish Conservancy v. Quan*, No. 2:20-CV-417-RAJ-MLP, 2021 WL 8445587 (W.D. Wash. Sept. 27, 2021), report and recommendation adopted, No. 2:20-CV-417-RAJ, 2022 WL 3155784 (W.D. Wash. Aug. 8, 2022)).

With respect to NEPA, the court concluded NMFS failed to conduct a NEPA analysis for the issuance of the ITS with the 2019 BiOp. The court also concluded that NMFS failed to conduct adequate NEPA analysis for the adoption of the prey increase program. The court remanded to the agency to address its conclusions regarding these NEPA, as well as the ESA, deficiencies.

As part of its effort to address the court's orders on remand, NMFS intends to conduct a new ESA section 7 consultation on the effects from the federal actions related to the SEAK salmon fisheries (delegation and funding), and if warranted, would issue a new ITS as part of that consultation. Compliance with a new ITS would exempt participants in the SEAK salmon fisheries under the 2019 PST Agreement from the ESA's prohibition on the incidental take of threatened and endangered species.

#### Draft Environmental Impact Statement

This DEIS responds specifically to the court order with respect to the stated failure to prepare an analysis pursuant to NEPA for the issuance of the ITS for the SEAK salmon fisheries. This DEIS analyzes the effects of a reasonable range of alternatives for the proposed issuance of a new ITS.

In light of the nexus between the court's orders on the ESA and NEPA deficiencies and in light of NMFS's ongoing disbursement of funds to the State, this EIS also evaluates the effects of the following actions under consultation:

- NMFS's delegation of management authority over salmon fisheries in the EEZ in SEAK to the State of Alaska under the Salmon FMP; and

- Federal funding through grants to the State of Alaska for the State's management of commercial and sport salmon fisheries and transboundary river enhancement necessary to implementation of the 2019 PST Agreement. This is also a second proposed action considered as a component of the alternatives.

Ultimately, this DEIS provides an assessment of the environmental, economic, and social impacts of the SEAK salmon fisheries in federal and state waters, even though none of the federal actions directly authorize the fisheries, because NMFS expects these impacts to occur from the operation of the salmon fisheries in SEAK that are prosecuted pursuant to the 2019 PST Agreement, facilitated by proposed Federal funding of grants to the State under the 2019 PST Agreement, and proposed to be exempted from liability for incidental takes of ESA listed species through the issuance of a new ITS.

Since the primary Federal action here—the issuance of the ITS—would exempt incidental take of ESA-listed species that occur in compliance with the ITS, the DEIS focuses on effects to those species (both ESA-listed salmon and ESA-listed marine mammals). In addition, the DEIS also analyzes the

impacts of the SEAK salmon fisheries on non-ESA-listed salmon, marine mammals, habitat, seabirds, greenhouse gas emissions and climate change. The DEIS also analyzes the impacts of the alternatives on fishery participants, communities, and Alaska Native tribes.

NMFS is also preparing a separate EIS for the expenditure of Federal funding to for the prey increase program for SRKW (88 FR 54301, August 10, 2023). For more information about that EIS, see <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/action/review-prey-increase-program-southern-resident-killer-whales>.

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

Dated: January 23, 2024.

Everett Wayne Baxter,

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

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648-XD664]

#### Pacific Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

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

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

**SUMMARY:** The Pacific Fishery Management Council's (Pacific Council) Ad-Hoc Klamath River Fall Chinook Workgroup will hold an online meeting.

**DATES:** The online meeting will be held Tuesday, February 13, 2024, from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m., Pacific standard time, or until business for the day concludes.

**ADDRESSES:** This meeting will be held online. Specific meeting information, including directions on how to join the meeting and system requirements will be provided in the meeting announcement on the Pacific Council's website (see [www.pcouncil.org](http://www.pcouncil.org)). You may send an email to Mr. Kris Kleinschmidt ([kris.kleinschmidt@noaa.gov](mailto:kris.kleinschmidt@noaa.gov)) or contact him at (503) 820-2280, extension 412 for technical assistance.

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

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Robin Ehлке, Staff Officer, Pacific Council; telephone: (503) 820-2410.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The primary purpose of the meeting is to

discuss and develop preliminary recommendations to inform Pacific Council decision-making at the March and April 2024 Pacific Council meetings for the 2024 salmon pre-season management process as it relates to Klamath River fall Chinook management. Additional discussion on Klamath River Dam removal, workload planning, etc. may also occur.

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

Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Mr. Kris Kleinschmidt ([kris.kleinschmidt@noaa.gov](mailto:kris.kleinschmidt@noaa.gov); (503) 820-2412) at least 10 days prior to the meeting date.

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

Dated: January 23, 2024.

**Diane M. DeJames-Daly,**

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

[FR Doc. 2024-01560 Filed 1-25-24; 8:45 am]

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648-XD673]

#### Fisheries of the South Atlantic; South Atlantic Fishery Management Council; Public Meetings

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

**ACTION:** Notice of a Seminar Series presentation via webinar.

**SUMMARY:** The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) will host a presentation on reproductive resilience in marine fishes.

**DATES:** The webinar presentation will be held on Tuesday, February 13, 2024, from 1 p.m. until 2:30 p.m.

**ADDRESSES:** The presentation will be provided via webinar. The webinar is open to members of the public.

Information, including a link to webinar registration will be posted on the Council's website at: <https://safmc.net/safmc-seminar-series/> as it becomes available.

*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) 302-8439 or toll free: (866) SAFMC-10; fax: (843) 769-4520; email: [kim.iverson@safmc.net](mailto:kim.iverson@safmc.net).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Council will host a presentation on the reproductive resilience in fish, which is the ability of a population to maintain reproductive success to produce long-term population stability. Fish managed by the Council have diverse reproductive strategies and these reproductive strategies along with environmental variables and behavioral traits should be considered when developing assessments and management regulations. A case study on gag grouper will be presented. A question-and-answer session will follow the presentation. Members of the public will have the opportunity to participate in the discussion. The presentation is for informational purposes only and no management actions will be taken.

### Special Accommodations

The meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for auxiliary aids should be directed to the Council office (see **ADDRESSES**) 5 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: January 23, 2024.

**Diane M. DeJames-Daly,**

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

[FR Doc. 2024-01561 Filed 1-25-24; 8:45 am]

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648-XD613]

#### Fisheries of the South Atlantic; Southeast Data, Assessment, and Review (SEDAR); Public Meeting

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

**ACTION:** Notice of SEDAR 89 South Atlantic Tilefish Life History Topical Working Group (LH-TWG) Webinar II.

**SUMMARY:** The SEDAR 89 assessment of the South Atlantic stock of tilefish will consist of a series of LH-TWG webinars. A SEDAR 89 LH-TWG Webinar is scheduled for February 14, 2024. See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**.

**DATES:** The SEDAR 89 South Atlantic Tilefish LH-TWG Webinar II has been scheduled for February 14, 2024, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., eastern. The established times may be adjusted as necessary to accommodate the timely completion of discussion relevant to the assessment process. Such adjustments may result in the meeting being extended from or completed prior to the time established by this notice.

**ADDRESSES:** The meeting will be held via webinar. The webinar is open to members of the public. Registration for the webinar is available by contacting the SEDAR coordinator via email at [Meisha.Key@safmc.net](mailto:Meisha.Key@safmc.net).

*SEDAR address:* South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, 4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201, N Charleston, SC 29405; [www.sedarweb.org](http://www.sedarweb.org).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Meisha Key, SEDAR Coordinator, 4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201, North Charleston, SC 29405; phone: (843) 571-4366; email: [Meisha.Key@safmc.net](mailto:Meisha.Key@safmc.net).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Gulf of Mexico, South Atlantic, and Caribbean Fishery Management Councils, in conjunction with NOAA Fisheries and the Atlantic and Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commissions, have implemented the Southeast Data, Assessment and Review (SEDAR) process, a multi-step method for determining the status of fish stocks in the Southeast Region. SEDAR is a three-step process including: (1) Data Workshop; (2) Assessment Process utilizing webinars; and (3) Review Workshop. The product of the Data Workshop is a data report which compiles and evaluates potential datasets and recommends which datasets are appropriate for assessment analyses. The product of the Assessment Process is a stock assessment report which describes the fisheries, evaluates the status of the stock, estimates biological benchmarks, projects future population conditions, and recommends research and monitoring needs. The assessment is independently peer reviewed at the Review Workshop. The product of the Review Workshop is a Summary documenting panel opinions regarding the strengths and weaknesses