

bycatch information for the shrimp fishery, fishery independent surveys and appropriate state sampling programs such as those conducted by Texas Parks and Wildlife. The goal of this review is to examine the fishery information collection programs in the Gulf of Mexico which provide the scientific data for managing the fishery, setting regulations, determining allocations and conducting stock assessments. The report from this review will be part of the information to be considered during the Science and Management Review.

#### Economics Review

The Economics Review Panel will consider the data which are available to conduct economic inquiries and will review and evaluate the economic analyses which are currently available and which contribute to the understanding of the economic ramifications of alternative management strategies for red snapper. The goal of this review is to examine the analyses conducted in support of establishing and individual transferable quota system for the red snapper fishery and determine whether the analyses were sufficient and whether additional analyses of other alternatives are called for.

#### Science and Management Review

The Science and Management Review Panel will consider all aspects of the scientific and management basis for managing the red snapper stock in the Gulf of Mexico. The review will consider the appropriateness of the scientific methods, information, and models used to assess the status and trends of the Gulf of Mexico red snapper stock and their usefulness as the basis for the fishery management plan for the Gulf of Mexico red snapper fishery, and the appropriateness and adequacy of the management measures in the fishery management plan for red snapper in the Gulf of Mexico for conserving and managing the red snapper fishery under the Act. The goal of this review is to examine the available scientific data relating to the status of U.S. Gulf of Mexico red snapper and determine the best scientific advice to be derived from it and to determine whether the preferred management options are supported by the scientific advice.

Dated: March 7, 1997.

Charles Karnella,  
*Acting Deputy Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.*  
[FR Doc. 97-6386 Filed 3-12-97; 8:45 am]

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[I.D. 030497C]

#### Marine Mammals; California Sea Lion Foraging and Predation on Salmonids

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

**ACTION:** Notice of availability and request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS announces the availability of an Environmental Assessment (EA) that examines the environmental consequences of preventing California sea lion foraging and predation on salmonids at the Willamette Falls in Oregon. The proposed non-lethal removal of nuisance marine mammals is authorized under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA).

**DATES:** Comments on the EA must be received by April 14, 1997.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments on the EA should be addressed to William Stelle, Jr., Administrator, Northwest Region, NMFS, 7600 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle, WA 98115. Copies of the EA may be obtained by writing to this address or by telephoning the contact listed below.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Joe Scordino, 206-526-6143.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Section 109(h)(1)(C) of the MMPA (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*) provides Federal, state, and local government officials with authority to take marine mammals in the course of their official duties. Under this authority NMFS and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) may non-lethally remove California sea lions to prevent them from preying on salmonids at the Willamette Falls fish passage facility in Oregon City, OR.

NMFS has determined that California sea lions at the Willamette Falls are a "nuisance" because of the vulnerability of salmonids to predation at this location, and because Willamette Falls are 128 miles (205 km) from the lower Columbia River estuary where California sea lions normally occur. Since 1990, California sea lions have been observed in the lower Willamette River (between the falls and the confluence with the Columbia River) during the winter/spring months from February to May coinciding with the spawning migrations of spring chinook salmon and winter and summer steelhead, and the downstream migration of smolts. ODFW has documented sea lions foraging near the fishway entrances at the Willamette Falls fishway in each of the last 4 years

and preying on adult spring chinook salmon and steelhead. In recent years, the spring chinook salmon and winter steelhead populations, which are the only native salmonid populations above the falls, have declined, raising concerns from the public about the potential effects of sea lions foraging on salmonids migrating through the fishway at the Willamette Falls. A preliminary assessment of this situation indicates that a few California sea lions are returning each year to the Falls and that the number of sea lions involved may be increasing.

In response to concerns over the possible impacts of increasing predation on returning salmonids, NMFS and ODFW propose to implement a program of non-lethal removal measures to prevent sea lion predation at the Willamette Falls while continuing to monitor the resource conflict at this site. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires that federal agencies conduct an environmental analysis of their actions to determine if the actions may affect the environment. Accordingly, NMFS jointly prepared with ODFW an EA that explores the environmental consequences of three alternatives: (1) No action; (2) Non-lethal removal of California sea lions (proposed action); and, (3) Lethal removal of sea lions foraging at Willamette Falls. The draft EA was prepared in accordance with NEPA and implementing regulations at 40 CFR Parts 1500 through 1508 and NOAA guidelines concerning implementation of NEPA found in NOAA Administrative Order 216-6.

Dated: March 7, 1997.

Hilda Diaz-Soltero,  
*Acting Director, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.*

[FR Doc. 97-6385 Filed 3-12-97; 8:45 am]

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[I.D. 030597F]

#### Gulf of Mexico 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 Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) will convene a public meeting of the Mackerel Stock Assessment Panel.

**DATES:** This meeting will begin at 1:00 p.m. on March 31, 1997, and will conclude by 5:00 p.m. on April 4, 1997.

**ADDRESSES:** The meeting will be held at NMFS Southeast Fisheries Science Center, 75 Virginia Beach Drive, Miami, FL.

*Council address:* Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, 3018 U.S. Highway 301 North, Suite 1000, Tampa, FL 33619.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Dr. Richard L. Leard, Senior Fishery Biologist; telephone: 813-228-2815.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Mackerel Stock Assessment Panel members will meet to review available data on the Gulf migratory group of Spanish mackerel and the Atlantic migratory group of king mackerel. These data will include, but not be limited to, commercial and recreational catches, natural and fishing mortality estimates, and recruitment. The panel will also update the stock assessments completed in 1996 for both the Atlantic and Gulf migratory groups of king and Spanish mackerel. These analyses will be used to determine the condition of the stocks and the levels of acceptable biological catch for the 1997-98 fishing year.

#### Special Accommodations

This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Anne Alford at the Council (see **ADDRESSES**) by March 24, 1997.

Dated: March 7, 1997.  
Bruce Morehead,  
*Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.*  
[FR Doc. 97-6387 Filed 3-12-97; 8:45 am]  
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[I.D. 030597C]

#### Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council; Meetings

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

**ACTION:** Notice of public meetings.

**SUMMARY:** The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council's (Council) Demersal Species Committee and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission will hold a public meeting.

**DATES:** The meetings will be held on March 19, 1997, from 3:00 p.m. until 5:00 p.m. and on March 20, 1997, from 8:00 a.m. until noon.

**ADDRESSES:** The meetings will be held at the Norfolk Airport Hilton, 1500 North Military Highway, Norfolk, VA; telephone: (800) 422-7474 or (757) 466-8000.

*Council address:* Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, 300 S. New Street, Dover, DE 19901; telephone: (302) 674-2331.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** David R. Keifer, Executive Director, Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council; telephone: (302) 674-2331

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The purpose of these meetings is to discuss Amendment 10 rebuilding schedule and the Summer Flounder Fishery Management Plan.

#### Special Accommodations

These meetings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Joanna Davis at the Council (see **ADDRESSES**) at least 5 days prior to the meeting dates.

Dated: March 7, 1997.  
Bruce Morehead,  
*Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.*  
[FR Doc. 97-6250 Filed 3-12-97; 8:45 am]  
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#### Modernization Transition Committee; Meeting

**ACTION:** Notice of public meeting.

**TIME AND DATE:** March 18, 1997 from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

**PLACE:** This meeting will take place at the Red Lion Inn, 400 Industry, Astoria, Oregon.

**STATUS:** The meeting will be open to the public. On March 18, 1997, 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. will be set aside for oral comments or questions from the public. Approximately 50 seats will be available on a first-come first-served basis for the public.

**MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED:** This meeting will cover: consultation of 85 proposed certification packages, and service level D automation criteria update.

**CONTACT PERSON FOR MORE INFORMATION:** Mr. Nicholas Scheller, National Weather Service, Modernization Staff, 1325 East-West Highway, SSMC2, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910. Telephone: (301) 713-0454.

Dated: March 11, 1997.  
Nicholas R. Scheller,  
*Manager, National Implementation Staff.*  
[FR Doc. 97-6484 Filed 3-12-97; 8:45 am]  
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[I.D. 030597D]

#### Western Pacific 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 Western Pacific Fishery Management Council will hold a meeting of its Bottomfish Task Force.

**DATES:** The meeting will be held on April 1, 1997, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

**ADDRESSES:** The meeting will be held at the Leiopapa A Kamehameha Bldg. (State Office Tower), 235 South Beretania Street, Room 204, Honolulu, HI 96813; telephone: (808) 522-8220.

*Council address:* Western Pacific Fishery Management Council, 1164 Bishop St., Suite 1405, Honolulu, HI 96813.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Kitty M. Simonds, Executive Director; telephone: (808) 522-8220.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The task force will meet to discuss and formulate limited entry alternatives for the Mau Zone bottomfish fishery in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands and consider other business as required.

#### Special Accommodations

This meeting is physically 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 meeting date.

Dated: March 7, 1997.  
Bruce Morehead,  
*Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.*  
[FR Doc. 97-6388 Filed 3-12-97; 8:45 am]  
BILLING CODE 3510-22-F

[I.D. 030797B]

#### Marine Mammals; Permit No. 963 (P532B)

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

**ACTION:** Receipt of application for amendment.

**SUMMARY:** Notice is hereby given that Department of Marine Biology, Texas A&M University, P.O. Box 1675, Galveston, TX 77553 has requested a amendment to permit No. 963.