

ACTION: Notice; public hearing via webinar.

SUMMARY: The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) will hold a public hearing via webinar to solicit public comments on Draft Reef Fish Amendment 44—Minimum Stock Size Threshold for Reef Fish Stocks.

DATES: The public hearing will take place via webinar on Tuesday, May 23, 2017, starting at 6 p.m. EDT and will conclude no later than 9 p.m. Written public comments must be received on or before 5 p.m. EDT on Tuesday, May 16, 2017.

ADDRESSES: Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, 2203 N. Lois Avenue, Suite 1100, Tampa, FL 33607; telephone: (813) 348–1630, www.gulfcouncil.org.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Steven Atran, Senior Fishery Biologist, Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council; telephone: (813) 348–1630; steven.atran@gulfcouncil.org.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Minimum stock size threshold (MSST) is the stock biomass level below which a stock is declared to be overfished and in need of a rebuilding plan. It is set at some level below the biomass level corresponding to maximum sustainable yield (Bmsy) in order to allow natural fluctuations around the Bmsy level without spurious overfished declarations resulting. There are 7 stocks in the Reef Fish Fishery Management Plan that have current or proposed MSST definitions (gag, red grouper, red snapper, vermilion snapper, gray triggerfish, greater amberjack, and hogfish). For most of these stocks, MSST is set using the formula: $(1 - M) * Bmsy$, where M is the natural mortality rate and Bmsy is the stock biomass corresponding to MSY or the MSY proxy. For stocks with a low natural mortality rate, this results in an MSST that is close to Bmsy. In some cases this MSST may be so close to Bmsy that it is not significantly different given the uncertainties in the data, and may lead to spurious overfished declarations due to natural fluctuations. For this reason, the Council is considering alternatives that would broaden the difference between Bmsy and MSST for some or all of the 7 reef fish stocks.

Staff and a Council member will be available to answer any questions and the public will have the opportunity to provide testimony on the amendment and other related testimony.

The schedule is as follows:

Tuesday, May 23, 2017, Webinar—6 p.m. EDT at: [https://](https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/369981646765939713)

attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/369981646765939713.

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

Public documents may be obtained by contacting the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council at (813) 348–1630 or on their Web site at www.gulfcouncil.org.

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

Dated: May 4, 2017.

Tracey L. Thompson,

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

[FR Doc. 2017–09437 Filed 5–9–17; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–22–P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648–XF402

New England Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

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

ACTION: Notice; public meeting.

SUMMARY: The New England Fishery Management Council (Council) is scheduling a joint public meeting of its Monkfish Committee on Wednesday, May 24, 2017, to consider actions affecting New England fisheries in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ). Recommendations from this group will be brought to the full Council for formal consideration and action, if appropriate. **DATES:** This meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 24, 2017 at 10 a.m. **ADDRESSES:** The meeting will be held at the Four Points by Sheraton Philadelphia Airport, 4101A Island Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19153; telephone: (215) 492–0400.

Council address: New England Fishery Management Council, 50 Water Street, Mill 2, Newburyport, MA 01950.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Thomas A. Nies, Executive Director, New England Fishery Management Council; telephone: (978) 465–0492.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Agenda

The Monkfish Committee will discuss the potential continuation of Amendment 6 to implement catch shares in the monkfish fishery. They will also discuss research priorities for the monkfish RSA program. Other business will be discussed as needed.

Although non-emergency issues not contained in this agenda may come before this group for discussion, those issues may not be the subject of formal action during this meeting. 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 Act, provided the public has been notified of the Council's intent to take final action to address the emergency.

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, Executive Director, at (978) 465–0492, at least 5 days prior to the meeting date. This meeting will be recorded. Consistent with 16 U.S.C. 1852, a copy of the recording is available upon request.

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

Dated: May 4, 2017.

Tracey L. Thompson,

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

[FR Doc. 2017–09434 Filed 5–9–17; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648–XF401

New England Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

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

ACTION: Notice; public meeting.

SUMMARY: The New England Fishery Management Council (Council) is scheduling a joint public meeting of its Monkfish Advisory Panel on Tuesday, May 23, 2017, to consider actions affecting New England fisheries in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ). Recommendations from this group will be brought to the full Council for formal consideration and action, if appropriate.

DATES: This meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 23, 2017 at 10 a.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Four Points by Sheraton Philadelphia Airport, 4101A Island Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19153; telephone: (215) 492–0400

Council address: New England Fishery Management Council, 50 Water Street, Mill 2, Newburyport, MA 01950.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

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

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Agenda

The Monkfish Advisory Panel will discuss the potential continuation of Amendment 6 to implement catch shares in the monkfish fishery. They will also discuss research priorities for the monkfish RSA program. Other business will be discussed as needed.

Although non-emergency issues not contained in this agenda may come before this group for discussion, those issues may not be the subject of formal action during this meeting. 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 Act, provided the public has been notified of the Council's intent to take final action to address the emergency.

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, Executive Director, at (978) 465-0492, at least 5 days prior to the meeting date. This meeting will be recorded. Consistent with 16 U.S.C. 1852, a copy of the recording is available upon request.

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

Dated: May 4, 2017.

Tracey L. Thompson,

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

[FR Doc. 2017-09433 Filed 5-9-17; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XF340

Takes of Marine Mammals Incidental to Specified Activities; Taking Marine Mammals Incidental to Mukilteo Multimodal Construction Project in Washington State

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

ACTION: Proposed incidental harassment authorization (IHA); request for comments.

SUMMARY: NMFS has received a request from Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) for authorization to take marine mammals incidental to Mukilteo Multimodal Construction Project in Washington State. Pursuant to the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), NMFS is requesting comments on its proposal to issue an IHA to incidentally take marine mammals during the specified activities.

DATES: Comments and information must be received no later than June 9, 2017.

ADDRESSES: Comments 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.guan@noaa.gov.

Instructions: NMFS is not responsible for comments sent by any other method, to any other address or individual, or received after the end of the comment period. Comments received electronically, including all attachments, must not exceed a 25-megabyte file size. Attachments to electronic comments will be accepted in Microsoft Word or Excel or Adobe PDF file formats only. All comments received are a part of the public record and will generally be posted online at www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/permits/incidental/construction.htm without change. All personal identifying information (e.g., name, address) voluntarily submitted by the commenter may be publicly accessible. Do not submit confidential business information or otherwise sensitive or protected information.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Shane Guan, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, (301) 427-8401. Electronic copies of the applications and supporting documents, as well as a list of the references cited in this document, may be obtained online at: www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/permits/incidental/construction.htm. In case of problems accessing these documents, please call the contact listed above.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Sections 101(a)(5)(A) and (D) of the MMPA (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*) direct the Secretary of Commerce 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) within a specified geographical region if certain findings are made and either regulations are issued or, if the taking is limited to harassment, a notice of a proposed authorization is provided to the public for review.

An authorization for incidental takings shall be granted if NMFS finds that the taking will have a negligible impact on the species or stock(s), will not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of the species or stock(s) for subsistence uses (where relevant), and if the permissible methods of taking and requirements pertaining to the mitigation, monitoring and reporting of such takings 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.

The MMPA states that the term "take" means to harass, hunt, capture, kill or attempt to harass, hunt, capture, or kill any marine mammal.

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).

National Environmental Policy Act

Issuance of an MMPA 101(a)(5)(D) authorization requires compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act.

NMFS preliminary determined the issuance of the proposed IHA is consistent with categories of activities identified in CE B4 (issuance of incidental harassment authorizations under section 101(a)(5)(A) and (D) of the MMPA for which no serious injury or mortality is anticipated) of the Companion Manual for NAO 216-6A and we have not identified any extraordinary circumstances listed in Chapter 4 of the Companion Manual for NAO 216-6A that would preclude this categorical exclusion.

We will review all comments submitted in response to this notice prior to making a final decision as to whether application of this CE is appropriate in this circumstance.