

Commenters may address the meeting, the role of the USCRTF, or general coral reef conservation issues. Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comments, you should be aware that your entire comment, including personal identifying information may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Established by Presidential Executive Order 13089 in 1998, the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force mission is to lead, coordinate and strengthen U.S. government actions to better preserve and protect coral reef ecosystems. Co-chaired by the Departments of Commerce and Interior, Task Force members include leaders of 12 federal agencies, seven U.S. states and territories and three freely associated states.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jennifer Koss, NOAA USCRTF Steering Committee Point of Contact, NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program, 1305 East-West Highway, N/OCRM, Silver Spring, MD 20910 at 301-533-0777 or Liza Johnson, USCRTF Executive Secretary, U.S. Department of Interior, MS-3530-MIB, 1849 C Street NW., Washington, DC 20240 at (202) 208-5004 or visit the USCRTF Web site at <http://www.coralreef.gov>

Dated: January 10, 2017.

Christopher Cartwright,
Chief Financial Officer, National Ocean Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

[FR Doc. 2017-00845 Filed 1-17-17; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XF164

Fisheries of the Gulf of Mexico and the South Atlantic; Southeast Data, Assessment, and Review (SEDAR); Pre-Workshop Webinar for Southeastern U.S. Black Grouper; Public Meeting

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

ACTION: Notice of SEDAR 48 pre-Data Workshop webinar for Southeastern U.S. black grouper.

SUMMARY: The SEDAR 48 assessment process of Southeastern U.S. black grouper will consist of a Data Workshop, an Assessment Workshop and a series of assessment webinars, and a Review Workshop. See

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION.

DATES: The SEDAR 48 pre-Data Workshop webinar will be held February 14, 2017, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Eastern Time.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held via webinar. The webinar is open to members of the public. Those interested in participating should contact Julie A. Neer at SEDAR (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**) to request an invitation providing webinar access information. Please request webinar invitations at least 24 hours in advance of each webinar.

SEDAR address: 4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201, North Charleston, SC 29405.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Julie A. Neer, SEDAR Coordinator; (843) 571-4366; email: Julie.neer@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 multi-step process including: (1) Data Workshop, (2) a series of assessment webinars, and (3) a Review Workshop. The product of the Data Workshop is a report that compiles and evaluates potential datasets and recommends which datasets are appropriate for assessment analyses. The assessment webinars produce a report that describes the fisheries, evaluates the status of the stock, estimates biological benchmarks, projects future population conditions, and recommends research and monitoring needs. The product of the Review Workshop is an Assessment Summary documenting panel opinions regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the stock assessment and input data. Participants for SEDAR Workshops are appointed by the Gulf of Mexico, South Atlantic, and Caribbean Fishery Management Councils and NOAA Fisheries Southeast Regional Office, HMS Management Division, and Southeast Fisheries Science Center. Participants include data collectors and database managers; stock assessment scientists, biologists, and researchers; constituency representatives including fishermen, environmentalists, and

NGO's; International experts; and staff of Councils, Commissions, and state and federal agencies.

The items of discussion during the pre-data workshop webinar are as follows:

Panelists will present summary data and discuss data needs and treatments.

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 identified 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 intent to take final action to address the emergency.

Special Accommodations

The meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to the Council office (see **ADDRESSES**) at least 5 business days prior to each workshop.

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

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

Dated: January 11, 2017.

Jeffrey N. Lonergan,
Acting Deputy Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.
[FR Doc. 2017-00959 Filed 1-17-17; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XF116

Endangered Species; File Nos. 19641, 17861, 20314, 20340, 20347, 20351, 20528, 20548, and 20651

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

ACTION: Notice; receipt of applications.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that nine applicants have applied in due form for permits to take Atlantic sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrinchus oxyrinchus*) and shortnose sturgeon (*Acipenser brevirostrum*) for purposes of scientific research.

DATES: Written, telefaxed, or email comments must be received on or before February 17, 2017.

ADDRESSES: The applications 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 corresponding File No. 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 the applications 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. 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(s) would be appropriate.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Malcolm Mohead or Erin Markin, (301) 427-8401.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The subject permits are requested under the authority of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA; 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) and the regulations governing the taking, importing, and exporting of endangered and threatened species (50 CFR parts 222-226).

Each application is summarized below. Please refer to the associated application for specific take numbers. Permits may be valid for up to 10 years.

File No. 19641: Tom Savory, Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, Marine Fisheries, P.O. Box 719, Old Lyme, CT 06371, requests a permit to collect, examine and tag shortnose and Atlantic sturgeon in Connecticut waters. Shortnose sturgeon research would be conducted in the Connecticut River from the mouth to the Holyoke Dam. Researchers would monitor for presence, abundance, age and sex composition, habitat utilization, and seasonal movement. Atlantic and shortnose sturgeon would be measured, tissue sampled, passive integrated transponder (PIT) tagged, photographed, and weighed prior to release. A subset of fish also would be fin ray sampled, blood sampled, acoustic tagged, and gastric lavaged. Up to three sturgeon of

each species may unintentionally die annually during research.

File No. 17861: Douglas Peterson, University of Georgia Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources Fisheries Division, Athens, GA 30602, requests a permit to better understand the ecology, population dynamics, and status of Atlantic and shortnose sturgeon in Georgia and Florida river systems. Spring and fall sampling would occur for Atlantic and shortnose. Fish would be PIT tagged, tissue sampled, measured, and weighed prior to release. A subset of fish would be acoustically tagged, fin ray sampled for aging, blood sampled, gonadal sampled, and endoscopic sex determination. Early life stages of each species would be intentionally collected and killed to document occurrence of spawning in systems. Up to eight Atlantic sturgeon and six shortnose sturgeon may unintentionally die annually in all river systems.

File No. 20314: Albert Spells, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 11110 Kimages Road, Charles City 23030, requests a permit to conduct research in Maryland and Virginia tributaries to the Chesapeake Bay as well as within the Chesapeake Bay proper. The objectives of the research are to (1) identify the overall health of the DPS, (2) monitor reproductive success, spawning adult and juvenile abundance in tributaries, and (3) evaluate movement patterns and habitat preferences in and between tributaries of the Bay. Sampling gear would include anchored/floating gillnets and other nets. Fish would be PIT tagged, tissue sampled, measured, and weighed prior to release. Individual fish would receive a T-bar, acoustic, and/or satellite tag. A subset of fish would be fin ray sampled. Early life stages of Atlantic sturgeon would be intentionally collected and killed to document occurrence of spawning in systems. Up to two Atlantic sturgeon may unintentionally die annually during research.

File No. 20340: Kim McKown, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, 205 Belle Mead Road, East Setuaket, NY 11733, requests a permit to conduct research on Atlantic and shortnose sturgeon to determine movement of adult sturgeon in the Hyde Park area, movement of age-1 sturgeon in the Hudson River, population estimates, and habitat utilization. Fish would be collected by gill nets year-round during ice-free periods. Studies would involve acoustic telemetry and mark-recapture. Upon capture, fish would be measured, weighed, PIT tagged, tissue sampled, and photographed. A subset of fish

would be externally and/or internally tagged, fin ray sampled for aging, gastric lavaged, gonadal biopsied, and blood sampled. Early life stages of Atlantic sturgeon would be intentionally collected and killed to document occurrence of spawning in systems. Up to four Atlantic sturgeon and three shortnose sturgeon may unintentionally die annually during research.

File 20347: Gayle Zydlewski, University of Maine, requests a permit to conduct research on Atlantic and shortnose sturgeon to (1) determine spawning periodicity and age class distribution, and (2) identify critical habitat and movement within and between river systems. Research on Atlantic and shortnose sturgeon in the Gulf of Maine would continue in several river systems: Penobscot River, Kennebec River, Saco River, and Merrimack River. All sampling would occur in riverine or near coastal areas annually. Adults, subadults, and juveniles would be sampled with gill nets, trammel nets, trot lines, and a miniature Missouri trawl in the spring, summer, and fall annually. Upon capture, fish would be measured, weighed, PIT tagged, tissue sampled, and photographed. A subset of fish would be acoustically tagged, fin ray, apical scute sampled, gastric lavaged, borescopy, and blood sampled. Early life stages of each species would be intentionally collected and killed to document occurrence of spawning in systems. Up to four sturgeon of each species may unintentionally die annually during research.

File No. 20351: Michael Frisk, the School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences, Stony Brook University, Stony Brook, NY 11794, requests a permit to conduct research on Atlantic and shortnose sturgeon to continue a long-term study examining the movements among and within Atlantic sturgeon marine aggregation areas located in New York, New Jersey, Delaware, and Connecticut waters and to conduct research to examine (1) sex-specific movements, (2) genetic stock identification, and (3) acquisition of diet, age, and parasite-prevalence data. Additional research would target adults within the marine aggregation areas, and target early life stage and juvenile Atlantic and shortnose sturgeon within riverine and estuarine areas of the Hudson and Delaware Rivers. Upon capture, fish would be measured, weighed, PIT tagged, tissue sampled, and photographed. A subset of fish would be externally and/or internally tagged, fin ray sampled, gastric lavaged, gonadal sampled, apical scute sampled, ultrasound, and blood sampled. Early

life stages of each species would be intentionally collected and killed to document occurrence of spawning in systems. Up to three Atlantic sturgeon and two shortnose sturgeon may unintentionally die annually during research.

File No. 20528: Bill Post, South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, 217 Fort Johnson Road, Charleston, SC 29412, requests a permit to conduct research on Atlantic and shortnose sturgeon to determine their presence, status, health, habitat use, and movements in South Carolina waters. Studies would involve using gill nets to capture fish. Upon capture, fish would be measured, weighed, PIT tagged, tissue sampled, and photographed. A subset of individuals would be acoustically tagged, fin ray sampled, and gonadal biopsied. Early life stages of each species would be intentionally collected and killed to document occurrence of spawning in systems. Up to two sturgeon of each species may unintentionally die annually during research.

File No. 20548: Dewayne Fox, Delaware State University, Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources, 1200 North DuPont Highway, Dover, DE 19901, requests a permit to conduct research on Atlantic and shortnose sturgeon using gillnets, D-ring nets, egg pad collectors, biotelemetry, and hydroacoustic tools in the Delaware River/Estuary, Hudson River/Estuary, and coastal environment between Virginia and New York to develop quantitative estimates of run size, recruitment, and habitat assessment. Upon capture, fish would be measured, weighed, PIT tagged, tissue sampled, and photographed. A subset of individuals would be externally and/or internally tagged, fin ray sampled, blood sampled, and gonadal biopsied. Early life stages of Atlantic sturgeon would be intentionally collected and killed to document occurrence of spawning in systems. Up to one sturgeon of each species may unintentionally die annually during research.

File No. 20651: Anthony Vitale, Entergy Indian Point, 450 Broadway, Buchanan, NY 10511, requests a permit to conduct research on Atlantic and shortnose sturgeon for the Hudson River Biological Monitoring Program (HRBMP) using trawls and seines. The HRBMP takes place within in the Hudson River estuary and involves fisheries sampling to monitor ichthyoplankton and juvenile fish abundance and distribution from Battery Park, Manhattan, upstream to Troy Dam during March through October, and in portions of New York

Harbor during November through April. Upon capture, individual fish would be measured, weighed, PIT tagged, tissue sampled, and photographed. Early life stages of each species would be intentionally collected and killed to document occurrence of spawning in systems.

Dated: January 11, 2017.

Julia Harrison,

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

[FR Doc. 2017-00956 Filed 1-17-17; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XF148

Marine Mammals; File No. 20294

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

ACTION: Notice; receipt of application.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that Robert DiGiovanni, Jr., 6 Wakefield Rd. Hampton Bays, New York 11946, has applied in due form for a permit to conduct research on North Atlantic right whales (*Eubalaena glacialis*) and 44 other protected marine mammal and sea turtle species.

DATES: Written, telefaxed, or email comments must be received on or before February 17, 2017.

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. 20294 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. 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 this application would be appropriate.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Courtney Smith or Amy Hapeman, (301) 427-8401.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

The subject permit is requested under the authority of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (MMPA; 16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*), the regulations governing the taking and importing of marine mammals (50 CFR part 216), the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA; 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), and the regulations governing the taking, importing, and exporting of endangered and threatened species (50 CFR 222-226).

The applicant proposes to conduct aerial, vessel, and ground surveys of North Atlantic right whales (*Eubalaena glacialis*) and 44 other protected cetaceans, pinnipeds, and sea turtles in the Mid-Atlantic U.S. waters, from Massachusetts to North Carolina. Nine of the target species are threatened or endangered: North Atlantic right, blue (*Balaenoptera musculus*), fin (*B. physalus*), sei (*B. borealis*), and sperm (*Physeter macrocephalus*) whales; and green (*Chelonia mydas*), Kemp's ridley (*Lepidochelys kempii*), loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*), and leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*) sea turtles. Surveys will be conducted using fixed wing aircraft and vessels to assess seasonal abundance and distribution of marine mammals in the area. Ground surveys will be conducted on foot and with remote cameras to obtain counts of seals throughout different tidal cycles and to document prevalence of human interaction around seal haul-out sites accessible to the public. Seal scat will be collected for health assessment studies. The permit would be valid for five years.

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 activity proposed is 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 the application to the Marine Mammal Commission and its Committee of Scientific Advisors.