

steelhead populations, especially in south Puget Sound, Hood Canal, and the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Continued releases of out-of-DPS hatchery fish from Skamania-derived summer run were a major concern for diversity in the DPS. In 2011, eight years after the ESA-listing decision, a status assessment of the DPS by NMFS' Biological Review Team found that the status of Puget Sound steelhead regarding risk of extinction had not changed (NMFS 2016; 81 FR 33468; May 26, 2016). Scientists on the Biological Review Team identified degradation and fragmentation of freshwater habitat, with consequential effects on connectivity, as the primary limiting factors and threats facing the Puget Sound steelhead DPS. They determined that most of the steelhead populations within the DPS continued to show downward trends in estimated abundance, with a few sharp declines (Ford 2011). Most recently, a NMFS species status review (NMFS 2016) concluded that "The biological risks faced by the Puget Sound steelhead DPS have not substantively changed since the listing in 2007, or since the 2011 status review." The NMFS review team concluded that the DPS was at very low viability, as were all three of its constituent MPGs, and many of its 32 DIPs (Hard *et al.* 2015).

The Proposed Plan presents NMFS' proposed recovery goals and the viability criteria and listing factor criteria for making a delisting decision. The proposed viability criteria for the Puget Sound steelhead DPS are designed to improve the DPS so it "has a negligible risk of extinction due to threats from demographic variation, local environmental variation, and genetic diversity changes over a 100-year time frame" based on the status of the MPGs and DIPs, and supporting ecosystems (McElhany *et al.* 2000). A self-sustaining viable population has a negligible risk of extinction due to reasonably foreseeable changes in circumstances affecting its abundance, productivity, spatial structure, and diversity characteristics and achieves these characteristics without dependence upon artificial propagation. The proposed viability criteria for Puget Sound steelhead require that all three MPGs be viable because the three MPGs differ substantially in key biological and habitat characteristics that contribute in distinct ways to the overall viability, diversity and spatial structure of the DPS.

The proposed listing factor criteria are based on the five listing factors found in the ESA section 4(a)(1). Before NMFS can remove the DPS from protection

under the ESA, the factors that led to ESA listing need to have been reduced or eliminated to the point where Federal protection under the ESA is no longer needed, and there is reasonable certainty that the relevant regulatory mechanisms are adequate to protect Puget Sound steelhead viability. NMFS listing factor criteria for Puget Sound steelhead address pressures from freshwater habitat degradation, hatcheries, and other factors that led to the species listing and continue to affect its viability.

The Proposed Plan also describes specific information on the following: Current status of Puget Sound steelhead; pressures (limiting factors) and threats throughout the life cycle that have contributed to the species decline; recovery strategies to address the threats based on the best available science; site-specific actions with timelines; and a proposed adaptive management framework for focusing needed research and evaluations and revising our recovery strategies and actions. The Proposed Plan also summarizes time and costs required to implement recovery actions.

#### How NMFS and Others Expect To Use the Plan

With approval of the final Puget Sound Steelhead recovery plan, we will implement the actions in the plan for which we have authority and funding; encourage other Federal, state and local agencies and tribal governments to implement recovery actions for which they have responsibility, authority, and funding; and work cooperatively with tribes, the public and local stakeholders on implementation of other actions. We expect the recovery plan to guide us and other Federal agencies in evaluating Federal actions under ESA section 7, as well as in implementing other provisions of the ESA and other statutes. For example, the plan will provide greater biological context for evaluating the effects that a proposed action may have on the species by providing delisting criteria, information on priority areas for addressing specific limiting factors, and information on how the DPS can tolerate varying levels of risk.

When we are considering a species for delisting, the agency will examine whether the section 4(a)(1) listing factors have been addressed. To assist in this examination, we will use the delisting criteria described in Chapter 4 of the Proposed Plan, which include both viability criteria and listing factor criteria addressing each of the ESA section 4(a)(1) listing factors, as well as

any other relevant data and policy considerations.

#### Public Comments Solicited

We are soliciting written comments on the Proposed Plan. All substantive comments received by the date specified above will be considered and incorporated, as appropriate, prior to our decision whether to approve the plan. While we invite comments on all aspects of the Proposed Plan, we are particularly interested in comments on the proposed strategies and actions, comments on the cost of recovery actions, and comments on establishing an appropriate implementation forum for the plan. We will issue a news release announcing the adoption and availability of the final plan. We will post on the NMFS West Coast Region website ([www.wcr.noaa.gov](http://www.wcr.noaa.gov)) a summary of, and responses to, the comments received, along with electronic copies of the final plan and its appendices.

#### Literature Cited

The complete citations for the references used in this document can be obtained by contacting NMFS (see ADDRESSES and FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT).

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*

Dated: December 6, 2018.

Donna S. Wieting,

Director, Office of Protected Resources,  
National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 2018-27003 Filed 12-12-18; 8:45 am]

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XG668

#### Fisheries of the Gulf of Mexico and 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 64 Data webinar for Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic yellowtail snapper.

**SUMMARY:** The SEDAR 64 assessment process of Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic yellowtail snapper will consist of a Data Workshop, and a series of assessment webinars, and a Review Workshop. See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**.

**DATES:** The SEDAR 64 Data webinar will be held January 11, 2019, from 10 a.m. to 11 a.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 Contact Information Below) 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](mailto: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 Data webinar are as follows:

Panelists will review the data sets being considered for the assessment.

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: December 10, 2018.

**Tracey L. Thompson,**

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

[FR Doc. 2018-26981 Filed 12-12-18; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3510-22-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

#### Evaluation of State Coastal Management Programs

**AGENCY:** Office for Coastal Management (OCM), National Ocean Service (NOS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce (DOC).

**ACTION:** Notice of public meeting.

**SUMMARY:** The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Office for Coastal Management will hold a public meeting to solicit comments on the performance evaluation of the Rhode Island Coastal Management Program.

#### DATES:

*Rhode Island Coastal Management Program Evaluation:* The public meeting will be held on February 5, 2019, and written comments must be received on or before February 15, 2019.

For specific dates, times, and locations of the public meetings, see **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**.

**ADDRESSES:** You may submit comments on the coastal program NOAA intends to evaluate by any of the following methods:

*Public Meeting and Oral Comments:* A public meeting will be held in Wakefield, Rhode Island. For the specific location, see **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**.

*Written Comments:* Please direct written comments to Carrie Hall, Evaluator, Planning and Performance Measurement Program, Office for Coastal Management, NOS/NOAA, 1305 East-West Highway, 11th Floor, N/OCM1, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910, or email comments [Carrie.Hall@noaa.gov](mailto:Carrie.Hall@noaa.gov).

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Carrie Hall, Evaluator, Planning and Performance Measurement Program, Office for Coastal Management, NOS/NOAA, 1305 East-West Highway, 11th Floor, N/OCM1, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910, by phone at (240) 533-0730 or email comments [Carrie.Hall@noaa.gov](mailto:Carrie.Hall@noaa.gov). Copies of the previous evaluation findings and 2016-2020 Assessment and Strategy may be viewed and downloaded on the internet at <http://coast.noaa.gov/czm/evaluations>. A copy of the evaluation notification letter and most recent progress report may be obtained upon request by contacting the person identified under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Section 312 of the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) requires NOAA to conduct periodic evaluations of federally approved state and territorial coastal programs. The process includes one or more public meetings, consideration of written public comments, and consultations with interested Federal, state, and local agencies and members of the public. During the evaluation, NOAA will consider the extent to which the state has met the national objectives, adhered to the management program approved by the Secretary of Commerce, and adhered to the terms of financial assistance under the CZMA. When the evaluation is completed, NOAA's Office for Coastal Management will place a notice in the **Federal Register** announcing the availability of the Final Evaluation Findings.

You may participate or submit oral comments at the public meeting scheduled as follows:

*Date:* February 5, 2019.

*Time:* 6:00 p.m., local time.

*Location:* Stedman Government Center, Conference Room A, 4808 Tower Hill Road, Wakefield, Rhode Island 02879.

Written public comments must be received on or before February 15, 2018. Federal Domestic Assistance Catalog 11.419