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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Chris Fanning, NMFS, West Coast Region, 562–980–4198.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: DSBG fishing trials have occurred for the past 11 years (2011–2015, research years; 2015–2021, EFP years) in the U.S. West Coast Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) off California. The data collected from this fishing activity have demonstrated DSBG to achieve about a 95 percent marketable catch composition. Non-marketable catch rates have remained low and all non-marketable catch were released alive. Due to DSBG being actively tended, strikes are capable of being detected within minutes of a hooking on the line; as a result, all catches can be tended quickly, with catch brought to the vessel in good

condition. To date, DSBG has had five observed or reported interactions with protected species, four Northern elephant seals and one loggerhead sea turtle, which were not seriously injured and were released alive due to the quick strike detection of the gear. Northern elephant seals are protected by the Marine Mammal Protection Act, and loggerhead sea turtles are protected by the Endangered Species Act.

DSLGB trials have produced similar data to DSBG activities. Swordfish and other marketable species have represented about 90 percent of the catch. Non-marketable species are released alive due to DSLGB quick strike detection and active gear tending. To date, there have been no observed or reported interactions with protected species using DSLGB.

At its June 2021 meeting, the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) received ten applications for EFPs in time for review and recommended that NMFS issue seven of these EFPs to authorize use of DSBG and/or DSLGB (see Table 1), and recommended further Council consideration of the remaining three EFP applications at its September 2021 meeting. Council recommendations can be found on the

June 2021 meeting Decision Document here, <https://www.pcouncil.org/june-2021-decision-document/#HMS>.

At this time, NMFS is requesting public comment on the seven DSBG EFP applications recommended by the Council in June 2021. NMFS will take the Council's comments into consideration along with public comments on whether or not to issue these EFPs. If all seven of the June 2021 Council recommended applications are approved, a total of 52 vessels would be allowed to fish with permitted exemptions from the prohibitions related to unauthorized fishing gears used to target swordfish within the U.S. EEZ under the Fishery Management Plan for U.S. West Coast Fisheries for (HMS FMP) throughout the duration of their respective EFPs. Thirty-seven of the vessels would be permitted to fish with DSBG only and 15 of the vessels would be permitted to fish using both DSBG and DSLGB. Aside from the exemption described above, vessels fishing under an EFP would be subject to all other regulations implemented in the HMS FMP, including measures to protect sea turtles, marine mammals, and seabirds.

TABLE 1—SUMMARY OF DEEP-SET BUOY GEAR EXEMPTED FISHING PERMIT APPLICATIONS RECOMMENDED AT THE JUNE 2021 COUNCIL MEETING *

F.3 attachment No.	Applicant name	Number of vessels	Fishing method
1	Austin and Robert Ashe	1	Standard DSBG.
3	Austin Brown	1	Standard and Linked DSBG.
5	Miguel Ferre	1	Standard DSBG.
6	Scott and Wyatt Hawkins	1	Linked DSBG.
7	Blake Hermann	1	Standard DSBG.
8	Markus Medak, Brian Sims, and Daniel Fuller	1	Linked DSBG.
10	Mathew Rimmel	1	Standard DSBG.

* Linked DSBG vessels can also use standard deep-set buoy gear (<https://www.pcouncil.org/june-2021-briefing-book/#F>).

NMFS will consider all public comments submitted in response to this **Federal Register** notice prior to issuance of any EFP. Additionally, NMFS has analyzed the effects of issuing DSBG and DSLGB EFPs in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act and NOAA's Administrative Order 216–6, as well as for compliance with other applicable laws, including Section 7(a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), which requires the agency to consider whether the proposed action is likely to jeopardize the continued existence and recovery of any endangered or threatened species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat.

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

Dated: August 6, 2021.

Jennifer M. Wallace,
Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.
[FR Doc. 2021–17147 Filed 8–10–21; 8:45 am]
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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648–XB301]

East Coast Fisheries of the United States; Public Meetings; Request for Comments

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and

Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of public meetings.

SUMMARY: Several fishery management bodies on the East Coast of the Atlantic Ocean are convening three public webinars to introduce a project called *East Coast Climate Change Scenario Planning*. This is a joint effort of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC), the New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC), the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC), the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC), and NOAA Fisheries. These webinars will introduce stakeholders to the overall initiative, present draft objectives, discuss potential outcomes, explain the general

focus of the work, and collect initial stakeholder input.

DATES: These webinars will be held on Monday, August 30, 2021, at 4 p.m.–5:30 p.m.; Wednesday, September 1, 2021, at 6 p.m.–7:30 p.m.; Thursday, September 2, 2021, at 10 a.m.–11:30 a.m.

ADDRESSES: All meeting participants and interested parties are strongly encouraged to register in advance of any webinar they are interested in attending. Meeting links for each webinar can be located at: <https://www.mafmc.org/climate-change-scenario-planning>.

Meeting addresses: The meetings will be held via webinar (see **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Thomas A. Nies, Executive Director, New England Fishery Management Council; telephone: (978) 465–0492. Contact information and individual staff members working on this initiative can be found here: <https://www.mafmc.org/climate-change-scenario-planning>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Climate change is a growing threat to marine fisheries worldwide. On the East coast of the United States, there is evidence of climate-related shifts in distribution, abundance, and/or productivity of fishery resources. It is uncertain what the next couple of decades will bring, and how fishery management programs can best prepare to meet the challenges ahead. Over the next year, this joint effort will bring together researchers, fishery managers, fishery participants and others to discuss these questions and emerge with ideas and recommendations for how fishery management can potentially adapt to climate change.

The management bodies in this region have decided to employ a scenario planning framework to discuss these issues. Scenario planning is a way of exploring how fishery management may need to evolve over the next few decades as climate change becomes a bigger issue. Specifically, scenarios are stories about possible future developments. This approach is designed to help stakeholders and managers think broadly about the future implications of climate change to help define what changes can potentially be made now to be better prepared.

These introductory webinars are the first step of a multi-year scenario planning effort. Staff will explain the overall initiative and share draft objectives, possible outcomes and focus of the work. There will be a presentation introducing the basics of scenario

planning and potential benefits of engaging in the process. At the end of the webinar there will be an opportunity for small group discussions for participants to share feedback and suggestions on the information presented and proposed. Additional details about the webinars will be posted to this page once available: <https://www.mafmc.org/climate-change-scenario-planning>.

Special Accommodations

These meetings are 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.

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

Dated: August 5, 2021.

Tracey L. Thompson,

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

[FR Doc. 2021–17051 Filed 8–10–21; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID: 0648–XB307]

Environmental Impact Statement on Phase 2 Modifications to the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan To Reduce Serious Injury and Mortality of Large Whales in Commercial Trap/Pot and Gillnet Fisheries Along the U.S. East Coast

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

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement, request for comments.

SUMMARY: The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) intends to begin a rulemaking process that will amend the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan (Plan) to reduce the risk of mortalities and serious injuries of North Atlantic right whales (*Eubalaena glacialis*) and other large whales caused by entanglement in commercial trap/pot and gillnet fisheries along the U.S. East Coast. An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to analyze the impacts to the environment of alternatives to amend the Plan. This notice informs the public of upcoming

scoping meetings to solicit public input on Phase 2 of our efforts to reduce the risk of entanglement to right, humpback, and fin whales in U.S. commercial fisheries managed under the Plan. Phase 1, a final rule implementing new modifications to reduce mortalities and serious injuries caused by incidental entanglement in the northeast American lobster and Jonah crab trap/pot fishery, is anticipated shortly, and was analyzed in a Final Environmental Impact Statement released (FEIS) on July 2, 2021. Phase 2 focuses on risk reduction in U.S. East Coast gillnet, Atlantic mixed species trap/pot, and Mid-Atlantic lobster and Jonah crab trap/pot fisheries.

DATES: Written or electronic scoping inputs must be received at the appropriate address, email mailbox, or phone number (see **ADDRESSES**) by October 21, 2021.

Public Hearings: At least seven virtual public meetings will be held during the public comment period. In addition, we will be holding three call-in days for interested parties to call and speak to a NMFS staff member to ask questions or submit information and recommendations.

See **ADDRESSES** to obtain public hearing and call-in day notification details. Scoping will also occur through presentations and discussions at the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and New England, Mid-Atlantic, and South Atlantic Fishery Management Council meetings during the scoping period.

ADDRESSES: You may submit input on this document via email. Submit all electronic public comments by sending an email to nmfs.gar.ALWTRT2021@noaa.gov using the subject line “Comments on Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan Scoping.” Input can also be provided via webinar during scoping meetings or via phone on call-in days. Remote public meeting dates, access, and call-in information is available in the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section. Meeting information will also be posted on the Plan website fisheries.noaa.gov/ALWTRP, or you may contact Marisa Trego for information on dates and times.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Marisa Trego, Take Reduction Team Coordinator, Greater Atlantic Region. Telephone: 978 282–8484. Address: 55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930. Email: marisa.trego@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: