

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration****Hydrographic Services Review Panel Meeting**

AGENCY: National Ocean Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce.

ACTION: Notice for open public meeting, and request for public comments.

SUMMARY: This serves as notice of a virtual public meeting for the NOAA Hydrographic Services Review Panel (HSRP) on September 23, 2020, 1–5:30 p.m. EDT, and September 24, 2020, 1–5 p.m. EDT via webinar. The HSRP will be asked for advice and recommendations on the development of the implementation plans for the two ocean and coastal mapping strategies noted below and other HSRP meeting topics. Individuals or groups who also want to comment on these or other NOAA navigation services topics are encouraged to submit advance public comments and letters via email no later than September 15, 2020.

DATES: Comments are due by September 15, 2020.

HSRP public meeting:

1. September 23, 2020, 1–5:30 p.m., EDT.
2. September 24, 2020, 1–5 p.m. EDT.

ADDRESSES: You may submit public comments identified by “September 2020 HSRP meeting public comments” in the subject line of the message by September 15, 2020, by email to: Melanie.Colantuno@noaa.gov, Lynne.Mersfelder@noaa.gov, Virginia.Dentler@noaa.gov, and hydroservices.panel@noaa.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Lynne Mersfelder-Lewis, HSRP program manager, National Ocean Service, Office of Coast Survey, NOAA (N/CS), email: hydroservices.panel@noaa.gov, Lynne.Mersfelder@noaa.gov, and phone 240–533–0064.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Advance registration is required for the webinar at: <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/8315160447400968715>. Comments are requested on the development of the implementation plans for the ocean and coastal mapping strategies which are as follows:

(1) “*National Strategy for Mapping, Exploring, and Characterizing the United States Exclusive Economic Zone*,” (NOME), including the establishment of a Standard Ocean Mapping Protocol: [https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/](https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/20200611-FINAL-STRATEGY-NOME-Sec.-2.pdf)

[uploads/2020/01/20200611-FINAL-STRATEGY-NOME-Sec.-2.pdf](https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/20200611-FINAL-STRATEGY-NOME-Sec.-2.pdf); and;

(2) “Mapping the Coast of Alaska—A 10-Year Strategy in Support of the United States Economy, Security, and Environment,” or the Alaska Coastal Mapping Strategy (ACMS): <https://iocm.noaa.gov/about/documents/strategic-plans/alaska-mapping-strategy-june2020.pdf>.

Advance written statements will be shared with the HSRP members and will be included in the meeting public record. The HSRP meeting agenda, draft meeting documents, presentations, and background materials are posted online and updates can be downloaded prior to the meeting at: <https://www.nauticalcharts.noaa.gov/hsrp/hsrp.html> and <https://www.nauticalcharts.noaa.gov/hsrp/meetings.html>.

Due to the condensed nature of the meeting, each individual or group providing written public comments will be limited to one comment per public comment period with no repetition of previous comments. Comments can also be submitted in writing during the daily public comment period using the chat function in the webinar. Comments will be read into the record, transcribed, and become part of the meeting record. Due to time meeting constraints, all comments may not be addressed during the meeting.

The Hydrographic Services Review Panel (HSRP) is a Federal Advisory Committee established to advise the Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere, the NOAA Administrator, on matters related to the responsibilities and authorities set forth in section 303 of the Hydrographic Services Improvement Act of 1998, as amended, and such other appropriate matters that the Under Secretary refers to the Panel for review and advice. Past HSRP public meeting documents, recommendation letters and issue papers are located online at: <https://www.nauticalcharts.noaa.gov/hsrp/recommendations.html> and <https://www.nauticalcharts.noaa.gov/hsrp/meetings.html>.

Matters to be Considered

The panel is convening on issues relevant to NOAA’s navigation services, including stakeholder use of navigation services data, products and services, and a NOAA request to the HSRP to provide recommendations for the future development of implementation plans for the two ocean and coastal mapping strategies NOME and ACMS. The HSRP will discuss at least one draft issue paper “*Alaska Coastal Mapping Strategy—Gaps and Priorities*”, and

other topics related to hydrographic surveys, nautical charting, delays impacting the ongoing National Spatial Reference System (NSRS) modernization, hurricane supplemental funds and the status of coastal mapping, PORTS® (Physical Oceanographic Real-Time System) sensor enhancements and expansion, the research plan for the NOAA-University of New Hampshire Joint Hydrographic Center Cooperative Agreement, “*Mapping U.S. Marine and Great Lakes Waters: Office of Coast Survey Contributions to a National Ocean Mapping Strategy*”, updates on legislative and budget priorities, and other topics. Navigation services include the data, products, and services provided by the NOAA programs and activities that undertake geodetic observations, gravity modeling, coastal and shoreline mapping, bathymetric mapping, hydrographic surveying, nautical charting, tide and water level observations, current observations, flooding, resilience, inundation and sea level rise, marine modeling, geospatial and LIDAR data, and related topics. This suite of NOAA products and services support safe and efficient navigation, resilient coasts and communities, and the nationwide positioning information infrastructure to support America’s commerce. The Panel will hear about the missions and uses of NOAA’s navigation services, the value these services bring, and what improvements could be made. Other matters may be considered. The agenda, speakers and time are subject to change, please refer to the website for the most updated information.

Special Accommodations

This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Please direct requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids to Melanie.Colantuno@noaa.gov at least 10 business days in advance of the meeting.

Shepard M. Smith,

Director, Office of Coast Survey, National Ocean Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

[FR Doc. 2020–18892 Filed 8–26–20; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

[RTID 0648–XA424]

Marine Mammals; File No. 23644

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

Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice; receipt of application.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that Iain Kerr, Ocean Alliance, 32 Horton Street, Gloucester, MA 01930, has applied in due form for a permit to conduct research on 22 cetacean species including endangered or threatened blue whales (*Balaenoptera musculus*), Gulf of Mexico Bryde's whales (*B. edeni*), fin whales (*B. physalus*), Hawaii insular false killer whales (*Pseudorca crassidens*), humpback whales (*Megaptera novaeangliae*), North Atlantic right whales (*Eubalaena glacialis*), sei whales (*B. borealis*), Southern right whales (*E. australis*), sperm whales (*Physeter macrocephalus*), and Western North Pacific gray whales (*Eschrichtius robustus*).

DATES: Written, telefaxed, or email comments must be received on or before September 28, 2020.

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. 23644 from the list of available applications. These documents are also available upon written request via email to NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov.

Written comments on this application should be submitted via email to NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov. Please include File No. 23644 in the subject line of the email comment.

Those individuals requesting a public hearing should submit a written request via email to NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov. The request should set forth the specific reasons why a hearing on this application would be appropriate.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Amy Hapeman or Shasta McClenahan, (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 parts 222-226).

The applicant proposes to conduct research for five years on 22 cetacean species in U.S. and international waters

of the North Atlantic and North Pacific Oceans. Research would be conducted for several cetacean studies including toxicology, microplastics, acoustics, and behavioral ecology. Researchers would conduct vessel and unmanned aircraft system surveys for biological sampling (skin and blubber biopsy, exhaled air, feces, and sloughed skin), counts, passive acoustics, photo-ID, photograph/video, observations, photogrammetry, and thermal imaging. Cetaceans also may be incidentally harassed during surveys when targeting another cetacean species or conspecifics. Samples collected on the high seas or in foreign territorial waters worldwide may be imported for study. Collected tissue samples also may be cultured for cell line development. Please see the application take tables for proposed take numbers by species.

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.

Dated: August 24, 2020.

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

[FR Doc. 2020-18866 Filed 8-26-20; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648-XA419]

Public Information Session Regarding Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Stock Assessment

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

ACTION: Notice; notification of public information session.

SUMMARY: NMFS is holding a public conference call and webinar for the Advisory Committee to the U.S. Section to the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) and other interested stakeholders to provide an update on the status of

recent work by the Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS) Bluefin Tuna Species Group to assess the western Atlantic and eastern Atlantic/Mediterranean bluefin tuna stocks.

DATES: An operator-assisted conference call and webinar information session that is open to the public will be held on September 3, 2020, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. EDT. (Phone number 888-935-0267; verbal password: "ICCAT"; WebEx link: t.ly/ixD; WebEx password: ICCAT). Participants must dial in by phone to receive audio and log on to the WebEx to view the presentation. Participants are strongly encouraged to dial in and log on 15 minutes prior to the meeting.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Terra Lederhouse at 301-427-8360 or Terra.Lederhouse@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: ICCAT's SCRS recently held the scheduled virtual meeting of its Bluefin Tuna Species Group to conduct stock assessments for the western Atlantic and eastern Atlantic/Mediterranean stocks of bluefin tuna. The work undertaken by the Bluefin Tuna Species Group, of which some analytical work is still ongoing, is considered preliminary until adopted by the SCRS by correspondence in late September 2020. At that time, the SCRS will also develop and adopt management advice for the Commission for both stocks of bluefin tuna. While it would be premature to speculate on the conclusions of the assessment or its implications, including with respect to management advice, NMFS scientists will provide the Advisory Committee to the U.S. Section to ICCAT and other interested stakeholders with an update on the preliminary results of the stock assessments at the September 3, 2020 webinar. NMFS will provide an opportunity for participants to ask questions regarding the presentation on the assessment work and will announce the timing and format for the question and answer period at the beginning of the conference call.

The webinar is specifically an update on the stock assessment progress and not on development of U.S. positions.

A Fall meeting of the Advisory Committee to the U.S. Section to ICCAT will be held after the final stock assessment results and SCRS management advice have been published to discuss additional topics related to the assessment results.