

process, as well as lessons learned. This debrief is intended to evaluate the process used to integrate MSE into Amendment 8 and will help inform future decisions on using MSE to manage Atlantic herring or for other purposes. The goals of the debrief are to: identify perceptions of the MSE process, identify pros and cons of the specific process used, identify lessons learned from the process, and inform future Council decisions on use of MSE for Atlantic herring management.

The Council conducted a Management Strategy Evaluation to help develop alternatives for an ABC control rule, or formula for setting catch limits. This MSE was intended to be a collaborative decision-making process, involving more public input and technical analysis earlier in the amendment development process than normal. An MSE involves modelling to determine potential outcomes of different management approaches, ABC control rules in this case. MSE can help evaluate tradeoffs among objectives and which control rules would most likely meet management goals.

The Council began working on Amendment 8 in 2015, conducting public scoping and setting the goals of this action. In January 2016, the Council decided to use MSE to help develop ABC control rule alternatives. MSEs typically take several years to finish and use invitation-only, small groups (15–25) of stakeholders to give input. The Council diverged from this norm for two reasons. First, the Council aimed to finish Amendment 8 in time to develop herring fishery catch limits for 2019–2021. Thus, this MSE had unusually constrained time limits. Second, the Council decided to have all points of stakeholder input (*e.g.*, workshops) completely open to the public, so the MSE process could mirror the open Council process as much as possible. Relative to other MSEs, the degree of stakeholder participation was rare, if not unique, at least for U.S. fisheries.

Public Comment

You may comment by submitting written comments to the Council (see **ADDRESSES**). While anyone may respond to this invitation for comment, the Council is particularly interested in understanding the viewpoints of those involved in the MSE (*e.g.*, attended an MSE workshop) and are invested in the future of herring management. You may address any aspect of the MSE but are encouraged to focus on the MSE as a decision-making process, rather than the technical aspects of the MSE or the outcomes of Amendment 8 (*e.g.*, the Council's preferred alternatives,

regulatory changes). Specifically, the Council is seeking input on:

- *Clarity of purpose and need* for using MSE in Amendment 8.
- *Sufficiency of general education* about MSE, how well MSE was understood (*e.g.*, models, role of stakeholder input) and any ideas for improving the education process (*e.g.*, more literature, online instructional webinars, in-person seminars)?
- *Utility of the six distinct phases of this MSE* (described above), whether some phases (or aspects of phases) more useful or successful than others and whether the time provided for each phase was enough.
- *Appropriateness of using open-invitation, public workshops* for this MSE and/or recommendations for other formats.
- *Utility of how MSE results were presented* in helping characterize the tradeoffs associated with various alternatives.
- *How well the Council integrated the MSE results and workshop input* in developing Amendment 8 alternatives.
- *Utility of the MSE in balancing tradeoffs* between objectives.
- *The benefits, if any, in using an MSE* for Amendment 8, and if the benefits outweigh the costs.
- *How this MSE process compared* to how else the Council could have developed and selected alternatives.

After the public comment period ends, the comments will be summarized, along with any Herring Plan Development Team (PDT) input and recommendations and discussed by the Herring Advisory Panel (AP) and Committee. The Council will be updated in September 2019. The PDT will draft a final report for discussion at the AP and Committee meetings in the fall, and the Council will likely receive a final report in December 2019. Public comment is important to the Council process. This is a key opportunity for you to give feedback on the Atlantic herring MSE. Your comments will help the Council evaluate this MSE and consider future MSEs.

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

Dated: June 28, 2019.

Alan D. Risenhoover,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[0648–XR003]

Marine Mammals; File No. 22835

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

ACTION: Notice; receipt of application.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that the Scripps Institute of Oceanography [Responsible Party: John Hildebrand, Ph.D.], University of California San Diego, 9500 Gilman Drive, La Jolla, CA 92093, has applied in due form for a permit to conduct research on 42 cetacean species, including endangered bowhead (*Balaena mysticetus*), blue (*Balaenoptera musculus*), fin (*Balaenoptera physalus*), sei (*Balaenoptera borealis*), Southern Resident killer (*Orcinus orca*), Hawaiian Islands Insular false killer (*Pseudorca crassidens*), humpback (*Megaptera novaeangliae*), North Pacific right (*Eubalaena japonica*), North Atlantic right (*Eubalaena glacialis*), sperm (*Physeter macrocephalus*), and Gulf of Mexico Bryde's (*Balaenoptera edeni*) whales.

DATES: Written, telefaxed, or email comments must be received on or before August 2, 2019.

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. 22835 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: Amy Hapeman or Sara Young, (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 study 42 cetacean species or stocks in the Pacific, Arctic and Atlantic Oceans, and Gulf of Mexico for five years. The primary objectives are to (1) develop improved methods for determining baseline data on cetaceans, and in particular how sound may be used to study cetacean behavior, and (2) assess the potential effects of human impacts on cetacean behavior including anthropogenic noise and the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. Cetaceans would be approached during surveys from vessel and aerial platforms for the following procedures: Passive acoustic recordings, counts, observation, photo-identification, photogrammetry, biopsy or skin swabbing, sloughed skin collection, fecal sampling, and/or suction-cup tagging and subsequent tracking.

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: June 28, 2019.

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XH081

New England Fishery Management Council; Public Meetings

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

ACTION: Notice; public meetings.

SUMMARY: The New England Fishery Management Council (Council) has contracted with the Gulf of Maine Research Institute (GMRI) to conduct a series of port meetings; nine public meetings are scheduled to solicit public comments on the sector catch share program in the Northeast Multispecies (groundfish) Fishery Management Plan.

DATES: Written public comments must be received on or before 5 p.m. EST, Monday, August 19, 2019. These meetings will be held between July 18, 2019 and August 16, 2019. For specific dates and times see **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**.

ADDRESSES: The port meetings will be held in Ellsworth, ME; Portland, ME; Hyannis, MA; Plymouth, MA; Gloucester, MA; Portsmouth, NH; Riverhead, NY; Narragansett, RI; and New Bedford, MA. For specific locations, see **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**.

Public comments: Mail to Thomas A. Nies, Executive Director, New England Fishery Management Council, 50 Water Street, Mill #2, Newburyport, MA 01950. Mark the outside of the envelope "Groundfish Catch Share Program Review". Comments may also be sent via fax to (978) 465-3116 or submitted via email to comments@nefmc.org with "Groundfish Catch Share Program Review" in the subject line.

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

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Council is seeking public input on the sector catch share program review. The New England Fishery Management Council is conducting a review of the groundfish sector system, which is a catch share program under the Northeast Multispecies (groundfish) Fishery Management Plan (FMP). The evaluation period for this review is focused strictly on fishing years 2010 to 2015, spanning from May 1, 2010 through April 30, 2016. This period covers the first six years of the catch

share program under Amendment 16 to the FMP. Information prior to program implementation also will be included for fishing years 2007 to 2009, covering May 1, 2007 through April 30, 2010. The Council has contracted with the Gulf of Maine Research Institute (GMRI) to conduct a series of port meetings to solicit public comments about the review. The schedule is as follows:

1. *Thursday, July 18, 2019, from 4:30 p.m.-7 p.m.*; Moore Community Center, 5 General Moore Way, Ellsworth, ME; phone: (207) 307-0324.

2. *Friday, July 19, 2019, from 4:30-7 p.m.*; Gulf of Maine Research Institute, 350 Commercial St., Portland, ME; phone: (207) 228-1625.

3. *Tuesday, July 23, 2019, from 4:30-7 p.m.*; Hyannis Youth & Community Center, 141 Bassett Lane, Hyannis, MA; phone: (508) 790-6345.

4. *Wednesday, July 24, 2019, from 4:30-7 p.m.*; Plymouth Library, 132 South Street, Plymouth, MA; phone: (508) 830-4250.

5. *Thursday, July 25, 2019, from 4:30-7 p.m.*; Gloucester Library, 2 Dale Avenue, Gloucester, MA; phone: (978) 281-9763.

6. *Friday, July 26, 2019, from 4:30-7 p.m.*; Portsmouth High School, 50 Andrew Jarvis Drive, Portsmouth, NH; phone: (603) 610-4166.

7. *Wednesday, August 14, 2019, from 4:30-7 p.m.*; Kermit W. Graf Building, Cornell Cooperative Extension, 423 Griffing Avenue, Riverhead, NY; phone: (631) 632-8730.

8. *Thursday, August 15, 2019, from 4:30-7 p.m.*; Narragansett Office of Town Managers, 25 Fifth Avenue, Narragansett, RI; phone: (401) 782-0645.

9. *Friday, August 16, 2019, from 4:30-7 p.m.*; Fairfield Inn and Suites, 185 MacArthur Drive, New Bedford, MA; phone: (774) 634-2000.

Additional information is available on the Council website at <https://www.nefmc.org/library/groundfish-catch-share-program-review>. The public also should be aware that the sessions will be recorded. Consistent with 16 U.S.C. 1852, a copy of the recording is available upon request.

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 Nies (see **ADDRESSES**), at least 5 working days prior to the meeting date.

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