

for this action, as NMFS does not intend to address these issues further without the submission of additional scientific information to the comment. If NMFS proposes regulations to allow this take, interested parties will be provided with a 45-day period within which to submit comments on the proposed rule.

Dated: March 5, 2003.

Brian P. Hayden,

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

[FR Doc. 03-5644 Filed 3-10-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-S

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 030503A]

Caribbean Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

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

ACTION: Notice of public meetings.

SUMMARY: The Caribbean Fishery Management Council (Council) and its Administrative Committee will hold meetings.

DATES: The meetings will be held on March 25-26, 2003. The Council will convene on Tuesday, March 25, 2003, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and the Administrative Committee will meet from 4:15 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. The Council will reconvene on Wednesday, March 26, 2003, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., approximately.

ADDRESSES: The meetings will be held at the Wyndham Sugar Bay Beach Club and Resort, 6500 Estate Smith Bay, St. Thomas, U.S.V.I.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Caribbean Fishery Management Council, 268 Munoz Rivera Avenue, Suite 1108, San Juan, Puerto Rico 00918-1920, telephone: (787) 766-5926.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Council will hold its 111th regular public meeting to discuss the items contained in the following agenda:

March 25, 2003, 9:00 a.m. 4:00 p.m.

A. Call to Order

B. The Role of Marine Reserves in Conservation Ethics and Ecosystem-Based Management - Dr. Jim Bohnsack

C. Essential Fish Habitat (EFH)-Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) Progress Report

-Schedule for the Submissions of DEIS

-Agenda items for Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC)/Habitat Advisory Panel (HAP) Meeting April 24-25, 2003

D. Recommendations from Fisheries Workshops - Dr. Lee Carrubba

E. Stomach Analysis of Deep Water Snappers - Dr. Edgardo Ortiz, 4:15 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

A. Administrative Committee Meeting -Advisory Panel (AP)/SSC/HAP

Membership

-Budget: 2002, 2003, 2004-05

-Queen Conch Initiative --Projects for Education and Scientific Literature -Personnel Issues and Statement of Organization, Practices and Procedures (SOPs)

-Other Business

March 26, 2003, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

A. Sustainable Fisheries Act (SFA);

-Status Criteria of Species: Discussion of Table 4 of SFA Document G. Garcia-Moliner

-Schedule to Finish the Caribbean Fishery Management Council/SFA Document

B. Enforcement

-Federal Government

-Puerto Rico

-U.S. Virgin Islands

-U.S. Coast Guard

C. Administrative Committee

Recommendations

-March 25, 2003

D. Meetings Attended by Council

Members and Staff

-Chairs and Executive Directors' Meeting, Washington, D.C.

-Enforcement Conference, Dominican Republic

-Coral Reef Task Force Meeting,

Washington, D.C.

-Southeast Data and Review (SEDAR) Workshop, St. Petersburg, FL.

E. Other Business

F. Next Council Meeting

The meetings are open to the public, and will be conducted in English.

Fishers and other interested persons are invited to attend and participate with oral or written statements regarding agenda issues.

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 Council's intent to take final action to address the emergency.

Special Accommodations

These meetings are physically accessible to people with disabilities.

For more information or request for sign language interpretation and/or other auxiliary aids, please contact Mr. Miguel A. Rolon, Executive Director, Caribbean Fishery Management Council, 268 Munoz Rivera Avenue, Suite 1108, San Juan, Puerto Rico, 00918-2577, telephone: (787) 766-5926, at least 5 days prior to the meeting date.

Dated: March 5, 2003.

Theophilus R. Brainerd,

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

[FR Doc. 03-5758 Filed 3-10-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-S

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 022703B]

Endangered Species; File No. 1420

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

ACTION: Receipt of application.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that Douglas Peterson, Ph.D., Warnell School of Forest Resources (Fisheries Division), University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia 30602, has applied in due form for a permit to take shortnose sturgeon, *Acipenser brevirostrum* for purposes of scientific research.

DATES: Written or telefaxed comments must be received on or before April 10, 2003.

ADDRESSES: The application and related documents are available for review upon written request or by appointment in the following office(s):

Permits, Conservation and Education Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13705, Silver Spring, MD 20910; phone (301)713-2289; fax (301)713-0376; and Southeast Region, NMFS, 9721 Executive Center Drive North, St. Petersburg, FL 33702-2432; phone (727)570-5301; fax (727)570-5320.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Jennifer Jefferies or Gene Nitta, (301)713-2289.

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

Dr. Peterson seeks authorization to sample and track shortnose sturgeon,

Acipenser brevirostrum, in the Altamaha River in Georgia. Annually, up to 200 fish will be taken via gill and trammel netting, measured, weighed, PIT and Carlin tagged, tissue and pectoral fin ray samples will be taken, and the fish subsequently released.

Additionally, up to 10 of the total fish sampled annually will also receive an internal radio-sonic transmitter. Dr. Peterson also proposes to deploy artificial substrate samplers from February to mid-March to collect up to 100 shortnose sturgeon eggs annually. The samplers will be checked and reset daily during the spawning season and the eggs collected and preserved for subsequent laboratory analysis to determine percent viability. Dr. Peterson seeks authorization to conduct the research 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.

Written comments or requests for a public hearing on this application should be mailed to the Chief, Permits, Conservation and Education Division, F/PR1, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13705, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Those individuals requesting a hearing should set forth the specific reasons why a hearing on this particular request would be appropriate.

Comments may also be submitted by facsimile at (301)713-0376, provided the facsimile is confirmed by hard copy submitted by mail and postmarked no later than the closing date of the comment period. Please note that comments will not be accepted by e-mail or by other electronic media.

Dated: February 28, 2003.

Stephen L. Leathery,

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

[FR Doc. 03-5645 Filed 3-10-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-S

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 022103C]

Vessel Monitoring Systems; List of Approved Mobile Transmitting Units and Communications Service Providers

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

ACTION: Notice of vessel monitoring systems; approval.

SUMMARY: This document provides notice of the vessel monitoring systems (VMS) approved by NOAA for use by pelagic longline vessels in the Atlantic Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Fisheries and sets forth relevant features of each VMS. This notification is being issued to replace the approval notice published on September 9, 1999.

ADDRESSES: To obtain copies of the list of NOAA approved VMS mobile transmitting units and NOAA approved VMS communications service providers, or information regarding the status of VMSs being evaluated by NOAA for approval, write to NMFS Office for Law Enforcement (OLE), 8484 Georgia Avenue, Suite 415, Silver Spring, MD 20910.

To submit a completed and signed checklist, mail or fax it to NOAA Enforcement, 9721 Executive Center Drive North, Koger Building, St. Petersburg, FL 33702, fax 727-570-5375.

For more addresses regarding approved VMSs, see the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section, under the heading VMS Provider Addresses.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For current listing information Mark Oswell, Outreach Specialist, phone 301-427-2300, fax 301-427-2055. For questions regarding VMS installation, activation checklists, and status of evaluations, contact Jonathan Pinkerton, National VMS Program Manager, phone 301-427-2300, fax 301-427-2055. For questions regarding the checklist, contact Fred Kyle, Special Agent, NMFS Office for Law Enforcement, Southeast Division, phone 727-570-5344.

The public may acquire this notice, installation checklist, and relevant updates via the "fax-back" service, or at the OLE website <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/ole/vms.html>. Telephone requests can be made by calling 301-427-2300.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. The VMS Requirement

The NMFS issued a regulation (64 FR 29090, May 28, 1999) codified at 50 CFR 635.69, requiring the use of VMS by vessels permitted to fish for HMS and that have pelagic longline gear onboard. Due to litigation, the requirement had been suspended until recently. The placement of VMS units on the fishing vessels in this fishery will enable NMFS to determine vessel locations and will complement the Agency's efforts to monitor and enforce compliance with applicable regulations.

This document provides notice of the VMS mobile transceiver units and the mobile communications service providers that have been approved by NOAA for use in the HMS Fisheries. This notice is being issued to replace the approval notice published on September 9, 1999 (64 FR 48988). The VMS consists of both the mobile transceiver unit placed on the vessel and the communications service provider that supplies the wireless link between the unit on the vessel and the shoreside data user. In the HMS Fisheries, the vessel owner is required to procure both VMS components. The two VMS components may, or may not, be provided by a single vendor. Thus, the vessel owner may need to procure the mobile transceiver unit and the mobile communications service separately.

To the extent that the use of VMS is required by applicable regulations, NMFS is considered to be the operator and user of the VMS mobile transceiver unit and the user of any required data, regardless of who is required to pay for the mobile transceiver unit onboard a vessel and for the associated communications services. Accordingly, NMFS will specify how the VMS mobile transceiver units must be configured, installed, and activated. This does not, however, preclude the vessel owner from procuring a VMS that provides additional services and capabilities used exclusively by the vessel owner and operator.

On September 23, 1993, NMFS published proposed VMS standards at 58 FR 49285. On March 31, 1994, NMFS published final VMS standards at 59 FR 15180. These documents stated that NMFS endorses the use of VMS and defined specifications and criteria for their use.

On September 8, 1998, NOAA published a request for information (RFI) in the Commerce Business Daily in which it stated the minimum VMS specifications necessary for NOAA's approval. The RFI requested that responses from interested VMS