

continue collaboration within a wide range of programmatic marine research disciplines. NOAA, in cooperation with UCSD, has prepared a joint EIS/EIR to analyze the environmental impacts of relocating the SWFSC facilities at UCSD.

*Other alternative actions considered were:* Use of other NOAA facility locations in California and other Pacific Coast states; use of alternative sites at or adjacent to SIO for collaborative research; and use of existing alternative NOAA facilities and properties away from UCSD.

This joint Draft EIS/EIR analyzes environmental impacts that may result from construction and/or operation of the proposed facilities. The environmental issues addressed in the Draft EIS/EIR include: Land use and coastal zone management, geology, hydrology and water resources; biological resources and protected species; utilities and public services; transportation and traffic circulation, recreational resources; air quality; noise and vibration; visual effects and aesthetics; cultural resources; and socioeconomic and environmental justice; public services and utilities; population and housing; solid waste and hazardous materials; and cumulative effects.

Copies of the draft EIS/EIR have been made available at the UCSD library, at the existing SWFSC, and at La Jolla Public Library.

#### Decision Process

Following due consideration of all comments received during the official comment period, a Final EIS/EIR will be prepared. The government decision as to how to proceed will be announced in a Record of Decision (ROD) to be issued no earlier than 30 days after issuance of the Final EIS/EIR. The official responsible for a final decision is William F. Broglie, Chief Administrative Officer, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Dated: November 18, 2008.

**Sandra R. Manning,**

*Acting Chief Administrative Officer, Office of the Chief Administrative Officer, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.*  
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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

**RIN: 0648-XL88**

#### Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council; Public Meetings

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

**ACTION:** Notice of public scoping meetings.

**SUMMARY:** The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) will convene scoping meetings to address loggerhead sea turtle interactions with reef fish bottom longlines.

**DATES:** The scoping meetings will be held December 9 & 10, 2008 at two locations. For specific dates, times, and subjects, see **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**.

**ADDRESSES:** The scoping meetings will be held in the following locations: Madeira Beach, FL and Panama City, FL. For specific addresses, see **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**.

*Council address:* Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, 2203 North Lois Avenue, Suite 1100, Tampa, FL 33607.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Carrie Simmons, Fishery Biologist; telephone: (813) 348-1630.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) has scheduled two scoping meetings on the estimated bycatch and subsequent mortality of hard shell sea turtles based on observer data in the bottom longline portion of the Gulf of Mexico reef fish fishery. The purpose of these scoping meetings is to explore possible alternatives to reduce takes of loggerhead sea turtles in the bottom longline fishery to levels that do not jeopardize the continued existence of the population. In response to observer data that indicates increased takes of sea turtles, the Council is required to take action to provide protection for threatened loggerhead sea turtles from interactions with fishing gear in compliance with the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and to reduce bycatch and bycatch mortality in compliance with National Standard 9 of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA). Scoping meetings are part of the initial phase of preparing a plan amendment. The purpose is to identify issues and a reasonable range of alternatives to address those issues.

Such alternatives could include time/area closures, gear modifications, alternative baits, observer program, effort limitation, or other measures to reduce sea turtle takes and mortality of sea turtles from interactions with reef fish longline gear. The public is encouraged to attend and provide input. Public input will be used by the Council to further develop the amendment. The scoping meetings will begin at 6 p.m. and conclude at the end of public testimony or no later than 9 p.m. at each of the following locations:

*Tuesday, December 9, 2008, Hilton Garden Inn, 1101 US Highway 231, Panama City, FL 32405; telephone: (850) 392-1093;*

*Wednesday, December 10, 2008, City of Madeira Beach, 300 Municipal Drive, Madeira Beach, FL 33708; telephone: (727) 391-9951.*

Copies of the Amendments scoping documents can be obtained by calling the Council office at (813) 348-1630.

#### Special Accommodations

These scoping meetings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Tina O'Hern at the Council (see **ADDRESSES**) at least 5 working days prior to the meeting.

Dated: November 18, 2008.

**Tracey L. Thompson,**

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

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

**RIN: 0648-XL96**

#### New England Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

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

**ACTION:** Notice of a public meeting.

**SUMMARY:** The New England Fishery Management Council(s) (Council) Herring Oversight Committee will meet to consider actions affecting New England fisheries in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ).

**DATES:** The meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 16, 2008 at 9:30 a.m.

**ADDRESSES:** The meeting will be held at the Sheraton Ferncroft Hotel, 50