

protected species and there would be no activity in any areas closed for Northeast multispecies. All harvest would be accounted for under Atlantic surfclam and ocean quahog quota allocations under the Federal individual transferable quota program.

The additional vessels would help to study the expansion of the protocol from one vessel in a pilot study to more fishing vessels for a wider-spread implementation. Also, the area designated on GB where the research is proposed would be divided into three even sections in which each vessel would collect samples on a regular basis. If it appears that an algal bloom is forming in a given area, spatial and temporal sampling would be increased as needed. This also allows for samples to be collected over a wider area, ensuring samples collected are representative of evenly distributed portions of the entire closure area.

State and Federal agencies will be notified of each trip, place and time of landing, the results of onboard screening, and the dockside laboratory results. Harvested clams would be landed in Massachusetts and Delaware. New Jersey and Rhode Island may be added as additional landing states pending agreements being developed according to the terms of the protocol. Harvested clams would be processed at Sea Watch International in New Bedford, MA, with independent samples from each trip landed being taken for shipment to an independent FDA certified laboratory in Brunswick, ME, and the shellfish held at the processing site under State supervision until the dockside tests are complete. All of the results from activities under the EFPs would be compiled, archived, and made public by the FDA.

Regulations under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act require publication of this notification to provide interested parties the opportunity to comment on applications for proposed EFPs. The Assistant Regional Administrator has made an initial determination that, based on a preliminary review of the proposed subject research and the criteria provided in section 5.05a-c and section 6.03c.3(a) of NOAA's Administrative Order 216-6, a Categorical Exclusion appears to be justified for this EFP. In accordance with NOAA's Administrative Order 216-6, a Categorical Exclusion, or other appropriate National Environmental Policy Act document, would be completed prior to the issuance of the EFP. Further review and consultation may be necessary before a final determination is made to issue the EFP.

If approved, the applicant may request minor modifications and extensions to the EFP throughout the year. EFP modifications and extensions may be granted without further notice if they are deemed essential to facilitate completion of the proposed research and have minimal impacts that do not change the scope or impact of the initially approved EFP request. Any fishing activity conducted outside the scope of the exempted fishing activity would be prohibited.

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

Dated: January 31, 2012.

Steven Thur,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XA978

Southwest Fisheries Science Center; Public Meeting

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

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: A methods review of the Collaborative Optically-assisted Acoustic Survey Technique (COAST) by the Center for Independent Experts (CIE) and the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) and will be held February 15-17, 2012, that is open to the public.

DATES: The methods review of the COAST process will be held beginning at 8:30 a.m., Wednesday, February 15, 2012, and end at 5:30 p.m. or as necessary to complete business for the day. The panel will reconvene on Thursday, February 16, 2012, and will continue through Friday, February 17, 2012, beginning at 8 a.m. and ending at 5:30 p.m. each day, or as necessary to complete business.

ADDRESSES: The COAST methods review will be held at the Southwest Fisheries Science Center; Southwest Fisheries Science Center, 3333 North Torrey Pines Court, La Jolla, CA 92037-1023; (858) 546-7000.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Mr. Dale Sweetnam, NMFS Southwest Fisheries Science Center; telephone: (858) 546-7170.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The COAST uses high-precision acoustic

sampling to efficiently map the distributions of rockfishes on large scales and to direct the optical sampling. The COAST also uses accurate optical sampling to provide estimates of species composition and their length distributions. Thus, the COAST combines information from acoustic and optical sampling to obtain relatively precise and accurate estimates of the distributions and abundances of rockfishes, by species. The COAST was developed by the NOAA/NMFS Southwest Fisheries Science Center, Advanced Sampling Technology Program, and the Sportfishing Association of California. It may also have broad appeal to fisheries managers and researchers as a tool for ecosystem-based management as well as evaluating the performance of marine protected areas.

Special Accommodations

This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Mr. Dale Sweetnam (858) 546-7170 at least five days prior to the meeting date.

Dated: January 31, 2012.

Steven Thur,

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

[FR Doc. 2012-2491 Filed 2-2-12; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XA603

Marine Mammals; File No. 15802

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

ACTION: Notice; requested change to permit application.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, 100 Eighth Avenue SE., St. Petersburg, FL 33701 [Gregg Poulakis, Responsible Party], has requested a change to the application for a permit (File No. 15802).

DATES: Written, telefaxed, or email comments must be received on or before March 5, 2012.

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