

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

RIN 0648–XA205

New England Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

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

ACTION: Notice; public meeting.

SUMMARY: The New England Fishery Management Council (Council) is scheduling a public meeting of its Scallop Committee in March 2011 to consider actions affecting New England fisheries in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ). Recommendations from this group will be brought to the full Council for formal consideration and action, if appropriate.

DATES: This meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 1, 2011, at 9 a.m.

ADDRESSES: This meeting will be held at the Hilton Garden Inn, One Thurber Street, Warwick, RI 02886; telephone: (401) 734–9600; fax: (401) 734–9700.

Council address: New England Fishery Management Council, 50 Water Street, Mill 2, Newburyport, MA 01950.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Paul J. Howard, Executive Director, New England Fishery Management Council; telephone: (978) 465–0492.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Committee will begin developing alternatives for Framework 23 to the Scallop Fishery Management Plan (FMP). Framework 23 is considering alternatives to potentially require a turtle excluder dredge, revise the yellowtail flounder accountability measures (AMs) proposed in Amendment 15, and possibly modify the limited access general category management program for the Northern Gulf of Maine (NGOM) area. The action may also include measures to develop alternatives to modify the current vessel monitoring system (VMS) regulations to improve scallop fleet operations (*e.g.* how days-at-sea are charged and how a vessel declares into the fishery). The Committee may discuss other business at this meeting.

Although non-emergency issues not contained in this agenda may come before this group for discussion, in accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act), those issues may not be the subject of formal action during this meeting. Actions 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 Act, provided the public has been notified of the Council's intent to take final action to address the emergency.

Special Accommodations

This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Paul J. Howard, Executive Director, at (978) 465–0492, at least 5 days prior to the meeting date.

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

Dated: February 4, 2011.

Tracey L. Thompson,

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

[FR Doc. 2011–2929 Filed 2–9–11; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–22–P

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

RIN 0648–XA149

Taking and Importing Marine Mammals; Taking of Marine Mammals Incidental to Conducting Precision Strike Weapons Testing and Training by Eglin Air Force Base in the Gulf of Mexico

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

ACTION: Notice of issuance of a Letter of Authorization.

SUMMARY: In accordance with provisions of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), as amended, notification is hereby given that a Letter of Authorization (LOA) to take four species of marine mammals incidental to testing and training during Precision Strike Weapons (PSW) testing and training in the Gulf of Mexico (GOM), a military readiness activity, has been issued to Eglin Air Force Base (AFB).

DATES: This authorization is effective from April 1, 2011, through December 27, 2011.

ADDRESSES: The application and LOA are available for review in the Permits, Conservation, and Education Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910, or by contacting the individuals listed in **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT.**

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Michelle Magliocca, NMFS, 301–713–2289.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**Background**

Section 101(a)(5)(A) of the MMPA (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*) directs NMFS to allow, upon request, the incidental, but not intentional, taking of small numbers of marine mammals by U.S. citizens who engage in a specified activity (other than commercial fishing) within a specified geographical region, if certain findings are made by NMFS and regulations are issued. Under the MMPA, the term “taking” means to harass, hunt, capture, or kill or to attempt to harass, hunt, capture or kill marine mammals. The National Defense Authorization Act of 2004 (Pub. L. 108–136) removed the “small numbers” and “specified geographical region” limitations and amended the definition of “harassment” as it applies to a “military readiness activity” to read as follows (Section 3(18)(B) of the MMPA):

(i) Any act that injures or has the significant potential to injure a marine mammal or marine mammal stock in the wild [Level A Harassment]; or (ii) Any act that disturbs or is likely to disturb a marine mammal or marine mammal stock in the wild by causing disruption of natural behavioral patterns, including, but not limited to, migration, surfacing, nursing, breeding, feeding, or sheltering, to a point where such behavioral patterns are abandoned or significantly altered [Level B Harassment].

Authorization, in the form of annual LOAs, may be granted for periods of up to 5 years if NMFS finds, after notification and opportunity for public comment, that the taking will have a negligible impact on the species or stock(s) of marine mammals and will not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of the species or stock(s) for subsistence uses (where relevant). In addition, NMFS must prescribe regulations that include permissible methods of taking and other means of effecting the least practicable adverse impact on the species and its habitat, and on the availability of the species for subsistence uses, paying particular attention to rookeries, mating grounds, and areas of similar significance. The regulations must include requirements pertaining to the monitoring and reporting of such taking. Regulations governing the taking of marine mammals incidental to PSW testing and training within the Eglin Gulf Test and Training Range (EGTTR) in the GOM were published on November 24, 2006 (71 FR 67810), and remain in effect from December 26, 2006, through December 27, 2011. The