

“unmitigable adverse impact” in 50 CFR 216.103 as an impact resulting from the specified activity: (1) That is likely to reduce the availability of the species to a level insufficient for a harvest to meet subsistence needs by: (i) Causing the marine mammals to abandon or avoid hunting areas; (ii) Directly displacing subsistence users; or (iii) Placing physical barriers between the marine mammals and the subsistence hunters; and (2) That cannot be sufficiently mitigated by other measures to increase the availability of marine mammals to allow subsistence needs to be met.

Given the nature of the activity and the required mitigation measures, serious injury and mortality of marine mammals is not expected to occur. Impacts to marine mammals will be limited to temporary behavioral disturbances of seals and bowhead whales. As described above, the required mitigation measures, such as implementation of shutdown zones, are expected to reduce the frequency and severity of takes of marine mammals.

Project activities could deter target species from west Harrison Bay. However, much of the project season avoids traditional ice seal harvest windows. (As noted in the Effects of Specified Activities on Subsistence Uses of Marine Mammals section above, Nuiqsut residents typically harvest ice seals in the highest numbers in June, July, and August, and Narwhal’s project will not begin until August.) While some hunting continues throughout the early fall, we do not anticipate that there will be impacts to seals that will make them unavailable for subsistence hunters. As noted in the Effects of Specified Activities on Subsistence Uses of Marine Mammals section, subsistence use of bowhead whales is limited in this area, as it is not within the preferred and frequented hunting areas. The authorized takes are not expected to affect the fitness of any bowhead whales, or cause significant deflection outside of the typical migratory path in areas where subsistence hunts occur. Narwhal will continue to coordinate with local communities and subsistence groups to minimize impacts of the project, as described in the POC, which the IHA requires Narwhal to abide by.

Based on the description of the specified activity, the measures described to minimize adverse effects on the availability of marine mammals for subsistence purposes, and the mitigation and monitoring measures, NMFS has determined that there will not be an unmitigable adverse impact on subsistence uses from Narwhal’s activities.

### Endangered Species Act

Section 7(a)(2) of the ESA of 1973 (ESA; 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) requires that each Federal agency ensure that any action it authorizes, funds, or carries out is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any endangered or threatened species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of designated critical habitat. To ensure ESA compliance for the issuance of IHAs, NMFS OPR consults internally whenever we propose to authorize take for endangered or threatened species, in this case with the NMFS Alaska Regional Office (AKR).

NMFS Alaska Regional Office issued a Biological Opinion under section 7 of the ESA on the issuance of an IHA to Narwhal under section 101(a)(5)(D) of the MMPA by the NMFS OPR. The Biological Opinion concluded that the proposed action is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of bowhead whale, bearded seal (Beringia DPS), and ringed seal (Arctic subspecies), and is not likely to destroy or adversely modify critical habitat for those species.

### National Environmental Policy Act

To comply with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA; 42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*) and NOAA Administrative Order (NAO) 216–6A, NMFS must review our proposed action (*i.e.*, the issuance of an IHA) with respect to potential impacts on the human environment.

NMFS prepared an EA and analyzed the potential impacts to marine mammals that would result from Narwhal’s oil and gas exploration project, and subsequently signed a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) regarding the effects of its proposed action on the human environment. Copies of the EA and FONSI are available at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/action/incidental-take-authorization-narwhal-llcs-oil-and-gas-exploration-activities-west-harrison>.

### Authorization

NMFS has issued an IHA to Narwhal for the potential harassment of small numbers of four marine mammal stocks incidental to the oil and gas exploration activities in west Harrison Bay, Alaska.

Dated: August 15, 2025.

**Kimberly Damon-Randall,**

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

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### DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

#### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648–XF091]

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

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

**ACTION:** Notice of public meeting.

**SUMMARY:** The New England Fishery Management Council (Council) is scheduling a public meeting of its Joint Groundfish Advisory and Recreational Advisory Panels via webinar 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 webinar will be held on Tuesday, September 3, 2025, at 9 a.m. Webinar registration URL information: <https://nefmc-org.zoom.us/meeting/register/G4dyAdmATe-3OyRQT5ZPhA>

#### ADDRESSES:

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

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Cate O’Keefe, Executive Director, New England Fishery Management Council; telephone: (978) 465–0492.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

#### Agenda

The Groundfish and Recreational Advisory Panels will meet to discuss revised Amendment 25/Atlantic Cod Specifications and Management and receive an update on development of the revised action. The Panels will receive an update on the development of Framework Adjustment 72/ Specifications and Management Measures. They will also receive an overview of the Joint New England and Mid-Atlantic Council Omnibus Alternative Gear Marking Framework and discuss other business as necessary.

Although non-emergency issues not contained on the agenda may come before this Council for discussion, those issues may not be the subject of formal action during this meeting. Council action will be restricted to those issues specifically listed 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

