

TABLE 2—PROJECT SUMMARY—Continued

Project title	Compensation fishing in support of a Great South Channel Habitat Management Area study phase II: an acoustic mapping survey of Davis Bank East
Project objectives	Compensation surfclam fishing to fund a habitat mapping project using multibeam sonar and drop cameras.
Project location	Great South Channel Habitat Management Area, Davis Bank East.
Number of vessels	3 (2 active with 1 in reserve).
Number of trips	260.
Trip duration (days)	1.
Total number of days	260.
Gear type(s)	Hydraulic clam dredge.
Number of tows or sets	30 per trip.
Duration of tows or sets	0.16 hrs.

Project Narrative

Acoustic Survey Trips

An initial survey of the full Davis Bank East area (approximately 60 square kilometers) would be conducted using multibeam sonar and a drop camera array, lasting approximately 8 and 6 days, respectively. This would establish a baseline to monitor changes in fished and unfished portions of the area. Following the initial survey, research trips would consist of one 4-day trip per season (16 total days) in the northern half of the area. The survey would be conducted with a 25-percent overlap between adjacent multibeam lines. Sonar imagery would be processed for bathymetry and backscatter. In addition, a 2-day research trip would occur seasonally (8 total days) using a drop camera array to ground-truth the sonar imagery and provide benthic community biological information. Drop camera survey trips would be conducted concurrent with the sonar survey trips. Four drops per hour would be accomplished for 12 hours for 2 days, with a goal of approximately 96 stations sampled per trip. Time of day, sea state and weather conditions, GPS coordinates, depth, and time on bottom will be recorded at each drop camera station. The drop camera is a 4-foot-tall, four-sided pyramid outfitted with lights and a high-resolution Sony camera with a 1-meter-squared field of view. A final multibeam sonar and drop camera survey of the full Davis Bank East area would be conducted again lasting approximately 8 and 6 days, respectively. All survey trips would be directed by two CFF scientists onboard the vessel. No fishing gear will be deployed during survey trips. CFF will submit a separate application for a letter of acknowledgment of scientific research for these survey cruises.

Compensation Fishing Trips

The EFP would authorize the harvest of surfclams from an area closed to hydraulic clam dredges for the purpose

of generating funds for the acoustic survey. After the initial acoustic survey is completed, two commercial surfclam vessels would take up to 130 trips (260 total trips) into the southern portion of the Davis Bank East area defined by these coordinates:

Latitude	Longitude
41.268° N	69.58° W.
41.268° N	69.508° W.
41.223° N	69.566° W.
41.223° N	69.508° W.

Both vessels would use a 48-inch-wide hydraulic surfclam dredge, towed between 2 and 3 knots for 10 minutes per tow, with a trip limit of 14 cages. Approximately 30 tows would be conducted per trip. A CFF scientist would be onboard 25 percent of compensation fishing trips to collect surfclam catch per unit effort and catch composition data. The vessel owners have committed 15 percent of the value of each trip to cover the full cost of the research trips and data analysis. At an estimated \$30 per bushel ex-vessel value, this would just cover the total research budget of roughly \$505,000. The participating vessel owners have agreed to make up the difference if the price falls below \$30 per bushel.

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: March 7, 2024.

Everett Wayne Baxter,
Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.
[FR Doc. 2024–05271 Filed 3–12–24; 8:45 am]
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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648–XD753]

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 is convening its Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) sub-panel 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 Wednesday, March 27, 2024, at 1 p.m.

ADDRESSES:

Webinar registration information:
<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/6027689206954658393>. Call in information: +1 (415) 930–5321, Access Code: 210–165–122.

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

A Scientific and Statistical Committee sub-panel will meet to review the

methods of a management strategy evaluation (MSE) for Atlantic cod and give input on possible scenarios to simulate through the MSE. This MSE aims to support the Council's ongoing decision-making process for how to manage Atlantic cod given the recent review of cod stock structure that resulted in shifting from two biological units (Gulf of Maine and Georges Bank) to five units. This MSE aims to quantify the relative performance of candidate spatial management procedures. The sub-panel will formulate suggestions for the MSE team to consider and may reconvene later in 2024 to review progress. Other business will be discussed 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 emergency. The public also should be aware that the meeting will be recorded. Consistent with 16 U.S.C. 1852, a copy of the recording is available upon request.

Special Accommodations

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

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

Dated: March 6, 2024.

Key Israel Marquez,

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

[FR Doc. 2024-05460 Filed 3-12-24; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648-XD793]

Marine Mammals; File No. 27938

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

ACTION: Notice; receipt of application.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that BBC Studios, Ltd., Whiteladies Road, Bristol, BS8 2LR, UK (Emily-Kate Moorhead, Responsible Party) has applied in due form for a permit to conduct commercial and educational photography on marine mammals.

DATES: Written comments must be received on or before April 12, 2024.

ADDRESSES: These documents are available upon written request via email to NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov.

Written comments on this application should be submitted via email to NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov. Please include File No. 27938 in the subject line of the email comment.

Those individuals requesting a public hearing should submit a written request via email to NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov. The request should set forth the specific reasons why a hearing on this application would be appropriate.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Shasta McClenahan, Ph.D., or Amy Hapeman, (301) 427-8401.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The subject permit is requested under the authority of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (MMPA; 16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*), the regulations governing the taking and importing of marine mammals (50 CFR part 216).

The applicant proposes to film up to 13 species of non-listed marine mammals in the New York Bight for a wildlife documentary series. Filming may occur from land, vessel, underwater (pole or drop-in camera), and unmanned aircraft system platform. See the application for species, life stages, and numbers of animals by filming platform. The permit is requested for 2 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.

Concurrent with the publication of this notice in the **Federal Register**, NMFS is forwarding copies of the application to the Marine Mammal Commission and its Committee of Scientific Advisors.

Dated: March 7, 2024.

Julia M. Harrison,

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

[FR Doc. 2024-05263 Filed 3-12-24; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648-XD721]

Takes of Marine Mammals Incidental to Specified Activities; Taking Marine Mammals Incidental to the Parallel Thimble Shoal Tunnel Project, Virginia Beach, Virginia

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

ACTION: Issuance of an incidental harassment authorization.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the regulations implementing the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) as amended, notification is hereby given that NMFS has issued an incidental harassment authorization (IHA) to the Chesapeake Tunnel Joint Venture (CTJV) to incidentally harass marine mammals during construction associated with the Parallel Thimble Shoal Tunnel Project (PTST) in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

DATES: This authorization is effective from February 15, 2024, through February 14, 2025.

ADDRESSES: Electronic copies of the application and supporting documents, as well as a list of the references cited in this document, may be obtained online at: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/marine-mammal-protection/incidental-take-authorizations-construction-activities>. In case of problems accessing these documents, please call the contact listed below.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Robert Pauline, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, (301) 427-8401.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The MMPA prohibits the "take" of marine mammals, with certain exceptions. Sections 101(a)(5)(A) and (D) of the MMPA (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*) direct the Secretary of Commerce (as delegated to 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 and either regulations are proposed or, if the taking is limited to harassment, a notice of a proposed IHA is provided to the public for review.

Authorization for incidental takings shall be granted if NMFS finds that the