can be identified. The captured steelhead and Chinook would be released with minimal handling, but some may be anesthetized, identified by species, and scanned for PIT tags. These fish will be held and allowed to recover in cool, aerated water and released at or near the site of capture.

The studies would benefit the fish by helping guide habitat restoration efforts and refuge planning and adding information on fish presence and interactions in areas where they are currently poorly understood. The researchers do not intend to kill any of the fish being captured but a small number may die as an inadvertent result of the activities.

Permit 18883

The City of Portland has requested a one-year permit to take listed salmon and steelhead while conducting fish tissue sampling in the Columbia River slough. The City performs fish tissue sampling every 10 years to assess whether upland source control actions have reduced the level of toxins in fish tissue and to evaluate exposure levels for people who consume fish. Due to their high lipid content and feeding habits, carp are the target fish species used to evaluate exposure levels. The City would collect adult carp, using boat electrofishing equipment, from locations throughout the Slough. Although salmon and steelhead are not the target of the study, the City may inadvertently take juvenile and adult LCR Chinook salmon, LCR coho salmon, LCR steelhead, UWR Chinook salmon, and UWR steelhead. These fish would benefit from the information to be gained because that information would be used to reduce contaminant loads in all fish using the slough. The City does not intend to kill any of the salmonids being captured but a small number of juvenile fish may die as an unintended result of the activities.

Permit 18906

The Northwest Straits Foundation (NSF) is seeking a five-year research permit to annually take juvenile HCS chum salmon, PS Chinook salmon, and PS steelhead. The researchers may also take adult S eulachon, for which there are currently no ESA take prohibitions. Sampling would take place at 20 to 30 sites in Puget Sound at the following locations: Fidalgo Bay, Bowman Bay, Shannon Point, Fort Townsend, Oak Bay, and Smugglers Cove. The purpose of the study is to monitor ecosystem response to restoration efforts and determine the restoration activities' effectiveness at reestablishing habitat as a natural functioning ecosystem. The research would benefit the listed species by determining the effectiveness of these restoration efforts and helping guide future efforts. The NSF proposes to use beach seines to capture the fish; they would then be identified by species, measured, and released. The researchers do not propose to kill any of the listed fish being captured, but a small number may die as an unintended result of the activities.

Permit 19013

Long Live the Kings (LLTK) is seeking a five-year research permit to annually take juvenile HCS chum salmon, PS Chinook salmon, and PS steelhead from the Hamma Hamma River, Washington, while assessing effects and effectiveness of PS steelhead supplementation in that area. The research would benefit the listed species by determining what legacy effects the PS steelhead hatchery program has had on natural steelhead populations (abundance, genetic diversity, and life history diversity). The LLTK researchers propose to use a rotary screw trap to capture the fish which would then be anesthetized, weighed, measured, have a tissue sample taken (sample scale and fin clip), and allowed to recover in cool, aerated water until they are ready for release. The researchers do not propose to kill any of the listed salmonids being captured, but a small number may die as an unintended result of the activities.

This notice is provided pursuant to section 10(c) of the ESA. NMFS will evaluate the applications, associated documents, and comments submitted to determine whether the applications meet the requirements of section 10(a) of the ESA and Federal regulations. The final permit decisions will not be made until after the end of the 30-day comment period. NMFS will publish notice of its final action in the **Federal Register**.

Dated: October 29, 2014.

Angela Somma,

Chief, Endangered Species Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 2014–26243 Filed 11–4–14; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–22–P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648–XD594

Endangered and Threatened Species; Take of Abalone

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

ACTION: Notice of receipt for a request to modify an existing scientific research and enhancement permit.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that NMFS has received one permit application request to modify an existing research and enhancement permit. The proposed research is intended to increase knowledge of species listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and to help guide management, conservation, and recovery efforts. The application may be viewed online at: *https://apps.nmfs.noaa.gov/preview/preview_open_for_comment.cfm.*

DATES: Comments or requests for a public hearing on the application must be received at the appropriate address or fax number (see **ADDRESSES**) no later than 5 p.m. Pacific standard time on December 5, 2014.

ADDRESSES: Written comments on the application should be submitted to the Protected Resources Division, NMFS, 777 Sonoma Avenue, Room 325, Santa Rosa, CA 95404. Comments may also be submitted via fax to 707–578–3435 or by email to *nmfs.swr.apps@noaa.gov* (include the permit number in the subject line of the email).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jeffrey Jahn, Santa Rosa, CA (ph.: 707–575–6097), Fax: 707–578–3435, email: *Jeffrey.Jahn@noaa.gov*). Permit application instructions are available from the address above, or online at *https://apps.nmfs.noaa.gov.*

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Species Covered in This Notice

The following listed species are covered in this notice:

Endangered white abalone (*Haliotis sorenseni*).

Authority

Scientific research and enhancement permits are issued in accordance with section 10(a)(1)(A) of the ESA (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et. seq*) and regulations governing listed fish and wildlife permits (50 CFR parts 222–227). NMFS issues permits based on findings that such permits: (1) Are applied for in good faith; (2) if granted and exercised, would not operate to the disadvantage of the listed species that are the subject of the permit; and (3) are consistent with the purposes and policy of section 2 of the ESA. The authority to take listed species is subject to conditions set forth in the permits.

Anyone requesting a hearing on an application listed in this notice should

set out the specific reasons why a hearing on that application would be appropriate (see **ADDRESSES**). Such hearings are held at the discretion of the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NMFS.

Application Received

Permit 14344 Modification 1

The University of California at Davis, Bodega Marine Laboratory (BML) is seeking to modify permit (14344) that currently authorizes the captive maintenance and breeding of captive white abalone. The research is designed to (1) investigate and overcome barriers to propagating endangered white abalone in captivity, (2) identify reproduction limits in wild white abalone, (3) to investigate white abalone disease processes and learn how to mitigate them, and (4) seek the most successful means of recovering these animals in the wild. The requested modification would allow BML to collect wild white abalone from the ocean, especially individuals facing immediate harm, in order to increase the numbers and genetic integrity of captive broodstock. We expect and intend that the captive breeding program will benefit the abalone by increasing their numbers, helping to stabilize the population, and eventually helping to recover them in the wild. The researchers do not intend to kill any of the animals being captured but a small number of them may be killed as an inadvertent result of the activities.

This notice is provided pursuant to section 10(c) of the ESA. NMFS will evaluate the applications, associated documents, and comments submitted to determine whether the applications meet the requirements of section 10(a) of the ESA and Federal regulations. The final permit decisions will not be made until after the end of the 30-day comment period. NMFS will publish notice of its final action in the **Federal Register**.

Dated: October 29, 2014.

Angela Somma,

Chief, Endangered Species Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 2014–26242 Filed 11–4–14; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–22–P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[Docket No. 1206013478–4863–03]

RIN 0648–XB140

Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants: Notice of 12-Month Finding on a Petition To List the Queen Conch as Threatened or Endangered Under the Endangered Species Act (ESA)

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

ACTION: Notice of 12-month finding.

SUMMARY: We, NMFS, announce a 12-month finding and listing determination on a petition to list the queen conch (*Strombus gigas*) as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). We have completed a comprehensive status report for the queen conch in response to the petition submitted by WildEarth Guardians. Based on the best scientific and commercial information available, including the status report (NMFS, 2014a), we have determined that the species does not warrant listing at this time. We conclude that the queen conch is not currently in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range nor is it not likely to become so within the foreseeable future.

DATES: This finding was made on November 5, 2014.

ADDRESSES: Documents associated with this determination and reference list—are available by submitting a request to the Species Conservation Branch Chief, Protected Resources Division, NMFS Southeast Regional Office, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, FL 33701–5505, Attn: Queen Conch 12-month Finding. The reports are also available electronically at: *http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/protected_resources/listing_petitions/index.html.*

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Calusa Horn, NMFS, Southeast Regional Office (727) 824–5312.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

On February 27, 2012, we received a petition from WildEarth Guardians to list the queen conch (*Stombus gigas*) as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act of 1973. The petitioner also requested that critical habitat be designated for this species concurrent with listing under the ESA. The petition stated that overfishing is the greatest threat to queen conch and is the principal cause of population declines. It also argued that the existing regulations are ineffective and unable to prevent the unsustainable and illegal harvest of queen conch. The petitioner asserted that biological characteristics (e.g., slow growth, late maturation, limited mobility, occurrence in shallow waters, and tendency to aggregate) render the species particularly vulnerable to overharvest, and that Allee effects are preventing the recovery of overexploited stocks. The petitioner also argued that degradation of shallow water nursery habitat and water pollution, specifically high concentrations of zinc and copper, reduces juvenile recruitment and causes reproductive failure.

On August 27, 2012, we published a 90-day finding with our determination that the petition presented substantial scientific and commercial information indicating that the petitioned action may be warranted (77 FR 51763). The 90-day finding requested scientific and commercial information from the public to inform a status report of the species. We requested information on the status of the queen conch throughout its range including: (1) Historical and current distribution and abundance of this species throughout its range; (2) historical and current population trends; (3) biological information (life history, genetics, population connectivity, *etc.*); (4) landings and trade data; (5) management, regulatory, and enforcement information; (6) any current or planned activities that may adversely impact the species; and (7) ongoing or planned efforts to protect and restore the species and its habitat. We received information from the public in response to the 90-day finding, and relevant information was incorporated into the status report.

Listing Species Under the ESA

We are responsible for determining whether queen conch are threatened or endangered under the ESA (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*). To make this determination, we first consider whether a group of organisms constitutes a ''species'' under Section 3 of the ESA, then whether the status of the species qualifies it for listing as either threatened or endangered. Section 3 of the ESA defines species to include ''any subspecies of fish or wildlife or plants, and any distinct population segment [DPS] of any species of vertebrate fish or wildlife which interbreeds when mature.'' Thus, as an invertebrate, the queen conch can only be considered for listing as a taxonomic species or subspecies. The species diagnosis for the queen conch has been