24, 2011 (76 FR 68719, November 7, 2011) authorized Dr. Stewart to continue a long term study on pinnipeds in California. California sea lions (*Zalophus californianus*), northern elephant seals (*Mirounga angustirostris*), and harbor seals (*Phoca vitulina*) may be captured and sampled at several sites: San Nicolas Island, San Miguel Island, Santa Rosa Island, Santa Cruz Island, Piedras Blancas, Cape San Martin, and Gorda. The minor amendment (No. 16553–01) extends the duration of the permit through October 31, 2017, but does not change any other terms or conditions of the permit.

Permit No. 20532: The requested permit (81 FR 59190, August 29, 2016) authorizes receipt, import, and export of biological samples from museum holdings and stranded animals worldwide for scientific research to chronologically profile anthropogenic and physiological data including hormones and pesticides to record exposure and stress. Samples will be from blue (*Balaenoptera musculus*), gray (*Eschrichtius robustus*), fin (*B. physalus*), minke (*B. acutorostrata*), bowhead (*Balaena mysticetus*), humpback (*Megaptera novaeangliae*), and sperm whales (*Physeter macrocephalus*). Samples may also be obtained from subsistence hunted bowhead whales in Alaska. The permit is valid through November 1, 2021.

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), a final determination has been made that the activities proposed are categorically excluded from the requirement to prepare an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement.

As required by the ESA, as applicable, issuance of these permits was based on a finding that such permits: (1) Were applied for in good faith; (2) will not operate to the disadvantage of such endangered species; and (3) are consistent with the purposes and policies set forth in section 2 of the ESA.

Dated: November 15, 2016.

Julia Harrison,

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

[FR Doc. 2016–27860 Filed 11–18–16; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–22–P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648–XF050

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), Atlantic Herring Committee, Atlantic Herring Advisory Panel and Atlantic Herring Plan Development Team is scheduling a public workshop on the Atlantic Herring Acceptable Biological Catch Control Rule Management Strategy Evaluation 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 workshop will be held on Wednesday, December 7, 2016 at 9 a.m. and Thursday, December 8, 2016 at 8:30 a.m.

ADDRESSES: The workshop will be held at the Sheraton Harborside Hotel, 250 Market Street, Portsmouth, ME 03801; phone: (888) 627–7138; fax: (603) 431–7805.

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

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Thomas A. Nies, Executive Director, New England Fishery Management Council; telephone: (978) 465–0492.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Introduction

The New England Fishery Management Council is currently developing Amendment 8 to the Atlantic Herring Fishery Management Plan. Through Amendment 8, the Council expects to establish a long-term control rule for the acceptable biological catch (ABC) of Atlantic herring that may explicitly account for herring's role in the ecosystem and address the biological and ecological requirements of the Atlantic herring resource. A control rule is a method for establishing an annual catch limit or target fishing level based on scientific information. A long-term control rule is needed to provide guidance on setting an annual ABC to account for scientific uncertainty, stock status, and the Council's risk tolerance to maintain a sustainable Atlantic herring stock that includes consideration of herring as a forage species.

In January 2016, the Council approved conducting a Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) to support the development of alternatives for an ABC control rule. MSE is a collaborative decision-making process involving more public input and technical analysis than the normal amendment development process. The MSE will help determine how a range of control rules may perform relative to potential objectives.

The Council held an initial public workshop in May 2016 to develop recommendations for a range of potential objectives of the ABC control rule, how progress towards these objectives may be measured, and the control rules to test. In June 2016, after reviewing the workshop recommendations and additional input from the Herring Plan Development Team, Advisory Panel, and Committee, the Council approved moving forward with the MSE. Technical work has been underway ever since.

Workshop Purpose

The purpose of this workshop is to provide continued opportunities for public input on the Management Strategy Evaluation of Atlantic herring ABC control rules.

Workshop Goals

The Council is holding this workshop to: Develop a common understanding of the outcomes of the MSE technical simulations, which tested the performance of a range of ABC control rules relative to potential objectives, identified at the May 2016 public workshop and approved by the Council in June. The workshop also aims to get input from stakeholders on: Identifying acceptable ranges of performance for various metrics, so that tradeoffs in achieving objectives may be identified; narrowing the range of Atlantic herring ABC control rule alternatives to consider in more detail; and what, if any, additional (minor) MSE simulation work would be helpful for establishing a long-term ABC control rule. Finally, the workshop will provide a chance for stakeholders of the Atlantic herring fishery to have greater input than typically possible at Council meetings, through constructive and open dialogue among resource users, scientists, fishery managers, and members of the public.

Special Accommodations

This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to

Thomas A. Nies, Executive Director, at (978) 465–0492, at least 5 days prior to the meeting date.

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

Dated: November 16, 2016.

Tracey L. Thompson,

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

[FR Doc. 2016–27974 Filed 11–18–16; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–22–P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648–XE931

Atlantic Highly Migratory Species; Atlantic Shark Management Measures; 2017 Research Fishery

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

ACTION: Notice of intent; request for applications.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces its request for applications for the 2017 shark research fishery from commercial shark fishermen with directed or incidental shark limited access permits. The shark research fishery allows for the collection of fishery-dependent and biological data for future stock assessments and to meet the research objectives of the Agency. The only commercial vessels authorized to land sandbar sharks are those participating in the shark research fishery. Shark research fishery permittees may also land other large coastal sharks (LCS), small coastal sharks (SCS), smoothhound sharks, and pelagic sharks. Commercial shark fishermen who are interested in participating in the shark research fishery need to submit a completed Shark Research Fishery Permit Application in order to be considered.

DATES: Shark Research Fishery Applications must be received no later December 21, 2016.

ADDRESSES: Please submit completed applications to the HMS Management Division at:

- *Mail:* Attn: Guý DuBeck, HMS Management Division (F/SF1), NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910.
- *Fax:* (301) 713–1917.
- *Email: NMFS.Research.Fishery@noaa.gov.*

For copies of the Shark Research Fishery Permit Application, please write to the HMS Management Division at the address listed above, call (301) 427–8503 (phone), or fax a request to (301) 713–1917. Copies of the Shark Research Fishery Application are also available at the HMS Web site at *http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/compliance/efp/index.html.* Additionally, please be advised that your application may be released under the Freedom of Information Act.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Karyl Brewster-Geisz, Guý DuBeck, Larry Redd, at (301) 427–8503 (phone) or (301) 713–1917 (fax), or Delisse Ortiz at 240–681–9037 (phone).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Atlantic shark fisheries are managed under the authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act). The Consolidated HMS Fishery Management Plan (FMP) is implemented by regulations at 50 CFR part 635.

The shark research fishery was established, in part, to maintain time series data for stock assessments and to meet NMFS' research objectives. Since the shark research fishery was established in 2008, the research fishery has allowed for: The collection of fishery-dependent data for current and future stock assessments; the operation of cooperative research to meet NMFS' ongoing research objectives; the collection of updated life-history information used in the sandbar shark (and other species) stock assessment; the collection of data on habitat preferences that might help reduce fishery interactions through bycatch mitigation; evaluation of the utility of the mid-Atlantic closed area on the recovery of dusky sharks and collection of hook-timer and pop-up satellite archival tag (PSAT) information to determine at-vessel and post-release mortality of dusky sharks; and collection of sharks to determine the weight conversion factor from dressed weight to whole weight.

The shark research fishery allows selected commercial fishermen the opportunity to earn revenue from selling additional sharks, including sandbar sharks. Only the commercial shark fishermen selected to participate in the shark research fishery are authorized to land sandbar sharks subject to the sandbar quota available each year. The base quota is 90.7 metric tons (mt) dressed weight (dw) per year, although this number may be reduced in the event of overharvests, if any. The selected shark research fishery permittees will also be allowed to land other LCS, SCS, smoothhound sharks, and pelagic sharks per any restrictions established on their shark research fishery permit. Generally, the shark research fishery permits are valid only for the calendar year for which they are issued.

The specific 2017 trip limits and number of trips per month will depend on the availability of funding, number of selected vessels, the availability of observers, the available quota, and the objectives of the research fishery, and will be included in the permit terms at time of issuance. The number of participants in the research fishery changes each year. In 2016, five fishermen were chosen to participate. From 2008 through 2016, there has been an average of seven participants each year with the range from five to eleven. The trip limits and the number of trips taken per month have changed each year the research fishery has been active. Participants may also be limited on the amount of gear they can deploy on a given set (*e.g.,* number of hooks and sets, soak times, length of longline).

In the 2016 fishing season, NMFS split the sandbar and LCS research fishery quotas equally among selected participants, with each vessel allocated 14.5 mt dw of sandbar shark research fishery quota and 8.0 mt dw of other LCS research fishery quota. NMFS also established a regional dusky bycatch limit where once three or more dusky sharks were brought to the vessel dead in any of five regions across the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic through the entire year, any shark research fishery permit holder in that region was not able to soak their gear for longer than 3 hours. If, after the change in soak time, there were three or more additional dusky shark interactions (alive or dead) observed, shark research fishery permit holders were not able to make a trip in that region for the remainder of the year, unless otherwise permitted by NMFS. There were slightly different measures established for shark research fishery participants in the mid-Atlantic shark closed area in order to allow NMFS observers to place satellite archival tags on dusky sharks and collect other scientific information on dusky sharks while also minimizing any dusky shark mortality.

Participants were also required to keep any dead sharks, unless they were a prohibited species, in which case they were required to release them. If the regional non-blacknose SCS, blacknose, smoothhound and/or pelagic shark management group quotas were closed, then the shark research fishery permit holder fishing in the closed region had to discard all of the species from the closed management groups regardless of condition. Any sharks, except prohibited species or closed