

on pinniped predation on at-risk salmonids. NEPA's inquiry focuses on the effects of a proposed action on the quality of the "human environment", which is defined broadly by the Council on Environmental Quality's regulation (see 40 CFR 1508.14). In addition, the term "significantly" has a specific meaning under the NEPA regulations and a determination whether an action results in a significant impact on the quality of the human environment is informed by a multitude of factors (see 40 CFR 1508.27). In contrast, section 120 focuses on a very narrow and specific conflict and asks only whether pinniped predation is having a significant negative impact on the decline or recovery of at-risk salmonids.

Under the ESA, NMFS must determine whether a proposed action is "likely to jeopardize the continued existence" of a threatened or endangered species or "result in the destruction or adverse modification" of designated critical habitat (16 U.S.C. 1536(a)(2)). Under these standards, NMFS has adopted regulations that focus the inquiry on the impacts of a proposed action on the species as a whole or its designated critical habitat (see 50 CFR 402.02 and 402.14). Moreover, as part of its section 7 analysis, NMFS considers the "effects of the action," which includes the proposed action combined with the effects of other activities that are interrelated or interdependent with the proposed action, which will be added to the environmental baseline. An action may not jeopardize the continued existence of a species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat, even though it has significant adverse effects to a listed individual or group of individuals. In sum, the ESA's analytical process, like that of NEPA, is well-defined by regulation and there is substantial agency guidance on both ESA and NEPA implementation, unlike that of MMPA, section 120.

#### Establishment of the Task Force

NMFS intends to schedule a Task Force meeting in October 2011 to consider the states' application. NMFS will invite member organizations from the 2008 Task Force to participate on the 2011 Task Force in order to take advantage of their expertise and familiarity with the subject matter. NMFS will provide the public with prior notice of the Task Force meeting as soon as a date is scheduled.

Dated: September 6, 2011.

**James H. Lecky,**

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

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**BILLING CODE 3510-22-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

**RIN 0648-XA692**

#### Gulf of Mexico 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 Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council will convene a meeting of the Ad Hoc Headboat Advisory Panel.

**DATES:** The meeting will be 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Tuesday, September 27, 2011.

**ADDRESSES:** The meeting will be held at the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, 2203 North Lois Avenue, Suite 1100, Tampa, FL 33607; telephone: (813) 348-1630.

*Council address:* Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, 2203 N. Lois Avenue, Suite 1100, Tampa, FL 33607.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Dr. Assane Diagne, Economist; Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council; telephone: (813) 348-1630.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The purpose of the meeting is to discuss potential headboat pilot programs in the Gulf of Mexico. Issues to be discussed include the design, implementation, monitoring, review, and, evaluation of headboat pilot programs.

Copies of the agenda and other related materials can be obtained by calling (813) 348-1630 or can be downloaded from the Council's ftp site, <ftp.gulfcouncil.org>.

Although other non-emergency issues not on the agenda may come before the Ad Hoc Headboat Advisory Panel for discussion, in accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, those issues may not be the subject of formal action during this meeting. Actions of the Ad Hoc Headboat Advisory Panel will be restricted to those issues specifically identified in the agenda and any issues arising after publication of this notice that require emergency action under Section 305(c)

of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, provided the public has been notified of the Council's intent to take 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 Kathy Pereira at the Council (see **ADDRESSES**) at least 5 working days prior to the meeting.

Dated: September 6, 2011.

**Tracey L. Thompson,**

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

[FR Doc. 2011-23149 Filed 9-9-11; 8:45 am]

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

**RIN 0648-XA693**

#### Fisheries of the South Atlantic; South Atlantic 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 South Atlantic Fishery Management Council will hold a meeting of its Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel (AP) in Charleston, SC.

**DATES:** The meeting will take place October 5-6, 2011. See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**.

**ADDRESSES:** The meeting will be held at the Charleston Marriott Hotel, 170 Lockwood Blvd., Charleston, SC 29403; telephone: (800) 968-3569; fax: (843) 723-0276.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Kim Iverson, Public Information Officer, South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, 4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201, N. Charleston, SC 29405; telephone: (843) 571-4366 or toll free (866) SAFMC-10; fax: (843) 769-4520; e-mail: [kim.iverson@safmc.net](mailto:kim.iverson@safmc.net).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Members of the Snapper Grouper AP will meet from 9 a.m. on October 5, 2011 until 5:30 p.m. on October 6, 2011.

Issues to be addressed at the meeting include updates on the following amendments: the Comprehensive Annual Catch Limit (ACL) Amendment; Amendments 18A and 18B addressing management of black sea bass and

golden tilefish, respectively; Amendment 24 regarding the rebuilding of red grouper stocks; and Amendment 20A, addressing changes to the wreckfish Individual Transferable Quota (ITQ) Program. An update will also be given on the removal of the 240-foot (40-fathom) closure (Regulatory Amendment 11) and the new Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) methodology to estimate recreational catches. Issues to include in Comprehensive Ecosystem-Based Amendment 3 will also be discussed, including approaches to minimize bycatch mortality of speckled hind and warsaw grouper and possible ways to evaluate impacts from the commercial wreckfish fishery and recreational deep-dropping on bottom habitat. The AP will give input on red porgy and vermilion snapper stocks and provide recommendations to the Council.

Although non-emergency issues not contained in this agenda may come before this group for discussion, those issues may not be the subject of formal action during this meeting. 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 Fishery Conservation and Management 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 auxiliary aids should be directed to the Council office (see **ADDRESSES**) 3 days prior to the meeting.

**Note:** The times and sequence specified in this agenda are subject to change.

Dated: September 6, 2011.

**Tracey L. Thompson,**

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

[FR Doc. 2011-23150 Filed 9-9-11; 8:45 am]

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

**RIN 0648-XA637**

### Takes of Marine Mammals Incidental to Specified Activities; Piling and Structure Removal in Woodard Bay Natural Resources Conservation Area, Washington

**AGENCY:** National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and

Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

**ACTION:** Notice; proposed incidental harassment authorization; request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS has received an application from the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for an Incidental Harassment Authorization (IHA) to take marine mammals incidental to restoration activities within the Woodard Bay Natural Resources Conservation Area (NRCAs). Pursuant to the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), NMFS is requesting comments on its proposal to issue an IHA to the DNR to take, by Level B Harassment only, harbor seals during the specified activity.

**DATES:** Comments and information must be received no later than October 12, 2011.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments on the application should be addressed to Michael Payne, Chief, Permits, Conservation and Education Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service, 1315 East West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910. The mailbox address for providing e-mail comments is [ITP.Laws@noaa.gov](mailto:ITP.Laws@noaa.gov). NMFS is not responsible for e-mail comments sent to addresses other than the one provided here. Comments sent via e-mail, including all attachments, must not exceed a 10-megabyte file size.

**Instructions:** All comments received are a part of the public record and will generally be posted to <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/permits/incidental.htm> without change. All Personal Identifying Information (e.g., name, address) voluntarily submitted by the commenter may be publicly accessible. Do not submit Confidential Business Information or otherwise sensitive or protected information.

A copy of the application containing a list of the references used in this document, as well as supplemental documents, may be obtained by writing to the address specified above, telephoning the contact listed below (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**), or visiting the Internet at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/permits/incidental.htm>. Documents cited in this notice may also be viewed, by appointment, during regular business hours, at the aforementioned address.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Ben Laws, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, (301) 427-8401.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

## Background

Sections 101(a)(5)(A) and (D) of the MMPA (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*) direct the Secretary of Commerce 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 issued or, if the taking is limited to harassment, a notice of a proposed authorization is published in the **Federal Register** to provide public notice and initiate a 30-day comment period.

Authorization for incidental takings shall be granted if NMFS finds that the taking will have a negligible impact on the species or stock(s), will not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of the species or stock(s) for subsistence uses (where relevant), and if the permissible methods of taking and requirements pertaining to the mitigation, monitoring and reporting of such takings are set forth. NMFS has defined 'negligible impact' in 50 CFR 216.103 as "an impact resulting from the specified activity that cannot be reasonably expected to, and is not reasonably likely to, adversely affect the species or stock through effects on annual rates of recruitment or survival."

Section 101(a)(5)(D) of the MMPA established an expedited process by which citizens of the United States can apply for an authorization to incidentally take small numbers of marine mammals by Level B harassment as defined below. Section 101(a)(5)(D) establishes a 45-day time limit for NMFS review of an application followed by a 30-day public notice and comment period on any proposed authorizations for the incidental harassment of marine mammals. Within 45 days of the close of the comment period, NMFS must either issue or deny the authorization. If authorized, the IHA would be effective for one year from date of issuance.

Except with respect to certain activities not pertinent here, the MMPA defines 'harassment' as:

any act of pursuit, torment, or annoyance which (i) has the potential to injure a marine mammal or marine mammal stock in the wild [Level A harassment]; or (ii) has the potential to disturb a marine mammal or marine mammal stock in the wild by causing disruption of behavioral patterns, including, but not limited to, migration, breathing, nursing, breeding, feeding, or sheltering [Level B harassment].