

marine mammals to be authorized in Category III fisheries, any mortality or serious injury must be reported to NMFS. NMFS solicits public comments on the proposed permit and the preliminary determinations supporting the permit.

Dated: January 4, 2017.

Donna S. Wieting,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XF128

Nominations for the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission Permanent Advisory Committee

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

ACTION: Notice of request for nominations.

SUMMARY: NMFS, on behalf of the Secretary of Commerce, is seeking nominations for the advisory committee established under the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Convention Implementation Act (Act). The Permanent Advisory Committee, composed of individuals from groups concerned with the fisheries covered by the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Convention (Convention), will be given the opportunity to provide input to the United States Commissioners to the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (Commission) regarding the deliberations and decisions of the Commission.

DATES: Nominations must be received no later than February 24, 2017. Nominations received after the deadline will not be accepted.

ADDRESSES: Nominations should be directed to Michael Tosatto, Regional Administrator, NMFS Pacific Islands Regional Office, and may be submitted by any of the following means:

- *Email:* pir.wcpfc@noaa.gov. Include in the subject line the following document identifier: "Permanent Advisory Committee nominations". Email comments, including attachments, are limited to 5 megabytes.
- *Mail or hand delivery:* 1845 Wasp Boulevard, Bldg 176, Honolulu, HI 96818

- *Facsimile:* 808-725-5215.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Zora McGinnis, NMFS Pacific Islands Regional Office; telephone: 808-725-5037 facsimile: 808-725-5215; email: zora.mcginis@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

The Convention and the Commission

The objective of the Convention is to ensure, through effective management, the long-term conservation and sustainable use of highly migratory fish stocks in the western and central Pacific Ocean in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 (UNCLOS) and the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the UNCLOS Relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks. The Convention establishes the Commission, the secretariat of which is based in Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia.

The Convention applies to all highly migratory fish stocks (defined as all fish stocks of the species listed in Annex I of the UNCLOS occurring in the Convention Area, and such other species of fish as the Commission may determine), except sauries.

The United States actively supported the negotiations and the development of the Convention and signed the Convention when it was opened for signature in 2000. It participated as a cooperating non-member of the Commission since it became operational in 2005. The United States became a Contracting Party to the Convention and a full member of the Commission when it ratified the Convention in January 2007. Under the Act, the United States is to be represented on the Commission by five United States Commissioners, appointed by the President.

Permanent Advisory Committee

The Act (16 U.S.C. 6902) provides (in section 6902(d)) that the Secretary of Commerce, in consultation with the United States Commissioners to the Commission, will appoint individuals as members of the advisory committee established under the Act, referred to here as the "Permanent Advisory Committee".

The appointed members of the Permanent Advisory Committee are to include not less than 15 or more than 20 individuals selected from the various groups concerned with the fisheries covered by the Convention, providing, to the extent practicable, an equitable balance among such groups. On behalf of the Secretary of Commerce, NMFS is

now seeking nominations for these appointments.

In addition to the 15-20 appointed members, the Permanent Advisory Committee includes the chair of the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council's Advisory Committee (or designee), and officials of the fisheries management authorities of American Samoa, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands (or their designees).

Members of the Permanent Advisory Committee will be invited to attend all non-executive meetings of the United States Commissioners to the Commission and at such meetings will be given opportunity to examine and be heard on all proposed programs of investigation, reports, recommendations, and regulations of the Commission.

Each appointed member of the Permanent Advisory Committee will serve for a term of 2 years and is eligible for reappointment. This request for nominations is for the term to begin on August 3, 2017, and is for a term of 2 consecutive years.

The Secretaries of Commerce and State will furnish the Permanent Advisory Committee with relevant information concerning fisheries and international fishery agreements.

NMFS, on behalf of the Secretary of Commerce, will provide to the Permanent Advisory Committee administrative and technical support services as are necessary for its effective functioning.

Appointed members of the Permanent Advisory Committee will serve without pay, but while away from their homes or regular places of business in the performance of services for the advisory committee will be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, in the same manner as persons employed intermittently in the Government service are allowed expenses under section 5703 of title 5, United States Code. They will not be considered Federal employees while performing service as members of the advisory committee except for the purposes of injury compensation or tort claims liability as provided in chapter 81 of title 5, United States Code and Chapter 171 of title 28, United States Code.

Procedure for Submitting Nominations

Nominations for the Permanent Advisory Committee should be submitted to NMFS (see **ADDRESSES**). This request for nominations is for first-time nominees as well as previous and current Permanent Advisory Committee members. Self nominations are acceptable. Nominations should include

the following information: (1) Full name, address, telephone, and email address of nominee; (2) nominee's organization(s) or professional affiliation(s) serving as the basis for the nomination, if any; and (3) a background statement, not to exceed one page in length, describing the nominee's qualifications, experience and interests, specifically as related to the fisheries covered by the Convention.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 6902.

Dated: January 4, 2017.

Emily H. Menashes,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XF139

List of Foreign Fisheries

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

ACTION: Notice; request for information.

SUMMARY: NMFS is seeking information on foreign commercial fishing operations that export fish and fish products to the United States and the level of incidental and intentional mortality and serious injury of marine mammals in those fisheries. NMFS will use this information to identify harvesting nations with commercial fishing operations that export fish and fish products to the United States and classify those fisheries based on their frequency of marine mammal interactions as either "exempt" or "export" fisheries.

DATES: Information should be received on or before March 1, 2017.

ADDRESSES: Information may be submitted by mail to: NMFS Office of International Affairs and Seafood Inspection, Attn: MMPA List of Foreign Fisheries Information, F/IS 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910, or electronically to: Nina.Young@noaa.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Nina Young, phone 301-427-8383, or email Nina.Young@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NMFS published a final rule (81 FR 54390, August 15, 2016) implementing the import provisions of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA). This

rule establishes conditions for evaluating a harvesting nation's regulatory program to address incidental and intentional mortality and serious injury of marine mammals in fisheries that export fish and fish products to the United States.

Under this rule, fish and fish products from fisheries identified by the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries in the List of Foreign Fisheries can only be imported into the United States if the harvesting nation has applied for and received a comparability finding from NMFS. The rule establishes procedures that a harvesting nation must follow and conditions to meet to receive a comparability finding for a fishery. The rule also establishes provisions for intermediary nations to ensure that intermediary nations do not import and re-export to the United States fish or fish products subject to an import prohibition.

NMFS will identify harvesting nations with commercial fishing operations that export fish and fish products to the United States and classify those fisheries based on the frequency of marine mammal interactions. NMFS will classify foreign commercial fishing operations exporting fish and fish products to the United States as either an "exempt fishery" or "export fishery" based on the reliable information provided by the harvesting nation or other readily available information.

NMFS defines "exempt fishery" as a foreign commercial fishing operation determined by the Assistant Administrator to be the source of exports of commercial fish and fish products to the United States that have a remote likelihood of, or no known, incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammals in the course of commercial fishing operations. A commercial fishing operation that has a remote likelihood of causing incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammals is one that collectively with other foreign fisheries exporting fish and fish products to the United States causes the annual removal of:

- (1) Ten percent or less of any marine mammal stock's bycatch limit, or
- (2) More than 10 percent of any marine mammal stock's bycatch limit, yet that fishery by itself removes 1 percent or less of that stock's bycatch limit annually, or

- (3) Where reliable information has not been provided by the harvesting nation on the frequency of incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammals caused by the commercial fishing operation, the Assistant Administrator may determine whether the likelihood of incidental mortality and serious

injury is "remote" by evaluating information concerning factors such as fishing techniques, gear used, methods used to deter marine mammals, target species, seasons and areas fished, qualitative data from logbooks or fisher reports, stranding data, the species and distribution of marine mammals in the area, or other factors at the discretion of the Assistant Administrator.

A foreign fishery will not be classified as an exempt fishery unless the Assistant Administrator has reliable information from the harvesting nation, or other information to support such a finding.

Commercial fishing operations that NMFS determines meet the definition of an exempt fishery would still be required to obtain a comparability finding by having the harvesting nation demonstrate that it has either prohibited the intentional mortality or serious injury of marine mammals in the course of commercial fishing operations in these exempt fisheries, unless the intentional mortality or serious injury of a marine mammal is imminently necessary in self-defense or to save the life of a person in immediate danger; or that it has procedures to reliably certify that exports of fish and fish products to the United States are not the product of an intentional killing or serious injury of a marine mammal unless the intentional mortality or serious injury of a marine mammal is imminently necessary in self-defense or to save the life of a person in immediate danger.

Exempt fisheries would not have to meet the comparability finding requirement to have a regulatory program for incidental mortality and serious injury comparable in effectiveness to the U.S. regulatory program.

NMFS defines "export fishery" as a foreign commercial fishing operation determined by the Assistant Administrator to be the source of exports of commercial fish and fish products to the United States and to have more than a remote likelihood of incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammals (as defined in the definition of an "exempt fishery") in the course of its commercial fishing operations. Where reliable information has not been provided by the harvesting nation on the frequency of incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammals caused by the commercial fishing operation, the Assistant Administrator may determine whether the likelihood of incidental mortality and serious injury is more than "remote" by evaluating information concerning factors such as fishing techniques, gear used, methods used to