

Thomas A. Nies (see **ADDRESSES**) at least 5 days prior to the meeting date.

Dated: March 27, 2018.

Jeffrey N. Lonergan,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XG097

Meeting of the Columbia Basin Partnership Task Force of the Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee

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

ACTION: Notice of open public meeting.

SUMMARY: This notice sets forth the proposed schedule and agenda of a forthcoming meeting of the Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee's (MAFAC's) Columbia Basin Partnership Task Force (CBP Task Force). The CBP Task Force will discuss the issues outlined in the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** below.

DATES: The meeting will be held April 18, 2018, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and on April 19, 2018, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Downtown Embassy Suites, 319 SW Pine St., Portland, OR 97204; 503-279-9000.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Katherine Cheney; NFMS West Coast Region; 503-231-6730; email: Katherine.Cheney@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Notice is hereby given of a meeting of MAFAC's CBP Task Force. The MAFAC was established by the Secretary of Commerce (Secretary) and, since 1971, advises the Secretary on all living marine resource matters that are the responsibility of the Department of Commerce. The MAFAC charter and summaries of prior MAFAC meetings are located online at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/partners#marine-fisheries-advisory-committee>. The CBP Task Force reports to MAFAC and is being convened to discuss and develop recommendations for long-term goals to meet Columbia Basin salmon recovery, conservation needs, and harvest opportunities. These goals will be developed in the context of habitat capacity and other factors that affect salmon mortality. More

information is available at the CBP Task Force web page: http://www.westcoast.fisheries.noaa.gov/columbia_river/index.html.

Matters To Be Considered

The meeting time and agenda are subject to change. Updated information will be available on the CBP Task Force web page above. Meeting topics include consideration of draft quantitative goals for most Columbia Basin species and discussing approaches to integrating goals across species to develop recommendations for basin-wide goals.

The meeting is open to the public as observers, and public input will be accepted on April 19, 2018, from 1:15 to 1:45 p.m., limited to the time available.

Special Accommodations

The meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Katherine Cheney, 503-231-6730, by April 9, 2018.

Dated: March 27, 2018.

Jennifer L. Lukens,

Director, Office of Policy, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 2018-06470 Filed 3-29-18; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XG127

Endangered and Threatened Species; Take of Anadromous Fish

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

ACTION: Notice of receipt of one enhancement permit application and request for comment.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that NMFS has received one permit application submitted by FISHBIO Environmental, LLC. (FISHBIO) to enhance the propagation and survival of species listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, as amended, for a five-year period. This document serves to notify the public of the availability of the permit application for review and comment, prior to a decision by NMFS whether to issue the permit. The permit 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 April 30, 2018.

ADDRESSES: Written comments on the application should be submitted to the NMFS California Central Valley Office, 650 Capitol Mall, Suite 5-100, Sacramento, CA 95814. Comments may also be submitted via fax to (916) 930-3629, or by email to Amanda.Cranford@noaa.gov (include the permit number in the subject line of the fax or email).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Amanda Cranford, Sacramento, CA (Phone: (916) 930-3706; Fax: (916) 930-3629; Email: Amanda.Cranford@noaa.gov). Permit application instructions are available from the address above, or online at <https://apps.nmfs.noaa.gov>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

ESA-Listed Species Covered in This Notice

Chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*): Threatened, naturally produced and hatchery propagated Central Valley (CV) spring-run;

Steelhead (*O. mykiss*): Threatened, naturally produced and artificially propagated California Central Valley (CCV).

North American green sturgeon (*Acipenser medirostris*): Threatened, naturally produced southern distinct population segment (SDPS).

Permit Application Received

Permit 21477

FISHBIO has applied for an enhancement permit under section 10(a)(1)(A) of the ESA for a period of five years that would allow take of both adult and juvenile CV spring-run Chinook salmon, CCV steelhead, and SDPS green sturgeon. Recent Federal legislation (Section 4010 of the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act (WIIN Act); December 16, 2016) requires the Oakdale Irrigation District and the South San Joaquin Irrigation District (Districts) and NMFS to jointly establish a nonnative predator research and pilot fish removal program in the Stanislaus River to investigate whether nonnative predator removal is an effective strategy to improve overall conditions for native fish, especially the survival of juvenile salmonids. The general approach of the program is intended to build off previous nonnative predator removal studies conducted in the Central Valley. The program will allow examination of the biological and ecological responses of both ESA-listed

and non-listed native fish (particularly salmonids) and the fish community in relation to predator exclusion and removal efforts. Specific study questions will focus on changes in the densities and relative abundances in these native fish and fish community assemblages.

The program will be carried out using three primary methods: (1) An exclusion weir equipped with a live box (or fyke trap) will be used to trap and remove nonnative predatory fish. Native fish will be trapped daily and selectively passed upstream of the weir in order to reduce the potential for in-trap predation and to minimize delays in migration; (2) boat electrofishing is proposed to estimate the abundance of nonnative predators and to conduct predator removals; and (3) survival will be assessed by conducting releases of acoustically tagged hatchery-origin Chinook salmon juveniles upstream of areas where predator removal has occurred.

Although ESA-listed species are not directly targeted by the program, they may be incidentally captured and handled during electrofishing sampling. All efforts will be made to limit electrofishing in areas where juvenile salmonids may be present or rearing. Electrofishing will follow strict guidelines to minimize mortality and established measures will be taken to protect species listed under the ESA. The proposed operation of a weir in the Stanislaus River could impact ESA-listed species by delaying adult upstream migration. Additionally, trapping at the weir may result in the capture of adult ESA-listed species. These effects will be minimized by frequent (at least daily) trap checks at the site and prioritization of ESA-listed species for handling and release prior to other non-listed species.

Authority

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 part 222). 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; (3) are consistent with the purposes and policies of section 2 of the ESA; (4) further a bona fide and necessary or desirable scientific purpose or enhance the propagation or survival of the endangered species, taking into account the benefits anticipated to be derived on behalf of the endangered species; and additional issuance criteria as listed at 50 CFR 222.308(c)(5)–(12).

The authority to take listed species is subject to conditions set forth in the permit.

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.

Public Comments Solicited

NMFS invites the public to comment on the section 10(a)(1)(A) enhancement permit application during a 30-day public comment period beginning on the date of this notice. This notice is provided pursuant to section 10(c) of the ESA (16 U.S.C. 1529(c)). All comments and materials received, including names and addresses, will become part of the administrative record and may be released to the public. We provide this notice in order to allow the public, agencies, or other organizations to review and comment on these documents.

Next Steps

NMFS will evaluate the permit application, associated documents, and comments submitted to determine whether the applications meet the requirements of section 10(a)(1)(A) of the ESA and Federal regulations. The final permit decisions will not be made until after the end of the 30-day public comment period and after NMFS has fully considered all relevant comments received. NMFS will publish notice of its final action in the **Federal Register**.

Dated: March 27, 2018.

Angela Somma,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648–XG130

Marine Mammals; File No. 22062

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

ACTION: Notice; receipt of application.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that Patricia Fair, Ph.D., Medical University of South Carolina, Hollings Marine Laboratory, 331 Fort Johnson Road,

Charleston, SC 29412, has applied in due form for a permit to receive, import, and export marine mammal parts for scientific research.

DATES: Written, telefaxed, or email comments must be received on or before April 30, 2018.

ADDRESSES: The application and related documents are available for review by selecting “Records Open for Public Comment” from the “Features” box on the Applications and Permits for Protected Species (APPS) home page, <https://apps.nmfs.noaa.gov>, and then selecting File No. 22062 from the list of available applications.

These documents are also available upon written request or by appointment in the Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13705, Silver Spring, MD 20910; phone (301) 427–8401; fax (301) 713–0376.

Written comments on this application should be submitted to the Chief, Permits and Conservation Division, at the address listed above. Comments may also be submitted by facsimile to (301) 713–0376, or by email to NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov. Please include the File No. 22062 in the subject line of the email comment.

Those individuals requesting a public hearing should submit a written request to the Chief, Permits and Conservation Division at the address listed above. The request should set forth the specific reasons why a hearing on this application would be appropriate.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Shasta McClenahan or Jennifer Skidmore, (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.*), and the regulations governing the taking and importing of marine mammals (50 CFR part 216).

The applicant proposes to receive, import, and export biological samples for scientific research from up to 100 bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*) annually to study pollutant stressors of dolphins in the El Morro Mangrove and Wildlife Refuge, Ecuador. The requested duration of the permit is 5 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.