

Determinations

On May 25, 2000 (65 FR 34014), NMFS determined that the impact of production operations at the Northstar project in the U.S. Beaufort Sea will result in no more than a temporary modification in behavior by certain species of cetaceans and pinnipeds. During the ice-covered season, pinnipeds close to the island may be subject to incidental harassment due to the localized displacement from construction of ice roads, from transportation activities on those roads, and from production activities at Northstar. As cetaceans will not be in the area during the ice-covered season, they will not be affected.

During the open-water season, the principal operations-related noise activities will be helicopter traffic, vessel traffic, and other general oil production activities on Seal Island. Sounds from production-related activities on the island are not expected to be detectable more than about 5-10 km (3.1-6.2 mi) offshore of the island. Disturbance to bowhead or beluga whales by on-island activities will be limited to an area substantially less than that distance. Helicopter traffic will be limited to nearshore areas between the mainland and the island and is unlikely to approach or disturb whales. Barge traffic will be located mainly inshore of the whales and will involve vessels moving slowly, in a straight line, and at constant speed. Little disturbance or displacement of whales by vessel traffic is expected. While behavioral modifications may be made by these species to avoid the resultant noise, this behavioral change is expected to have no more than a negligible impact on the animals.

While the number of potential incidental harassment takes will depend on the distribution and abundance of marine mammals (which vary annually due to variable ice conditions and other factors) in the area of operations, because the activity is in shallow waters inshore of the main migration corridor for bowhead whales and far inshore of the main migration corridor for belugas, the number of potential harassment takings is estimated to be small. In addition, no take by injury and/or death is anticipated, except possibly for a small take by mortality incidental to ice-road construction. No rookeries, areas of concentrated mating or feeding, or other areas of special significance for marine mammals occur within or near the planned area of Northstar operations.

Because bowhead whales are east of Seal Island area in the Canadian Beaufort Sea until late August/early

September, activities at Northstar are not expected to impact subsistence hunting of bowhead whales prior to that date. Appropriate mitigation measures to avoid an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of bowhead whales for subsistence needs is the subject of consultations between BPXA and subsistence users.

Also, while production activities at Northstar have some potential to influence seal hunting activities by residents of Nuiqsut, because (1) the peak sealing season is during the winter months, (2) the main summer sealing is off the Colville Delta, and (3) the zone of influence from Northstar on beluga and seals is fairly small, NMFS believes that Northstar production-related activities will not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of these stocks for subsistence uses.

NMFS has determined that the potential for an offshore oil spill occurring is low (less than 10 percent over 20–30 years (Corps, 1999)) and the potential for that oil intercepting whales or seals is even lower (about 1.2 percent (Corps, 1999)). Because of this low potential and because of the seasonality of bowheads, and recognizing that NMFS cannot authorize the incidental taking for oil spills, NMFS has determined that the taking of marine mammals incidental to construction and operation at the Northstar oil production facility will have no more than a negligible impact on them. In addition, because BPXA has certified to NMFS that it will not drill into oil-bearing strata during periods of open water or broken ice (the time period between June 13 and ending with the presence of 18 inches of continuous ice cover for one-half mile in all directions), because there will be an oil spill response program in effect that will be as effective as possible in Arctic waters, and because other mitigation measures have been proposed by BPXA in the event that oil did contact bowheads, NMFS has preliminarily determined that there will not be an unmitigable adverse impact on subsistence uses of marine mammals.

Information Solicited

NMFS requests interested persons to submit comments, and information, concerning this request for an LOA (see ADDRESSES). However, in the preamble to the final rule (65 FR 34014, May 25, 2000), NMFS clarified that because it had made the determinations required under section 101 (a)(5)(A) of the MMPA when it published the final rule, that, in order to expedite the LOA renewal process, NMFS would open the annual LOA review process to the

following issues only: (1) New scientific data or information (including Traditional Knowledge) that indicates that the determinations made in the final rule document (and therefore in this document) are in need of reconsideration, (2) comments on the Plan of Cooperation, and (3) comments on the proposed monitoring plan. Provided the written comments are specific to the issues under consideration in this document, NMFS will give full consideration to all comments submitted when making its determination on reissuance of an LOA. Comments on issues not relevant to the potential impact on marine mammals inhabiting the Beaufort Sea or to the subsistence use of marine mammals in this area will not be considered by NMFS when making its final determination on this matter.

Dated: August 10, 2001.

Wanda L. Cain,

Acting Deputy Director, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 081001D]

Pacific Fishery Management Council; Public Meetings

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

ACTION: Notice of public meetings.

SUMMARY: The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) and its advisory bodies will hold public meetings.

DATES: The Council and its advisory bodies will meet September 9-14, 2001. The Council meeting will begin on Tuesday, September 11, at 10:30 a.m., reconvening each day through Friday. All meetings are open to the public, except a closed session will be held from 10 a.m. until 10:30 a.m. on Tuesday, September 11 to address litigation and personnel matters. The Council will meet as late as necessary each day to complete its scheduled business.

ADDRESSES: The meetings and hearing will be held at the DoubleTree Hotel Columbia River, 1401 N Hayden Island Drive, Portland, OR 97217; telephone: 503–283–2111. Council address: Pacific Fishery Management Council, 7700 NE

Ambassador Place, Suite 200, Portland, OR 97220.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Donald O. McIsaac, Executive Director; telephone: 503-326-6352.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The following items are on the Council agenda, but not necessarily in this order. All items listed are subject to potential Council action.

A. Call to Order

1. Opening Remarks, Introductions
2. Council Member Appointments
3. Roll Call
4. Executive Director's Report
5. Approve Agenda
6. Approve June 2001 Minutes

B. Pacific Halibut Management

1. Status of 2001 Fisheries
2. Status of Bycatch Estimate
3. Proposed Changes to the Catch Sharing Plan and Annual Regulations

C. Groundfish Management

1. National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Report
2. Marine Recreational Fishery Statistics Survey Update
3. Preliminary Harvest Levels and Other Specifications for 2002
4. Groundfish Strategic Plan Implementation
5. Rebuilding Programs
6. Exempted Fishing Permits (EFP)
7. Proposed Management Measures for 2002
8. Status of Fisheries and Inseason Adjustments
9. Amendment 15 to the Groundfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP) - American Fisheries Act
10. Groundfish FMP Environmental Impact Statement
11. Full Retention Measures
12. 2002 Stock Assessment Schedule

D. Marine Reserves

1. Status Report on West Coast Marine Reserve Activities
2. Marine Reserve Proposals for Channel Island National Marine Sanctuary

E. Habitat Issues

Essential Fish Habitat Issues

F. Salmon Management

1. NMFS Report
2. Update of Ongoing Fisheries
3. Update on Scientific and Statistical Committee Methodology Review
4. Queets Coho Status Review

G. Highly Migratory Species Management

1. NMFS Report
2. Update on FMP Development

H. Coastal Pelagic Species Management

1. NMFS Report
2. Final Report on Squid Maximum Sustainable Yield Workshop
3. Pacific Sardine Fishery Update

I. Administrative and Other Matters

1. Status of Legislation
2. Appointments to Advisory Bodies
3. Report of the Budget Committee
4. Council Staff Work Load Priorities
5. November 2001 Council Meeting Draft Agenda

SCHEDULE OF ANCILLARY MEETINGS

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2001

No meetings currently scheduled.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2001

Council Secretariat	8 a.m.
Groundfish Advisory Subpanel	8 a.m.
Groundfish Management Team	8 a.m.
Scientific and Statistical Committee	8 a.m.
Habitat Steering Group	10 a.m.
Budget Committee	10 a.m.
Groundfish Stock Assessment	3:30 p.m.

Briefing
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

Council Secretariat	7 a.m.
California State Delegation	7 a.m.
Oregon State Delegation	7 a.m.
Washington State Delegation	7 a.m.
Groundfish Advisory Subpanel	8 a.m.
Groundfish Management Team	8 a.m.
Scientific and Statistical Committee	8 a.m.
Habitat Steering Group	8 a.m.-2 p.m.
Enforcement Consultants	Immediately following Council Session

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2001

Council Secretariat	7 a.m.
California State Delegation	7 a.m.
Oregon State Delegation	7 a.m.
Washington State Delegation	7 a.m.
Groundfish Advisory Subpanel	8 a.m.
Coastal Pelagic Species Advisory Subpanel	10 a.m.
Groundfish Management Team	As Necessary
Enforcement Consultants	As Necessary

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2001

Council Secretariat	7 a.m.
California State Delegation	7 a.m.
Oregon State Delegation	7 a.m.

SCHEDULE OF ANCILLARY MEETINGS—Continued

Washington State Delegation	7 a.m.
Groundfish Advisory Subpanel	As Necessary
Groundfish Management Team	As Necessary
Enforcement Consultants	As Necessary
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2001	
Council Secretariat	7 a.m.
California State Delegation	7 a.m.
Oregon State Delegation	7 a.m.
Washington State Delegation	7 a.m.
Enforcement Consultants	As Necessary

Although non-emergency issues not contained in this agenda may come before this Council for discussion, those issues may not be the subject of formal Council action during this meeting. Council 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

These meetings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Ms. Carolyn Porter at (503) 326-6352 at least 5 days prior to the meeting date.

Dated: August 10, 2001.

Richard W. Surdi,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 081001E]

Pacific Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

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

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: The Pacific Fishery Management Council's (Council) Scientific and Statistical Committee's