

hunting areas; (ii) Directly displacing subsistence users; or (iii) Placing physical barriers between the marine mammals and the subsistence hunters; and (2) That cannot be sufficiently mitigated by other measures to increase the availability of marine mammals to allow subsistence needs to be met.

The proposed Test Pile Program will occur in or near a traditional subsistence hunting area and could affect the availability of marine mammals for subsistence uses. Harbor seals are the only species for which take is authorized that may be subject to limited boat-based subsistence hunting.

POA communicated with representative Native subsistence users and Tribal members to develop a Plan of Cooperation, which identifies what measures have been taken or will be taken to minimize any adverse effects of the Test Pile Program on the availability of marine mammals for subsistence uses. On December 22, 2015, POA sent letters to eight tribes including the the Kenaitze, Tyonek, Knik, Eklutna, Ninilchik, Seldovia, Salamatoff, and Chickaloon tribes informing them of the project and identifying potential impacts to marine mammals as well as planned mitigation efforts. POA also inquired about any possible marine mammal subsistence concerns they might have. None of the tribes indicated that they had any concerns with the proposed Test Pile Program.

Since all project activities will take place within the immediate vicinity of the POA, the project will not have an adverse impact on the availability of marine mammals for subsistence use at distant locations. Due to mitigation and monitoring requirements, no displacement of marine mammals from traditional hunting areas or changes to availability of subsistence resources will result from Test Pile Program activities. Given the combination of the Test Pile Program location, small size of the affected area, and required mitigation and monitoring measures NMFS has determined that there will not be an unmitigable adverse impact on subsistence uses from POA's proposed activities.

Endangered Species Act (ESA)

The Cook Inlet beluga whale and western depleted population segment of Steller sea lion are mammal species listed as endangered under the ESA with confirmed or possible occurrence in the study area. NMFS' Permits and Conservation Division has completed a formal consultation with NMFS' Protected Resources Division under section 7 of the ESA on the issuance of an IHA to POA under section

101(a)(5)(D) of the MMPA for this activity. A Biological Opinion was issued on March 2, 2016 and is posted at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/permits/incidental/construction.htm>. NMFS determined that while the proposed action may affect Cook Inlet beluga whales and wDPS Steller sea lions, it is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of those species or adversely modify any designated critical habitat.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

NMFS drafted a document titled *Environmental Assessment for Issuance of an Incidental Harassment Authorization to the Port of Alaska for the Take of Marine Mammals Incidental to a Test Pile Program and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)*. The FONSI was signed on March 2, 2016. The EA/FONSI is posted at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/permits/incidental/construction.htm>.

Authorization

As a result of these determinations, we have issued an IHA to POA for conducting the Test Pile Program in Anchorage, AK from April 1, 2016 through March 31, 2017 through provided the previously described mitigation, monitoring, and reporting requirements are incorporated.

Dated: March 9, 2016.

Perry Gayaldo,

Deputy Director, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.
[FR Doc. 2016-06251 Filed 3-18-16; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XE511

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 (Council) will hold a four-day meeting to consider actions affecting the Gulf of Mexico fisheries in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ).

DATES: The meeting will take place on Monday, April 4 through Thursday, April 7, 2016, starting at 8:30 a.m. daily.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Doubletree by Hilton hotel, 6505 N. Interstate Highway 35 North, Austin, TX 78752; telephone: (512) 454-3737.

Council address: Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, 2203 N. Lois Avenue, Suite 1100, Tampa, FL 33607; telephone: (813) 348-1630.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Douglas Gregory, Executive Director, Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council; telephone: (813) 348-1630.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Agenda

Monday, April 4, 2016; 8:30 a.m.–5 p.m.

The Gulf Council will begin with updates and presentations from management committees. The Joint Administrative Policy & Budget Management Committee will review the 2014 No-cost extension, 2015 & 2016 Budgets, and 2016 Proposed Activities. The Data Collection Committee will review the Electronic Reporting Program Flowchart; give an update on the Commercial Electronic Reporting Pilot Program; and discuss Final Action—South Atlantic's Amendment: Modifications to Charter Vessel and Headboat Reporting Requirements. The Shrimp Management Committee will discuss the Biological Review of the Texas Closure; review the Updated Stock Assessments for Brown, White and Pink shrimp; receive a summary from the Shrimp Advisory Panel (AP) meeting; review of Options Paper for Shrimp Amendment 17B; and receive a summary from the Shrimp Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) meeting. After lunch, the Mackerel Management Committee will discuss Final Action on Coastal Migratory Pelagics (CMP) Amendment 26: Changes in Allocations, Stock Boundaries and Sale Provisions for Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Migratory Groups of King Mackerel; receive summary of Public Hearing Comments and Written Public Comments; and a summary from the Law Enforcement Advisory Panel. The Law Enforcement Committee will receive a summary from the Law Enforcement Technical Committee; and select the recipient for Officer of the Year award.

Tuesday, April 5, 2016; 8:30 a.m.–5 p.m.

The Reef Fish Management Committee will receive an update on 2015 Recreational Red Snapper Landings and Recreational Season Projections for 2016; take final action on Framework Action to Modify Red Grouper Annual Catch Limits; review Options Paper for Amendment 46—Modify Gray Triggerfish Rebuilding

Plan and Draft Amendment 41—Red Snapper Management for Federally Permitted Charter Vessels. The committee will receive a summary report from the Ad Hoc Red Snapper Charter For-Hire Advisory Panel (AP) meeting; review of Draft Amendment 42—Federal Reef Fish Headboat Management, Public Hearing Draft Amendment 43—Hogfish Stock Definition, Status Determination Criteria (SDC), Annual Catch Limits (ACL) and Size Limit; review Draft Amendment 45—Extend or Eliminate the Red Snapper Sector Separation Sunset Provision; and review preliminary options for Mechanism to Allow Recreational Red Snapper Season to Re-open if ACL is not exceeded.

Wednesday, April 6, 2016; 8:30 a.m.–5 p.m.

The Reef Fish Management Committee will discuss Final Action on Framework Action to Modify Commercial Gear Requirements and Recreational/Commercial Fishing Year for Yellowtail Snapper; and any other business. The Gulf SEDAR Committee will review and provide updates on SEDAR Schedule Progress and deliverables; and receive a SEDAR Steering Committee update.

The Full Council will convene approximately mid-morning (10:30 a.m.) with a Call to Order, Announcements and Introductions; Adoption of Agenda and Approval of Minutes; and will review Exempt Fishing Permit (EFPs) Applications, if any. The Council will receive presentations on Proposed Rule Standardized Bycatch Reporting Methodology, Science Update: How the Oil Spill Impacted the Fish Species We Care About, Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council's Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management, and NMFS—SERO Landing Summaries.

After lunch, the Council will receive public testimony from 1:45 p.m. until 5 p.m. on Agenda Testimony Items: Final Action—Coastal Migratory Pelagics Amendment 26: Changes in Allocations, Stock Boundaries and Sale Provisions for Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Migratory Groups of King Mackerel; Final Action—Framework Action to Modify Red Grouper Annual Catch Limits; Final Action—Framework Action to Modify Commercial Gear Requirements and Recreational/Commercial Fishing Year for Yellowtail Snapper; Final Action—South Atlantic Amendment: Modifications to Charter Vessel and Headboat Reporting Requirements and hold an open public testimony period regarding any other fishery issues or concern. Anyone wishing to speak during public

comment should sign in at the registration station located at the entrance to the meeting room.

Thursday, April 7, 2016; 8:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m.

The Council will review and discuss committee reports as follows: Joint Administrative Policy/Budget, Law Enforcement, Data Collection, Shrimp, Mackerel, Gulf SEDAR, and Reef Fish Management Committees; and, vote on Exempted Fishing Permits (EFP) applications, if any. Lastly, the Council will discuss other business items, if any.

Meeting Adjourns

The timing and order in which agenda items are addressed may change as required to effectively address the issue. The latest version will be posted on the Council's file server, which can be accessed by going to the Council's Web site at <http://www.gulfcouncil.org> and clicking on FTP Server under Quick Links. For meeting materials, select the "Briefing Books/Briefing Book 2016–04" folder on Gulf Council file server. The username and password are both "gulfguest". The meetings will be webcast over the internet. A link to the webcast will be available on the Council's Web site, <http://www.gulfcouncil.org>.

Although other non-emergency issues not contained in this agenda may come before this Council for discussion, those issues may not be the subjects of formal 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 Act, provided that 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 sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Kathy Pereira (see **ADDRESSES**) at least 5 days prior to the meeting date.

Dated: March 15, 2016.

Jeffrey N. Lonergan,

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

[FR Doc. 2016–06218 Filed 3–18–16; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648–XE395

Takes of Marine Mammals Incidental to Specified Activities; Taking Marine Mammals Incidental to Port of Kalama Expansion Project on the Lower Columbia River

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

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

SUMMARY: NOAA Fisheries has received an application from the Port of Kalama (POK) for an Incidental Harassment Authorization (IHA) to take marine mammals, by harassment, incidental to Port of Kalama Expansion Project. Pursuant to the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), NOAA Fisheries is requesting comments on its proposal to issue an IHA to the POK to incidentally take, by Level B Harassment only, marine mammals during the in-water construction of Kalama Marine Manufacturing and Export Facility during the 2016–2017. Work is anticipated to occur between September 1, 2016 and January 31, 2017. The authorization for this proposed project would be 120 days of in-water work between September 1, 2016 through August 31, 2017 to account for the possible need to vary the schedule due to logistics and weather. Per the Marine Mammal Protection Act, we are requesting comments on our proposal to issue an Incidental Harassment Authorization to the Port of Kalama to incidentally take, by Level B harassment only, 3 species of marine mammals during the specified activity. NOAA Fisheries does not expect, and is not proposing to authorize, Level A harassment (injury), serious injury, or mortality as a result of the proposed activity.

DATES: Comments and information must be received no later than April 20, 2016.

ADDRESSES: Comments on the application should be addressed to Jolie Harrison, Chief, Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910. The mailbox address for providing email comments is itp.youngkin@noaa.gov. Comments sent via email, including all attachments, must not exceed a 25-