

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 proposed 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, and the potential for temporary or permanent hearing impairment will be avoided through the incorporation of the mitigation measures mentioned in this document. 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 operations during the season of operations.

Because bowhead whales are east of the construction 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 will be the subject of consultation between BPXA and subsistence users.

Also, while construction at Northstar has 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 belukha and seals is fairly small, NMFS believes that Northstar construction will not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of these stocks for subsistence uses.

Proposed Authorization

NMFS proposes to issue an IHA for the taking of marine mammals incidental to construction of the Northstar development project in the Alaskan Beaufort Sea, provided the previously mentioned mitigation, monitoring, and reporting requirements are incorporated. NMFS has preliminarily determined that the proposed activity would result in the

harassment of only small numbers of bowhead whales, gray whales, belukha whales, ringed seals, bearded seals, and spotted (largha) seals; would have a negligible impact on these marine mammal stocks; and would not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of marine mammal stocks for subsistence uses.

Information Solicited

NMFS requests interested persons to submit comments and information concerning this request (see ADDRESSES).

Dated: October 20, 1998.

Hilda Diaz-Soltero,

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

[FR Doc. 98-28601 Filed 10-23-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-F

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 101698H]

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council; Public Meetings

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

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council will convene public meetings.

DATES: The meetings will be held on November 9-12, 1998.

ADDRESSES: These meetings will be held at the Galveston Island Hilton Resort, 5222 Seawall Boulevard, Galveston, TX; telephone: 1-800-475-3386.

Council address: Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, 3018 U.S. Highway 301 North, Suite 1000, Tampa, FL 33619.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Wayne E. Swingle, Executive Director, Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council; telephone: (813) 228-2815.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Council

November 11, 1998

8:30 a.m.—Convene.

9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.—Receive public testimony on red snapper total allowable catch (TAC).

3:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.—Receive the Reef Fish Management Committee Report.

November 12, 1998

8:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.—Receive the Shrimp Management Committee Report.

9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.—Receive the Joint Reef Fish/Shrimp Committee Report.

10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.—Receive Sustainable Fisheries Committee Report.

11:00 a.m. - 11:15 a.m.—Receive the Migratory Species Committee Report.

11:15 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.—Receive the Personnel Committee Report.

11:30 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.—Receive the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas Advisory Committee Meeting Report.

11:45 a.m. - 12:00 noon—Receive the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC) Liaison Report.

12:00 noon - 12:15 p.m.—Receive Enforcement Reports.

12:15 p.m. - 12:45 p.m.—Receive Director's Reports.

12:45 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.—Other business.

November 9, 1998

11:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon—Orientation session for new Council members.

1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.—Convene the Reef Fish Management Committee to review the stock assessment update for red snapper and the recommendations of the Reef Fish Stock Assessment Panel (RFSAP), Socioeconomic Panel, Red Snapper Advisory Panel (RSAP), and the Scientific and Statistical Committee. The committee will develop their recommendations to the Council on TAC for red snapper and possibly other regulatory measures included in the framework procedure of the Reef Fish Fishery Management Plan (FMP), as amended. The recommendations of the Reef Fish Committee will be considered by the Council on Wednesday, November 11, 1998, following public testimony.

November 10, 1998

8:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.—Convene a joint meeting of the Reef Fish and Shrimp Management Committees to review a report entitled "An Alternative View Regarding Appropriate SPR Threshold and Targets for Gulf of Mexico Red Snapper." The Committee will also consider comments on the report by the RFSAP and critiques by other peer reviewers.

10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.—Convene the Shrimp Management Committee to review a protocol for certifying additional bycatch reduction devices (BRDs) developed by NMFS. NMFS will also provide the Committee with an update of the BRD evaluation study and a status report of the certification of the

Parker turtle excluder device. A draft of a scoping document for Amendment 10 to the Shrimp FMP will also be reviewed.

11:30 a.m. - 12:00 noon—Convene the Personnel Committee to review staff health benefits.

1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.—Convene the Migratory Species Committee to review a newly completed draft of the Highly Migratory Species FMP that addresses the current commercial and recreational fisheries for tuna, swordfish, and sharks. The Committee will also discuss an amendment to the Billfish FMP which includes Atlantic blue and white marlin, Western Atlantic sailfish, and longbill spearfish.

2:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.—Convene the Sustainable Fisheries Committee to review the Generic Sustainable Fisheries Act (SFA) Amendment that contains, among other provisions, alternatives for specifying maximum sustainable yield, optimum yield, overfishing and overfished definitions, and rebuilding periods for overfished stocks. The Generic SFA Amendment includes all stocks currently under management by the Council, including jointly managed species and, as such, the Committee will also consider approval of the SFA amendment of the SAFMC.

Although other issues not contained in this agenda may come before the Council for discussion, in accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation Act, those issues may not be the subject of formal Council action during this meeting. Council action will be restricted to those issues specifically identified in the agenda listed in this notice.

Special Accommodations

These meetings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Anne Alford at the Council (see ADDRESSES) by November 2, 1998.

Dated: October 20, 1998.

Richard W. Surdi,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.
[FR Doc. 98-28598 Filed 10-23-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-F

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 102098D]

North Pacific Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

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

ACTION: Notice of committee meeting.

SUMMARY: The Pacific Northwest Crab Industry Advisory Committee has scheduled a meeting.

DATES: The meeting will be held on Friday, November 20, 1998.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Leif Erickson Lodge, 2245 NW 57th Street, Seattle, WA.

Council address: North Pacific Fishery Management Council, 605 W. 4th Ave., Suite 306, Anchorage, AK 99501-2252.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Arni Thomson, Alaska Crab Coalition, 206-547-7560.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Committee will convene at 9:00 a.m. and continue until the following subjects have been addressed:

1. Reports on the 1999 budget for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G); the ADF&G proposed observer program, Crab Plan Team activities.
2. Status of crab stocks.
3. Proposed delay in season openings.
4. Tanner crab harvest and rebuilding strategy.
5. Review of American Fisheries Act, SB 1221.
6. Review proposals submitted to the Alaska Board of Fisheries for their March 1999 meeting.

Although other issues not contained in this agenda may come before the Committee 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. Action will be restricted to those issues specifically identified in this notice.

Special Accommodations

The meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Helen Allen, 907-271-2809, at least 5 working days prior to the meeting date.

Dated: October 20, 1998.

Richard W. Surdi,

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

[FR Doc. 98-28599 Filed 10-23-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-F

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Patent and Trademark Office

[Docket No. 980326078-8078-01]

Request for Comments on Proposed Internet Usage Policy

AGENCY: Patent and Trademark Office, Commerce.

ACTION: Notice and request for public comments.

SUMMARY: The Patent and Trademark Office (PTO) requests comments on a proposed Internet usage policy. The policy is intended to provide guidance to PTO employees regarding the use of the Internet for official PTO business. The policy is to cover (1) communications with applicants via Internet electronic mail (e-mail) and (2) using the Internet to search for information concerning patent applications and elements appearing in trademark applications.

DATES: Written comments on the proposed Internet usage policy will be accepted by the PTO until December 28, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Written comments should be addressed to the attention of Magdalen Greenlief, Office of the Deputy Assistant Commissioner for Patent Policy and Projects. Comments submitted by mail should be sent to: Box Comments—Patents, Assistant Commissioner for Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231. Comments may also be submitted by facsimile transmission to (703) 305-8825 or by electronic mail through the Internet to "magdalen.greenlief@uspto.gov".

Written comments will be available for public inspection in Suite 910 of Crystal Park 2, 2121 Crystal Drive, Arlington, Virginia. In addition, comments provided in machine-readable format will be available through the PTO's Website at <http://www.uspto.gov>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Magdalen Greenlief, by mail to her attention addressed to Box Comments—Patents, Assistant Commissioner for Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231; by telephone at (703) 305-8813; by facsimile transmission to (703) 305-8825; or by electronic mail through the Internet to "magdalen.greenlief@uspto.gov".