

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

[I.D. 021104A]

International Whaling Commission Nominations

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

ACTION: Request for nominations.

SUMMARY: This notice is a call for nominees for the U.S. Delegation to the July 2004 International Whaling Commission (IWC) annual meeting.

DATES: All nominations for the U.S. Delegation to the IWC annual meeting must be received by April 9, 2004.

ADDRESSES: All nominations for the U.S. Delegation to the IWC annual meeting should be addressed to Rolland Schmitt, U.S. Commissioner to the IWC, and sent via post to: Chris Yates, 13708, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service, 1315 East West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Prospective Congressional advisors to the delegation should contact the Department of State directly.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Chris Yates, 301-713-2322, Extension 114.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Secretary of Commerce is charged with the responsibility of discharging the obligations of the United States under the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling, 1946. The U.S. commissioner has primary responsibility for the preparation and negotiation of U.S. positions on international issues concerning whaling and for all matters involving the IWC. He is staffed by the Department of Commerce and assisted by the Department of State, the Department of the Interior, Marine Mammal Commission, and by other agencies. The non-federal representative(s) selected as a result of this nomination process is(are) responsible for providing input and recommendations to the U.S. IWC Commissioner representing the positions of non-governmental organizations.

The IWC is hosting its 56th annual meeting from July 19-22, 2004, in Sorrento, Italy.

Dated: February 19, 2004.

Laurie K. Allen,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

[I.D. 021704C]

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 March 8-12, 2004.

ADDRESSES: These meetings will be held at the Adam's Mark Hotel, 64 South Water Street, Mobile, AL; telephone: 251-438-4000.

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

March 11, 2004

8:30 a.m.—Convene.

8:45 a.m.—11:30 a.m.—Receive public testimony on the Draft Reef Fish Amendment 22 (Red Snapper Rebuilding Plan) and the final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Essential Fish Habitat (EFH).

1 p.m.—4:30 p.m.—Receive the Reef Fish Management Committee report.

4:30 p.m.—5:30 p.m.—(Closed Session) Receive the report of the Joint Personnel/Administrative Policy Committee.

March 12, 2004

8:30 a.m.—9 a.m.—Receive the Habitat Protection Committee report.

9 a.m.—9:30 a.m.—Receive the Joint Reef Fish/Mackerel/Red Drum Management Committee report.

9:30 a.m.—10 a.m.—Receive the Joint Reef Fish/Mackerel Management Committee report.

10 a.m.—11 a.m.—Receive the Shrimp Management Committee report.

11 a.m.—11:15 a.m.—Receive the Budget Committee Report.

11:15 a.m.—11:30 a.m.—Receive the Joint Personnel/Administrative Committee report.

1 p.m.—1:15 p.m.—Receive the report on the Marine Recreational Fishery Statistics Survey (MRFSS) meeting.

1:15 p.m.—1:45 p.m.—Receive the report on the Southeast Data and Review (SEDAR) Steering Committee meeting.

1:45 p.m.—2 p.m.—Receive the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC) Liaison Report.

2 p.m.—2:15 p.m.—Receive a report on the Gulf Safety Committee.

2:15 p.m.—2:30 p.m.—Receive a report on the Joint Council meeting.

2:30 p.m.—2:45 p.m.—Receive the NMFS Billfish/Highly Migratory Species Advisory Panel (HMS AP) meeting reports.

2:45 p.m.—3 p.m.—Receive Enforcement Reports.

3 p.m.—3:15 p.m.—Receive the NMFS Regional Administrator's Report.

3:15 p.m.—3:30 p.m.—Receive Director's Reports.

3:30 p.m.—3:45 p.m.—Other Business
March 8, 2004

8 a.m.—9:30 a.m.—Convene the Shrimp Management Committee to review Draft Shrimp Amendment 13.

9:30 a.m.—11:30 a.m.—Convene the Budget Committee in a closed session to review bids to hire a court reporter. The Budget Committee meeting will then be open to the public to discuss the cost of new microphones and a Florida State University economic data collection proposal.

1 p.m.—5:30 p.m.—Convene the Reef Fish Management Committee to review the Public Hearing Draft of Vermilion Snapper Amendment 23 that contains alternatives for arresting overfishing of that stock by commercial and recreational fishermen. The committee will also review and take final action on the Final Reef Fish Amendment 22 (red snapper rebuilding program). An options paper for Reef Fish Amendment 18 pertaining to the grouper fishery will be discussed. The following issues will also be reviewed: The Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC) recommendations on grouping amberjacks, tilefish, and deepwater groupers; U.S. Coast Guard rules for crew size of inspected recreational for-hire vessels; the SAFMC's action on yellowtail snapper; and a status report on the red snapper IFQ referendum. The Committee will ratify and/or add to the SEDAR pool and panel membership for each of the SEDAR workshops during 2004 and 2005 for stocks of king mackerel, red snapper, vermilion snapper, and greater amberjack. The Committee will develop recommendations for consideration by full Council on Thursday afternoon.

March 9, 2004

8:30 a.m.–11:30 a.m.—Continue with the Reef Fish Management Committee.

1 p.m.–2:30 p.m.—Convene the Habitat Protection Committee to review the final EIS for the Generic EFH Amendment; and to discuss Council participation in the Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership (SARP).

2:30 p.m.–5 p.m.—Convene the Joint Reef Fish/Mackerel Committees to review hearing comments on the Joint Reef Fish/Mackerel Limited Access Scoping Document. The committees will also review the Scoping Document for Extension of the Charter Vessel Permit Moratorium.

March 10, 2004

8:30 a.m.–12 noon—Convene the Joint Personnel/Administrative Policy Committees in a closed session to address personnel issues and review the Administrative Handbook and Statement of Organizational Practices and Procedures (SOPPs).

1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.—Convene the Joint Reef Fish/Mackerel/Red Drum Committees to receive a presentation on a Cage Culture Study; review hearing comments on the Offshore Aquaculture Amendment Scoping Document; and receive a presentation on the NMFS Regional Bycatch Plan.

Although non-emergency issues not contained in the agenda may come before the Council for discussion, in accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSFCMA), 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 this notice and any issues arising after publication of this notice that require emergency action under section 305 (c) of the MSFCMA, provided the public has been notified of the Council's intent to take final action to address the emergency. A copy of the Committee schedule and agenda can be obtained by calling (813) 228–2815.

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 March 1, 2004.

Dated: February 18, 2004.

Tracey Thompson,

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

[FR Doc. E4–353 Filed 2–23–04; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 102203A]

Marine Mammals; File No. 116–1697

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

ACTION: Issuance of permit.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that Sea World Inc., 7007 Sea World Drive, Orlando, FL 32821, has been issued a permit to take one Guadalupe fur seal (*Arctocephalus townsendi*) for purposes of enhancement.

ADDRESSES: The permit and related documents are available for review upon written request or by appointment in the following office(s):

Permits, Conservation and Education Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13705, Silver Spring, MD 20910; phone (301)713–2289; fax (301)713–0376;

Southwest Region, NMFS, 501 West Ocean Blvd., Suite 4200, Long Beach, CA 90802–4213; phone (562)980–4001; fax (562)980–4018.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Amy Sloan or Jennifer Skidmore, (301)713–2289.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On April 18, 2003, notice was published in the **Federal Register** (68 FR 19193) that a request for an enhancement permit to take the species identified above had been submitted by the above-named organization. The requested permit has been issued under the authority of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*), the Regulations Governing the Taking and Importing of Marine Mammals (50 CFR part 216), the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA; 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), and the regulations governing the taking, importing, and exporting of endangered and threatened species (50 CFR parts 222–226).

This permit authorizes maintenance of one non-releaseable rehabilitated juvenile male Guadalupe fur seal at Sea World of California (and other Sea World facilities if relocation is necessary) for enhancement purposes. The animal has recurring grand mal seizures and thus, release of this animal may be detrimental to the wild population due to the undetermined cause of the condition and the possibility that it may be hereditary. The animal would be provided with daily husbandry care and treatment for

seizures, routine medical procedures and neutering, and would be available for opportunistic research. The applicant has been issued a five-year permit.

Issuance of this permit, as required by the ESA, was based on a finding that such permit (1) was applied for in good faith, (2) will not operate to the disadvantage of the endangered species which is the subject of this permit, and (3) is consistent with the purposes and policies set forth in section 2 of the ESA.

Dated: February 18, 2004.

Stephen L. Leathery,

Chief, Permits, Conservation and Education Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 020404G]

Marine Mammals; File Nos. 42–1642, 482–1653, and 1026–1671

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

ACTION: Receipt of applications for permit amendments.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that the following applicants have applied in due form for a permit amendment to take marine mammals for purposes of scientific research:

Mystic Aquarium, 55 Coogan Blvd., Mystic, CT 06355 (Dr. Lisa Mazarro, Principal Investigator);

James Gilbert, Ph.D., University of Maine, Department of Wildlife Ecology, 210 Nutting Hall, Orono, Maine 04469; and

Belinda L. Rubinstein, New England Aquarium, Central Wharf, Boston, MA 02110.

DATES: Written or telefaxed comments on the amendment requests must be received on or before March 25, 2004.

ADDRESSES: The applications and related documents are available for review upon written request or by appointment in the following office(s):

All documents: Permits, Conservation and Education Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13705, Silver Spring, MD 20910; phone (301)713–2289; fax (301)713–0376; and

Northeast Region, NMFS, One Blackburn Drive, Gloucester, MA