

are available for review, by appointment, for permit 16608: Protected Resources Division, NMFS, 650 Capitol Mall, Suite 5-100, Sacramento, CA 95814 (Ph: (916) 930-3600, Fax: (916) 930-3629). Documents may also be reviewed by appointment in the Office of Protected Resources, F/PR3, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910-3226 (301) 713-1401.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Shirley Witalis at phone number: (916) 930-3606, or email: Shirley.Witalis@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Authority

Issuance of permits and permit modifications, as required by the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531-1543) (ESA), is based on a finding that such permits/modifications: (1) Are applied for in good faith; (2) would not operate to the disadvantage of the listed species which are the subject of the permits; and (3) are consistent with the purposes and policies set forth in section 2 of the ESA. Authority to take listed species is subject to conditions set forth in the permits. Permits and modifications are issued in accordance with and are subject to the ESA and NMFS regulations governing listed fish and wildlife permits (50 CFR parts 222-226).

Those individuals 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**). The holding of such a hearing is at the discretion of the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA. All statements and opinions contained in the permit action summaries are those of the applicant and do not necessarily reflect the views of NMFS.

Species Covered in This Notice

This notice is relevant to the federally-listed threatened California Central Valley (CCV) steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) distinct population segment.

New Application Received

The USBR, in affiliation with the San Joaquin River Restoration Program (SJRRP), requests a 3-year permit to conduct the SJRRP Steelhead Monitoring Plan (SMP) in the San Joaquin River upstream of the Merced River confluence, in the Central Valley, California.

The SJRRP intends to research the presence or absence of CCV steelhead

within the SJRRP restoration area, defined as the mainstem San Joaquin River from Friant Dam to the confluence of the Merced River. The SMP focuses monitoring efforts on the CCV steelhead adult migration from mid-December through mid-March when the SJRRP Interim Flows Project is implemented to maintain sufficient river conditions for fish in the SJRRP restoration area.

The SMP includes several sampling methodologies in response to monitoring challenges in the restoration area. Trammel nets will be deployed to drift during short durations in high velocity water in areas where adult steelhead are most likely to be present. Raft mounted electrofishers will be used to navigate through shallow water (e.g., backwater sloughs, around in-river structures, under bypasses) locations where other sampling methodologies are ineffective. Fyke nets with wing walls and fish traps will be deployed for effective sampling during pulse flows, flood releases, and high riverine turbidity. Monitoring staff will employ best management practices and follow NMFS electrofishing guidelines to minimize sampling effects on fish.

All captured steelhead will be recorded, measured, identified as to gender, sampled for scales and tissues, and checked for injuries and the presence of tags. Additionally, fish will be Floy-tagged with a unique identification number to document any recaptures that may occur in the study area. Sampled fish will then be transported by tank truck equipped with oxygen diffusers, and acclimated to river temperature prior to release into suitable habitat downstream of the mouth of the Merced River.

The SMP will monitor continuously from December 1 through March 31 throughout the study period. USBR requests authorization for an estimated annual non-lethal take of 6 steelhead by fyke net, 10 steelhead by electrofisher, and 2 steelhead by trammel net. No indirect mortality is anticipated during fish capture, sampling and release activities carried out for the study.

Dated: December 7, 2011.

Angela Somma,

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

[FR Doc. 2011-31956 Filed 12-12-11; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XA863

Fisheries of the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic; Southeast Data, Assessment, and Review (SEDAR); Public Meeting

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

ACTION: Notice of SEDAR 28 pre-data workshop webinar for Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Spanish mackerel and cobia.

SUMMARY: The SEDAR 28 assessments of the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic stocks of Spanish mackerel and cobia will consist of a series of workshops and webinars: A Data Workshop and webinar, an Assessment Workshop and webinars, and a Review Workshop. See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**.

DATES: The SEDAR 28 pre-data workshop webinar will be held Wednesday, January 11, 2012, from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. The established time may be adjusted as necessary to accommodate the timely completion of discussion relevant to the assessment process. Such adjustments may result in the meeting being extended from, or completed prior to the time established by this notice.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held via webinar. The webinar is open to members of the public. Those interested in participating should contact Kari H. Fenske at SEDAR (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**) to request an invitation providing webinar access information.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Kari H. Fenske, SEDAR Coordinator, 4055 Faber Place, Suite 201, North Charleston, SC 29405; telephone: (843) 571-4366; email: Kari.Fenske@safmc.net

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Gulf of Mexico, South Atlantic, and Caribbean Fishery Management Councils, in conjunction with NOAA Fisheries and the Atlantic and Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commissions have implemented the Southeast Data, Assessment and Review (SEDAR) process, a multi-step method for determining the status of fish stocks in the Southeast Region. SEDAR is a three-step process including: (1) Data Workshop, (2) Assessment Process utilizing a workshop and webinars, (3) Review Workshop. The product of the

Data Workshop is a data report which compiles and evaluates potential datasets and recommends which datasets are appropriate for assessment analyses. The product of the Assessment Process is a stock assessment report which describes the fisheries, evaluates the status of the stock, estimates biological benchmarks, projects future population conditions, and recommends research and monitoring needs. The assessment is independently peer reviewed at the Review Workshop. The product of the Review Workshop is a Summary documenting Panel opinions regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the stock assessment and input data. Participants for SEDAR Workshops are appointed by the Gulf of Mexico, South Atlantic, and Caribbean Fishery Management Councils and NOAA Fisheries Southeast Regional Office, HMS Management Division, and Southeast Fisheries Science Center. Participants include data collectors and database managers; stock assessment scientists, biologists, and researchers; constituency representatives including fishermen, environmentalists, and NGO's; International experts; and staff of Councils, Commissions, and state and federal agencies.

During the SEDAR 28 pre-data workshop webinar participants will present summary data, and discuss data needs and treatments.

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

The meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to the Council office (see **ADDRESSES**) at least 10 business days prior to the meeting.

Dated: December 8, 2011.

Tracey L. Thompson,

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

[FR Doc. 2011-31886 Filed 12-12-11; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XA864

New England Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

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

ACTION: Notice; public meeting.

SUMMARY: The New England Fishery Management Council (Council) is scheduling a public meeting of its Joint Whiting Oversight and Advisory Panel, in January, 2012, to consider actions affecting New England fisheries in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ). Recommendations from this group will be brought to the full Council for formal consideration and action, if appropriate.

DATES: The meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 18, 2012 at 10 a.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Hotel Providence, 139 Mathewson Street, Providence, RI 02903; *telephone:* (401) 861-8000; *fax:* (401) 861-8002.

Council address: New England Fishery Management Council, 50 Water Street, Mill 2, Newburyport, MA 01950.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Paul J. Howard, Executive Director, New England Fishery Management Council; *telephone:* (978) 465-0492.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The advisors and committee will review and revise Draft Amendment 19 which proposes to implement Annual Catch Limits and accountability measures. The committee may also identify preferred alternatives. If approved at the January 31-February 2 Council meeting, public hearings will be held on the final Draft Amendment 19 document. If sufficient time exists at this meeting, the advisors and committee may also discuss limited access issues that will be considered in the next amendment.

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

This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Paul J. Howard, Executive Director, at (978) 465-0492, at least 5 days prior to the meeting date.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: December 8, 2011.

Tracey L. Thompson,

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

[FR Doc. 2011-31933 Filed 12-12-11; 8:45 am]

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COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Draft Guidance on Improving the Process for Preparing Efficient and Timely Environmental Reviews under the National Environmental Policy Act

AGENCY: Council on Environmental Quality.

ACTION: Notice of availability, draft guidance on improving the process for preparing efficient and timely environmental reviews under the National Environmental Policy Act.

SUMMARY: The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) is issuing its draft guidance on Improving the Process for Preparing Efficient and Timely Environmental Reviews under the National Environmental Policy Act for public review and comment. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and CEQ Regulations implementing NEPA provide numerous techniques for preparing efficient and timely environmental reviews. CEQ is issuing this guidance for Federal departments and agencies to emphasize and clarify these techniques, consistent with a thorough and meaningful environmental review and keeping in mind the following basic principles: (1) NEPA encourages simple, straightforward, and concise reviews and documentation that are proportionate to and effectively convey the relevant considerations in a timely manner to the public and decisionmakers, while comprehensively addressing the issues presented; (2) NEPA should be integrated into project planning rather than be an after-the-fact add-on; (3) NEPA reviews should coordinate and take appropriate advantage of existing documents and studies, including through adoption and incorporation by reference; (4) Early and well-defined scoping can assist in focusing environmental reviews on