

Dated: May 8, 2012.

Tracey L. Thompson,

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

[FR Doc. 2012-11448 Filed 5-10-12; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

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's (Council) Groundfish Committee will meet to consider actions affecting New England fisheries in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ).

DATES: The meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 30, 2012 at 9 a.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Holiday Inn, 31 Hampshire Street, Mansfield, MA 02048; telephone: (508) 339-2200; fax: (508) 339-1040.

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 items of discussion in the committee's agenda are as follows:

The Groundfish Oversight Committee will discuss possible adjustments to sector management measures and issues related to setting Acceptable Biological Catches (ABCs), Annual Catch Limits (ACLs), and Accountability Measures (AMs). After receiving reports from the Groundfish Advisory Panel and the Recreation Advisory Panel, the Committee will continue to develop options to improve sector monitoring, including both at-sea and dockside monitoring. They may discuss different funding mechanisms, appropriate coverage levels, and full retention of allocated groundfish species. With respect to ABCs/ACLs/AMs, the Committee will consider additional sub-ACLs for the scallop fishery for stocks such as SNE/MAB windowpane flounder and SNE/MA winter flounder. As directed in the letter from the National Marine Fisheries Service approving Framework 47, Committee members will also discuss additional

reactive AMs for wolffish, SNE/MA winter flounder, and Atlantic halibut. The Committee may begin a discussion of recreational fishing measures for FY 2013. Options identified by the Committee will be included in a future management action or actions that will be considered by the Council in the fall of 2012. The Committee may also discuss other business, such as issues related to Georges Bank yellowtail flounder management.

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 identified 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 (see **ADDRESSES**) at least 5 days prior to the meeting date.

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

Dated: May 8, 2012.

Tracey L. Thompson,

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

[FR Doc. 2012-11380 Filed 5-10-12; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XB173

Marine Mammals; File No. 16919

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

ACTION: Notice; receipt of application.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that Eye of the Whale (Olga von Ziegesar, Responsible Party and Principal Investigator), P.O. Box 15191, Fitz Creek, AK 99603, has applied in due form for a permit to conduct research on humpback whales (*Megaptera novaeangliae*).

DATES: Written, telefaxed, or email comments must be received on or before June 11, 2012.

ADDRESSES: The application and related documents are available for review by selecting "Records Open for Public Comment" from the *Features* box on the Applications and Permits for Protected Species (APPS) home page, <https://apps.nmfs.noaa.gov>, and then selecting File No. 16919 from the list of available applications.

These documents are also available upon written request or by appointment in the following offices:

Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13705, Silver Spring, MD 20910; phone (301) 427-8401; fax (301) 713-0376; and

Alaska Region, NMFS, P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802-1668; phone (907) 586-7221; fax (907) 586-7249.

Written comments on this application should be submitted to the Chief, Permits and Conservation Division at the above address. Comments may also be submitted by facsimile to (301) 713-0376, or by email to NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov. Please include the File No. in the subject line of the email comment.

Those individuals requesting a public hearing should submit a written request to the Chief, Permits and Conservation Division at the address listed above. The request should set forth the specific reasons why a hearing on this application would be appropriate.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Amy Hapeman or Carrie Hubbard, (301) 427-8401.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The subject permit is requested under the authority of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (MMPA; 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 222-226).

The applicant requests a five-year scientific research permit to continue a long-term census of humpback whales in Prince William Sound and adjacent waters of Alaska. Up to 200 takes for close vessel approach, photo-identification and behavioral observation of whales is requested annually to better define abundance, distribution, reoccurrence of old individuals vs. new individuals, feeding habits, vital rates, associations between animals, and sex of individual whales.

A draft environmental assessment (EA) has been prepared in compliance

with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), to examine whether significant environmental impacts could result from issuance of the proposed scientific research permit. The draft EA is available for review and comment simultaneous with the scientific research permit application.

Concurrent with the publication of this notice in the **Federal Register**, NMFS is forwarding copies of the application to the Marine Mammal Commission and its Committee of Scientific Advisors.

Dated: May 8, 2012.

Tammy C. Adams,

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

[FR Doc. 2012-11525 Filed 5-10-12; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XA172

Marine Mammals; File No. 15453

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

ACTION: Notice; issuance of permit.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that a permit has been issued to the Waikiki Aquarium, 2777 Kalakaua Avenue, Honolulu, HI 96815 (Dr. Andrew Rossiter, Responsible Party), to conduct research on and enhancement of captive Hawaiian monk seals (*Monachus schauinslandi*).

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

Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13705, Silver Spring, MD 20910; phone (301) 427-8401; fax (301) 713-0376; and

Pacific Islands Region, NMFS, 1601 Kapiolani Boulevard, Room 1110, Honolulu, HI 96814-4700; phone (808) 944-2200; fax (808) 973-2941.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Amy Sloan or Jennifer Skidmore, (301)427-8401.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On January 27, 2011, notice was published in the **Federal Register** (76 FR 4867) that a request for a permit to conduct research on and enhancement of the

species identified above had been submitted by the above-named applicant. On May 24, 2011, notice was published in the **Federal Register** (76 FR 30109) that a request to amend the application had been submitted by the applicant to increase the number of seals to be maintained under the proposed permit (from two to three seals). 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).

Permit No. 15453 authorizes the Waikiki Aquarium to maintain in captivity up to three non-releasable Hawaiian monk seals for research and enhancement purposes. Research includes (1) a long-term study on the digestive efficiency of captive seals; and (2) a post-vaccination antibody response study using West Nile virus and canine distemper virus vaccinations. The seals will be displayed to the public incidental to the research program, and the Waikiki Aquarium provides daily public narrations and educational graphics about the Hawaiian monk seal. The permit is valid for five years from the date of issuance.

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), a final determination has been made that the activity proposed is categorically excluded from the requirement to prepare an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement.

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

Dated: April 30, 2012.

Tammy C. Adams,

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

[FR Doc. 2012-11523 Filed 5-10-12; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XA873

Endangered Species; File No. 15566

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

ACTION: Notice; issuance of permit modification.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, Marine Resources Division, Charleston, SC 29422-2559 [Responsible Party: Mike Arendt] has been issued a modification to scientific research Permit No. 15566.

ADDRESSES: The modification and related documents are available for review upon written request or by appointment in the following offices: Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13705, Silver Spring, MD 20910; phone (301) 427-8401; fax (301) 713-0376; and Southeast Region, NMFS, 263 13th Ave South, St. Petersburg, FL 33701; phone (727) 824-5312; fax (727) 824-5309.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Kristy Beard or Amy Hapeman, (301) 427-8401.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On December 20, 2011, notice was published in the **Federal Register** (76 FR 78890) that a modification of Permit No. 15566 had been requested by the above-named organization. The requested modification has been granted under the authority of 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 222-226).

Permit No. 15566, issued April 8, 2011 (76 FR 22877), authorizes capture by trawl of 345 loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*), 29 Kemp's ridley (*Lepidochelys kempii*), 9 green (*Chelonia mydas*), 1 leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*), and 1 hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) sea turtle to assess temporal change in catch rates, size distributions, sex and genetic ratios, and health of sea turtles. Captures occur annually in coastal waters between Winyah Bay, SC and St. Augustine, FL. Turtles may be handled, blood sampled, measured, flipper and passive integrated transponder (PIT)