

Thermometry of Ocean Climate experiment and from the U.S. Navy's Low-Frequency Active sonar system testing is provided in the Habitat Degradation and Military Operations sections, respectively.

Comment 11. With regard to the discussion on stocks in the North Pacific population, one commenter suggested adding the phrase "...based on the presence of rare epizoots on blue whales which were not found on other species known to migrate north ..." to the sentence, "[h]owever, he recently concluded that the California population is separate from that in the Gulf of and eastern Aleutians (Rice 1992)."

Response. This suggested change has been made.

Comment 12. One reviewer challenged the assertion that blue whales regularly feed on the pelagic red crab, *Pleuroncodes planipes*, as reported by Rice (1974) and Rice (1986).

Response. In response to this comment, the sentence that read "[o]ne exception to their near-total dependence on euphausiid prey is that blue whales regularly feed on pelagic red crabs, *Pleuroncodes planipes*, off Baja California (Rice 1974, 1986)" in the draft has been changed in the final plan to read, "[o]ne exception to their near-total dependence on euphausiid prey is that blue whales have been observed feeding on pelagic red crabs, *Pleuroncodes planipes*, off Baja California (Rice 1974, 1986), although these observations have not been confirmed by subsequent observations or other analyses (e.g., fecal analysis)."

Comment 13. A reviewer suggested a change in the discussion about blue whale prey in the Gulf of California, Mexico.

Response. Two sentences on this subject have been changed to read, "[b]etween February and April, blue whales in the Gulf of California, Mexico, have been observed feeding on euphausiid surface swarms (Sears 1990), consisting mainly of *Nyctiphanes simplex* engaged in reproductive activities (Gendron 1990, 1992). Sears (1990) regarded *Nyctiphanes simplex* as the principal prey of blue whales in the region, and results from recent fecal analyses confirmed this assertion (Del Angel-Rodriguez and Gendron 1997)."

Comment 14. One reviewer indicated that the section on Reproduction did not, but should, indicate that the Gulf of California is the only known nursing and probable calving ground in the North Pacific.

Response. The following sentence has been added "[t]herefore, this area is

likely an important nursing and calving area for the species."

Comment 15. A reviewer pointed out that there are no regulations or guidelines for whale watching in Mexican waters and suggested that this be noted in the plan.

Response. The boat disturbance discussion in the North Pacific section has been modified to reflect this comment.

Comment 16. One reviewer noted that there are three (not two) blue whale photo-identification catalogs, including one for the waters off Baja California and portions of the Mexico mainland Pacific coast.

Response. Under Narrative, section 2.3 of the Plan has been modified accordingly.

Comment 17. A reviewer suggested that the importance of blue whale habitat in the Gulf of California be clarified in section 3.2 of the Narrative.

Response. In response to this comment, the sentence on Mexico has been modified to read, "[i]n Mexico, the waters of Baja California, particularly the southwestern portion of the Gulf of California where nursing, feeding, and probably calving occurs, are clearly of great importance to many eastern North Pacific blue whales, including whales that spend part of the year in U.S. waters."

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1531-1543 *et seq.*

Dated: October 19, 1998.

Hilda Diaz-Soltero,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 101698F]

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

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

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council's (Council) Large Pelagics Committee will hold a public meeting.

DATES: The meetings will be held on Monday, November 9, 1998, from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m., and Tuesday, November 10, 1998, from 8:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m.

ADDRESSES: This meeting will be held at the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council Office, 2nd Floor Conference Room, Alan Frear Federal Building, 300 S. New Street, Dover, DE 19904, telephone: 302-674-2331.

Council address: Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, 300 S. New Street, Dover, DE 19904, telephone: 302-674-2331.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Christopher M. Moore, Ph.D., Acting Executive Director, Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council; telephone: 302-674-2331, ext. 16.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The purpose of this meeting is to develop Mid-Atlantic Council comments on the Highly Migratory Species and Atlantic Billfish Fishery Management Plans.

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

These meetings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Joanna Davis at the Council (see **ADDRESSES**) at least 5 days prior to the meeting date.

Dated: October 19, 1998.

Bruce C. Morehead,

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

[FR Doc. 98-28507 Filed 10-22-98; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 101698E]

North Pacific Fishery Management Council; Public Meetings

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

ACTION: Notice of public meetings.

SUMMARY: The North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) and its advisory committees will meet in Anchorage, AK.

DATES: The meetings will be held on November 8-12, 1998.

ADDRESSES: The meetings will be held at the Anchorage Hilton Hotel, 500 W. Third Avenue, Anchorage, AK.

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

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Council staff, telephone: 907-271-2809.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

1. The Advisory Panel (AP) will begin meeting at 8:00 a.m. on Sunday, November 8, and continue through Monday, November 9, 1998.

2. The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) will meet beginning at 1:00 p.m. on Sunday, November 8, continuing through Monday, November 9, 1998.

3. The Council will begin at 8:00 a.m. on Tuesday, November 10, 1998, continuing through at least Thursday, November 12, and possibly into Friday morning, November 13, 1998.

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council and its advisory bodies will hold a special meeting to discuss management implications of draft Senate Bill 1221, and to discuss the current status of Stellar sea lions and potential management measures to mitigate fisheries impacts on those marine mammals.

SB 1221 (assuming its passage) will mandate specific management measures for the pollock fisheries in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands, and the pollock and Pacific cod fisheries in the Gulf of Alaska, and will likely necessitate additional actions by the Council.

Also on the agenda for the November meeting will be a discussion of total weight measurement in the groundfish fisheries, as it relates to SB 1221, and a discussion of the recent crab license limitation actions from the Council's October meeting, relative to SB 1221 and relative to possible State of Alaska crab fishery management considerations.

Although other issues not contained in this agenda may come before this Council for discussion, in accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, those issues may not be the subject of formal Council action during the 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 Helen Allen, 907-

271-2809, at least 7 working days prior to the meeting date.

Dated: October 19, 1998.

Bruce C. Morehead,

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

[FR Doc. 98-28506 Filed 10-22-98; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 101598D]

Marine Mammals; Permit No. 926

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

ACTION: Receipt of application for amendment.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that Dr. Robin W. Baird, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, B3H 4J1, Canada, has requested an amendment to scientific research Permit No. 959.

DATES: Written comments must be received on or before November 23, 1998.

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

Permits Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13705, Silver Spring, MD 20910 (301/713-2289);

Regional Administrator, Southwest Region, National Marine Fisheries Service, 501 West Ocean Blvd., Suite 4200, Long Beach, CA 90802-4213 (562/980-4001); and

Protected Resources Program Manager, Pacific Islands Area Office, 2570 Dole Street, Room 106, Honolulu, HI 96822-2396 (808/973-2987).

Written data or views, or requests for a public hearing on this request should be submitted to the Chief, Permits Division, F/PR1, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Those individuals requesting a hearing should set forth the specific reasons why a hearing on this particular request would be appropriate.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jeannie Drevenak, 301/713-2289.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The subject amendment is requested 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 (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), and the regulations governing endangered fish and wildlife permits (50 CFR Parts 217-222).

The Permit Holder is currently authorized to: radio tag via suction cup attachment, killer whales (*Orcinus orca*) and Dall's porpoise (*Phocoenoides dalli*) annually in the waters of Washington, Southeast Alaska, Oregon, and California over a five year period; and to suction-cup TDR/VHF tag the following additional species of cetaceans: Baird's beaked whales (*Berardius bairdii*), Cuvier's beaked whales (*Ziphius cavirostris*), sperm whales (*Physeter macrocephalus*), northern right whale dolphins (*Lissodelphis borealis*), Pacific white-sided dolphins (*Lagenorhynchus obliquidens*), Risso's dolphins (*Grampus griseus*), short-finned pilot whales (*Globicephala macrorhynchus*), false killer whales (*Pseudorca crassidens*), minke whales (*Balaenoptera acutorostrata*), and gray whales (*Eschrichtius robustus*).

The Permit Holder is now requesting authorization to: (1) expand the geographic research area to include Hawaii waters; (2) include suction-cup TDR/VHF tagging of several additional species of marine mammals found in Hawaii waters (*i.e.*, spotted dolphins (*Stenella attenuata*), spinner dolphins (*Stenella longirostris*), rough-toothed dolphins (*Steno bredanensis*), pygmy killer whales (*Feresa attenuata*), melon headed whales (*Peponocephala electra*), Blainville's or dense beaked whales (*Mesoplodon densirostris*), and humpback whales (*Megaptera novaeangliae*)); and (3) collect photo-identification and behavioral information on small odontocetes in Hawaii waters (*i.e.*, those odontocete species listed above as well as bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*) and those species which are currently covered in the existing permit that are found in Hawaii waters (*i.e.*, short-finned pilot whales (*Globicephala macrorhynchus*), false killer whales (*Pseudorca crassidens*), Cuvier's beaked whales (*Ziphius cavirostris*), sperm whales (*Physeter macrocephalus*), Risso's dolphins (*Grampus griseus*), and killer whales (*Orcinus orca*)).

The primary goal of the proposed research on the subject species is to study their diving behavior using time-depth recorder data.

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