

periodic stock assessments. The next stock assessment is scheduled for late 2004. Annual landings also would be monitored to ensure quotas are not exceeded.

Bycatch Reporting Methodology

The Council is required by the Magnuson-Stevens Act to establish a standardized bycatch reporting methodology for Federal fisheries. Current regulations require commercial and recreational for-hire participants in the Gulf of Mexico reef fish fishery who are selected by the Southeast Science and Research Director (SRD) to maintain and submit a fishing record, including bycatch information, on forms provided by the SRD.

To enhance current bycatch reporting, Amendment 22 would provide for the establishment of a mandatory observer program for the reef fish fishery. NMFS would develop a procedure for the random selection of vessels for which a Federal commercial vessel permit or charter vessel/headboat permit for Gulf of Mexico reef fish has been issued. A vessel selected by NMFS would be required to carry a NMFS-approved observer. The owner or operator of a vessel selected for observer coverage would be required to provide food and accommodations for the observer and provide the observer access to the vessel's equipment, personnel, and physical space sufficient to carry out the observer's duties. The costs associated with observer coverage, other than food and accommodations, would be borne by NMFS. In selecting vessels, NMFS would consider the suitability of the vessel for observer coverage and would ensure that the universe of vessels included is representative of all statistical sub-zones in the Gulf of Mexico. Vessel permits would not be renewed for vessels that fail or refuse to carry observers in accordance with this process. NMFS would initiate full implementation of the observer program as soon as sufficient funding for the program is obtained.

In addition, to further improve bycatch reporting for the headboat sector of the Gulf of Mexico reef fish fishery, NMFS's Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistical Survey (MRFSS) would be enhanced by including headboats, using the same sampling methodology as is currently used for charter vessels. The existing MRFSS catch-and-effort program would be continued to collect bycatch information from the private recreational sector of the fishery.

A proposed rule that would implement measures outlined in Amendment 22 has been prepared. In

accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Act, NMFS is evaluating the proposed rule to determine whether it is consistent with Amendment 22, the FMP, the Magnuson-Stevens Act, and other applicable law. If that determination is affirmative, NMFS will publish the proposed rule in the **Federal Register** for public review and comment.

Written comments received by October 4, 2004, whether specifically directed to the FMP or the proposed rule, will be considered by NMFS in its decision to approve, disapprove, or partially approve Amendment 22. Comments received after that date will not be considered by NMFS in this decision. Written comments received by NMFS on Amendment 22 or the proposed rule during their respective comment periods will be addressed in the final rule.

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

Dated: July 27, 2004.

Alan D. Risenhoover,
Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.
[FR Doc. 04-17666 Filed 8-2-04; 8:45 am]
BILLING CODE 3510-22-S

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 071904A]

Caribbean Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

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

ACTION: Notice of Public Meetings.

SUMMARY: The Caribbean Fishery Management Council (Council) and its Administrative Committee will hold meetings.

DATES: The meetings will be held on August 17-18, 2004. The Council will convene on Tuesday, August 17, 2004, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and the Administrative Committee will meet from 5:15 p.m. to 6:15 p.m. The Council will reconvene on Wednesday, August 18, 2004, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., approximately.

ADDRESSES: The meetings will be held at The Buccaneer Hotel, Estate Shoys, Christinastad, St. Croix, USVI 00824.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Caribbean Fishery Management Council, 268 Munoz Rivera Avenue, Suite 1108, San Juan, Puerto Rico 00918-1920; telephone: (787) 766-5926.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Council will hold its 116th regular public meeting to discuss the items contained in the following agenda:

August 17, 2004

9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Call to Order

Election of Officials

Adoption of Agenda

Consideration of 115th Council Meeting Verbatim Minutes

Executive Director's Report

Presentations

NOAA/National Ocean Service (NOS) Biogeography Program—Mark Monaco
Trap Studies Update—Ron Hill
Limited Entry Project—Bob Trumble
Update on Socio-Economic Survey of PR and USVI Fishers—Manuel Valdes-Pizzini

Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)—

Brock Bernstein

NOAA Fisheries Recreational

Strategic Plan—Michael Kelly

East End Marine Park, St. Croix,

USVI—Susan Curtis

Coral Reefs Studies Update—Jorge R. Garcia-Sais

Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) Update—

Graciela Garcia-Moliner

Sustainable Fisheries Act (SFA)

Document en Emergency Action—Grammanik Bank

5:15 p.m. – 6:15 p.m.

Administrative Committee Meeting

Advisory Panel (AP)/Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC)/Habitat Advisory Panel (HAP) Membership Budget: 2002, 2003, 2004-05
Pending Travel and Contracts
Other Business

August 18, 2004

9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Continuation of Discussion on SFA Document and Emergency Action—Grammanik Bank

Enforcement Report

Puerto Rico

U.S. Virgin Islands

NOAA

U.S. Coast Guard

Administrative Committee Recommendations

August 17, 2004

Meetings Attended by Council Members and Staff

Other Business

Next Council Meeting

The meetings are open to the public, and will be conducted in English.

Fishers and other interested persons are invited to attend and participate with oral or written statements regarding agenda issues.

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

These meetings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. For more information or request for sign language interpretation and/or other auxiliary aids, please contact Mr. Miguel A. Rolon, Executive Director, Caribbean Fishery Management Council (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**) at least 5 days prior to the meeting date.

Dated: July 29, 2004.

Alan D. Risenhoover,

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

[FR Doc. E4-1719 Filed 8-2-04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6717-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Public Comment for Enhancement of the Initial Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS)

AGENCY: National Ocean Service, NOAA, Department of Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of opportunity for written public comment.

SUMMARY: This notice announces the opportunity for public comment on the planning process and plans for developing the U.S. Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS). IOOS is the U.S. contribution to the Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS) and the Global Earth Observing System of Systems (GEOSS).

DATES: A conference to complete a phased implementation plan for the IOOS has been scheduled for August 31 through September 1, 2004. Due to limited space, attendance is by invitation only. However, the public is invited to comment in writing on design plans and priorities for IOOS development. Planning documents that

the conference will build on can be found at <http://www.ocean.us/documents/componentsIOOS.jsp>. Comments must be submitted by close of business on August 20, 2004 (w.fields@ocean.us, or Ms. Windy Fields, Ocean.US, 2300 Clarendon Blvd, Suite 1350, Arlington, VA 22201).

ADDRESSES: The meeting location is undisclosed.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For information regarding this notice, please contact Ms. Windy Fields, Ocean.US Telephone: (703) 588-0853. E-mail: w.fields@ocean.us.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: See <http://www.ocean.us>.

Dated: July 29, 2004

Mary Leach,

Chief Financial Officer, Ocean Services and Coastal Management, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

[FR Doc. 04-17645 Filed 8-2-04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-JE-M

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 072904A]

Marine Mammals; File No. 369-1757

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

ACTION: Receipt of application.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that Bruce R. Mate, Ph.D., Hatfield Marine Science Center, Oregon State University, Newport, OR 97365, has applied in due form for a permit to take large whales, and other non-endangered species for purposes of scientific research.

DATES: Written, telefaxed, or e-mail comments must be received on or before September 2, 2004.

ADDRESSES: The application and related documents are available for review upon written request or by appointment: (See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**).

Written comments or requests for a public hearing on this application should be mailed to the Chief, Permits, Conservation and Education Division, F/PR1, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13705, 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.

Comments may also be submitted by facsimile at (301)713-0376, provided

the facsimile is confirmed by hard copy submitted by mail and postmarked no later than the closing date of the comment period.

Comments may also be submitted by e-mail. The mailbox address for providing email comments is NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov. Include in the subject line of the e-mail comment the following document identifier: File No. 369-1757.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Ruth Johnson or Carrie Hubard, (301)713-2289.

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 permit to conduct the following activities:

(1) Tag 200 each of humpback whales (*Megaptera novaeangliae*), blue whales (*Balaenoptera musculus*), fin whales (*Balaenoptera physalus*), gray whales (*Eschrichtius robustus*), North Atlantic right whales (*Eubalaena glacialis*), southern right whales (*Eubalaena australis*), bowhead whales (*Balaena mysticetus*), sperm whales (*Physeter catodon*) and 60 North Pacific right whales (*Eubalaena japonica*) in U.S. and foreign waters of the North Atlantic (including Gulf of Mexico), North Pacific (including Hawaii), Arctic and Indian Oceans, Beaufort, Bering and Chukchi Seas, and international waters of the Mediterranean Sea over a 5-year period. No more than 50 of each whale species will be tagged in a single year. Up to 200 of each species would be incidentally harassed annually. Satellite-monitored radio tags, GPS-linked satellite tags and acoustic tags will be deployed to monitor the movements and diving behavior of these species. The objectives of the proposed research are to: (a) identify migration routes; (b) identify specific feeding and breeding grounds for each species, if unknown; (c) characterize local movements and dive habits in both feeding and breeding grounds, and during migration; (d) examine the relationships between movements/dive habits and prey distribution, time of day, geographic location, or physical and biological oceanographic conditions; (e) provide surfacing-rate information that can be useful in the