

(n = 350). Captured animals would be restrained (chemical or physical); weighed and measured; have biological samples collected (blood, milk (lactating females), blubber, muscle, skin, muscle, hair, mucus membrane swabs, stomach lavage, tooth and vibrissae); be administered deuterated water; have measurement of blubber via ultrasound; be marked with flipper identification tags; and have internal (PIT tags) or external scientific instruments attached. Tissue samples would be collected from subsistence harvested animals and other mortalities and some samples would be exported to Canada for analysis. The applicant requests authorization for incidental research-related mortalities (4 per year, not to exceed 10 over five years) and permission to humanely euthanize animals seriously injured during research (2 per year, not to exceed 5 over five years). The applicant also requests incidental harassment (5 per year) and accidental mortality (3 per year) of harbor porpoises (*Phocoena phocoena*) during seal capture activities.

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

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: July 22, 2011.

P. Michael Payne,

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

[FR Doc. 2011-19259 Filed 7-28-11; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XA606

Second Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement Related to Two Joint State and Tribal Resource Management Plans for Puget Sound Hatchery Programs and Reopening of Comment Period

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

ACTION: Notice of intent; request for comments.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), this notice announces that NMFS intends to obtain additional information necessary to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for two hatchery Resource Management Plans and appended Hatchery and Genetic Management Plans (HGMPs) jointly proposed by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Puget Sound Treaty Tribes (referred to as the co-managers) for NMFS's evaluation and determination under the Endangered Species Act for threatened salmon. The previous notice of intent to prepare an EIS was published on May 12, 2004. NMFS is now reopening the comment period for 30 days.

NMFS provides this notice to remind other agencies and the public of its plans to analyze effects related to the action, and obtain information that may not have been available in 2004 pertinent to the scope of issues to include in the EIS.

DATES: Written or electronic comments from all interested parties are encouraged and must be received no later than 5 p.m. Pacific Daylight Time August 29, 2011.

ADDRESSES: All comments concerning the preparation of the EIS and NEPA process should be addressed to Steve Leider, NMFS, 510 Desmond Drive, SE., Suite 103, Lacey, WA 98503; facsimile (360) 753-9517. Comments may be submitted by e-mail to the following address: PShatcheryEIS.nwr@noaa.gov with a subject line containing the document identifier "Puget Sound Hatcheries EIS Second Comment Period."

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Steve Leider, NMFS, by phone at (360) 753-4650. In addition, further information regarding this project, including the co-managers' Resource Management Plans and associated HGMPs may be found at <http://www.nwr.noaa.gov/Salmon-Harvest-Hatcheries/Hatcheries/Puget-Sound-Hatchery.cfm>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Listed Species in This Notice

The following species and Evolutionarily Significant Units (ESUs) and Distinct Population Segments (DPSs) under NMFS jurisdiction would potentially be affected by the proposed action:

Puget Sound Chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*).

Hood Canal summer-run chum salmon (*O. keta*).

Stellar sea lion (*Eumetopias jubatus*).

Species listed since 2004:

Puget Sound steelhead (*O. mykiss*).

Southern Resident killer whale (*Orcinus orca*).

Puget Sound/Georgia Basin bocaccio (*Sebastes paucispinis*).

Puget Sound/Georgia Basin yelloweye rockfish (*S. ruberrimus*).

Puget Sound/Georgia Basin canary rockfish (*S. pinniger*).

Green sturgeon (*Acipenser medirostris*).

Eulachon (*Thaleichthys pacificus*).

Listed species regulated by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service that may be affected by the proposed action include bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*), brown pelicans (*Pelecanus occidentalis*), marbled murrelet (*Brachyramphus marmoratus marmoratus*), and Northern spotted owls (*Strix occidentalis caurina*).

Background

On May 14, 2004 (69 FR 26363), NMFS announced its intent to prepare an EIS pursuant to NEPA (42 U.S.C. *et seq.*), and to conduct public scoping meetings related to the action. A 60-day public comment period was opened from May 12, 2004 to July 12, 2004, and public scoping meetings were held at four locations in June, 2004, including Mount Vernon, Seattle, Belfair, and Port Hadlock, WA. NMFS sought public input on the scope of the required NEPA analyses at that time, in addition to seeking comment for a range of reasonable alternatives and impacts to resources. Since the 2004 scoping period, NMFS has begun its analyses on the action, but due in part to the elapsed time since the first notice, NMFS is reopening the comment period on the EIS to ask the public for input on possible new information related to this action.

NEPA requires Federal agencies to conduct environmental analysis of the proposed actions to determine if the actions may affect the human environment. The co-managers' Resource Management Plans are the proposed framework through which they would jointly manage hatchery programs in Puget Sound, rearing steelhead and Chinook, coho, pink, sockeye, and chum salmon while meeting conservation requirements specified under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). NMFS's action of evaluating the co-managers Resource Management Plans for ESA compliance is a major Federal action subject to environmental review under NEPA. Therefore, NMFS is seeking additional public input on the

scope of the required NEPA analysis, including reasonable alternatives and the associated impacts of any alternatives.

The co-managers have jointly submitted to NMFS two Resource Management Plans for hatcheries in Puget Sound. One plan describes hatchery programs that produce Chinook salmon. The other plan describes hatchery programs producing other anadromous salmonid species. Appended to the overarching Resource Management Plans are individual HGMPs for each hatchery program. The HGMPs describe each hatchery program, including measures proposed by the co-managers to minimize risks of adversely affecting listed fish. Both plans consider potential effects on Puget Sound Chinook and steelhead, and Hood Canal summer-run chum. NMFS listed as threatened the two salmon species in March 1999 (64 FR 14308) and steelhead in May 2007 (72 FR 26722).

NMFS will perform an environmental review of the Resource Management Plans and prepare an EIS. From the 2004 internal and public scoping process, the EIS will consider potential impacts on listed and non-listed species and their habitats, water quality and quantity, wildlife and marine mammals, socioeconomics, tourism and recreation, environmental justice, cultural resources, human health, and cumulative impacts.

NMFS is rigorously exploring and objectively evaluating a full range of reasonable alternatives in the EIS, including the proposed action (evaluation of the co-managers' Resource Management Plans) and a no action alternative. Additional alternatives resulting from the 2004 internal and public scoping processes include the following: (1) A decrease in artificial production in selected programs that have a primary goal of augmenting fisheries, and (2) an increase in artificial production in selected programs that have a primary goal of augmenting fisheries, where additional hatchery capacity exists.

Request for Comments

Specific comments and suggestions are invited from all interested parties to ensure that the EIS considers the full range of issues and alternatives related to the proposed action. In particular, NMFS requests information that may have become available since 2004 that relates to: other possible alternatives; the direct, indirect, and cumulative impact that implementation of the proposed Resource Management Plans could have on endangered and threatened species and their

communities and habitats; potential adaptive management and/or monitoring provisions; funding issues; baseline environmental conditions in Clallam, Island, King, Kitsap, Jefferson, Mason, Pierce, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, Thurston, and Whatcom Counties; other plans or projects that might be relevant to this proposed action; and potential methods to minimize and mitigate for impacts.

Written comments concerning the proposed action and the environmental review should be directed to NMFS as described above (see **ADDRESSES**). All comments and materials received, including names and addresses, will become part of the administrative record and may be released to the public. The environmental review of this project will be conducted in accordance with the requirements of the NEPA of 1969 as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*) National Environmental Policy Act Regulations (40 CFR parts 1500–1508), other appropriate Federal laws and regulations, and policies and procedures of NMFS for compliance with those regulations.

Dated: July 26, 2011.

Therese Conant,

*Acting Chief, Endangered Species Division,
Office of Protective Resources, National
Marine Fisheries Service.*

[FR Doc. 2011–19262 Filed 7–28–11; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–22–P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648–XA608

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council); Public Meetings

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

ACTION: Notice of public meetings.

SUMMARY: The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council will convene a public meeting.

DATES: The meeting will be held August 15–19, 2011.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, 6121 North IH–35, Austin, TX 78752; *telephone:* (512) 323–5466.

Council address: Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, 2203 North Lois Avenue, Suite 1100, Tampa, FL 33607.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Stephen Bortone, Executive Director,

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council; *telephone:* (813) 348–1630.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Council

Thursday, August 18, 2011

9 a.m.—The Council meeting will begin with a Call to Order and Introductions.

9:10 a.m.–9:25 a.m.—The Council will have an Investiture Ceremony for New Members.

9:25 a.m. to–9:30 a.m.—The Council will review the agenda and approve the minutes.

9:30 a.m.–9:45 a.m.—The Council will receive a presentation titled “Fisheries 101”.

9:45 a.m.–11:30 a.m.—The Council will review and discuss reports from the committee meetings as follows: Outreach and Education; Advisory Panel Selection; Joint Mackerel, Reef Fish and Red Drum; Artificial Reef; Data Collection; Budget/Personnel; and Administrative Policy.

12:30 p.m.–4:30 p.m.—The Council will receive public testimony on exempted fishing permits (EFPs), if any; Final Actions on Reef Fish Amendment 32, the Generic Annual Catch Limits/Accountability Measures Amendment and Joint Amendment 18 to the Coastal Migratory Pelagics Fishery Management Plan; Action 4 to the Comprehensive Ecosystem-Based Amendment 2; and a regulatory amendment to set total allowable catch and bag limits for red grouper; the Council will also hold an open public comment period regarding any other fishery issues of concern. People wishing to speak before the Council should complete a public comment card prior to the comment period.

4:30 p.m.–4:45 p.m.—The Council will review and discuss the Mackerel Committee Report.

Friday, August 19, 2011

8:30 a.m.–12 p.m.—The Council will review and discuss reports from the committee meetings as follows: Sustainable Fisheries/Ecosystem and Reef Fish.

12 p.m.–12:15 p.m.—Other Business items will follow.

12:15 p.m. to 12:30 p.m.—The Council will conduct their election of the new Chair and Vice Chair.

The Council will conclude its meeting at approximately 12:45 p.m.

Committees

Monday, August 15, 2011

9 a.m.–12 p.m.—New Council Member Orientation.