

will consist of a series of workshops and webinars: Stock ID Work Group Meeting; Data Workshop; Assessment Workshop and Webinars; and a Review Workshop. See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**.

DATES: The SEDAR 50 Assessment Workshop will be held on May 23–25, 2017, from 8:30 a.m. until 6 p.m. and May 26, 2017, from 8:30 a.m. until 1 p.m. The established times may be adjusted as necessary to accommodate the timeline completion of discussion relevant to the assessment process. Such adjustments may result in the meeting be extended from, or completed prior to the time established by this notice. Additional Assessment Webinars and the Review Workshop dates and times will publish in a subsequent issue in the **Federal Register**.

ADDRESSES:

Meeting address: The SEDAR 50 Assessment Workshop will be held at the Doubletree by Hilton Atlantic Beach Oceanfront Hotel, 2712 West Fort Macon Road, Atlantic Beach, NC 28512; phone: (252) 240–1155.

SEDAR address: South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, 4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201, N. Charleston, SC 29405; www.sedarweb.org.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Julia Byrd, SEDAR Coordinator, 4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201, North Charleston, SC 29405; phone: (843) 571–4366; email: julia.byrd@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/or webinars; and (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, Highly Migratory Species 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 non-governmental organizations (NGOs); international experts; and staff of Councils, Commissions, and state and federal agencies.

The items of discussion at the Assessment Workshop are as follows:

1. Participants will use datasets provided by the Data Workshop to develop population models to evaluate stock status, estimate population benchmarks and Sustainable Fisheries Act criteria, and project future conditions, as specified in the Terms of Reference.

2. Participants will recommend the most appropriate methods and configurations for determining stock status and estimating population parameters.

3. Participants will prepare a workshop report, compare and contrast various assessment approaches, and determine whether the assessments are adequate for submission to the review panel.

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 intent to take final action to address the emergency.

Special Accommodations

This meeting is accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for auxiliary aids should be directed to the SAFMC office (see **ADDRESSES**) at least 10 business days prior to the meeting.

Note: The times and sequence specified in this agenda are subject to change.

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

Dated: May 3, 2017.

Tracey L. Thompson,

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

[FR Doc. 2017–09222 Filed 5–5–17; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648–XF379

Magnuson-Stevens Act Provisions; General Provisions for Domestic Fisheries; Application for Exempted Fishing Permits

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

ACTION: Notice; request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Assistant Regional Administrator for Sustainable Fisheries, Greater Atlantic Region, NMFS, has made a preliminary determination that an Exempted Fishing Permit application from the University of Rhode Island to conduct flatfish bycatch reduction in the limited access general category scallop fishery contains all of the required information and warrants further consideration.

Regulations under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act require publication of this notice intended to provide interested parties the opportunity to comment on applications for proposed Exempted Fishing Permits.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before May 23, 2017.

ADDRESSES: You may submit written comments by any of the following methods:

- *Email:* nmfs.gar.efp@noaa.gov. Include in the subject line “URI Gear Research EFP.”
- *Mail:* John K. Bullard, Regional Administrator, NMFS, Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office, 55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930. Mark the outside of the envelope “Comments on URI Gear Research EFP.”

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Shannah Jaburek, Fisheries Management Specialist, 978–282–8456.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The University of Rhode Island submitted a complete application for an EFP on February 23, 2017, in support of research associated with a 2016 Bycatch Reduction Engineering Program grant titled “The Flatfish Deflector Bar: Excluding Flatfish from Scallop Dredges

in the Northeast.” The project would test a V-shaped bar with drop chains (V bar will refer to the entire apparatus consisting of bar and chains) attached to the dredge wire to reduce flatfish bycatch while maintaining the catch of sea scallops. The vessels would be temporarily exempt from possession limits and minimum size requirements specified in 50 CFR part 648, subsections B and D through O, for sampling purposes only, and from the scallop observer program requirements at 648.11(g). URI has contracted East West Technical Services (an observer and at-sea monitor service provider) to conduct the at-sea data collection component of this project. All trips would be conducted on LAGC IFQ vessels, and all landed scallop catch would count against the vessels yearly IFQ allocation. Any fishing activity conducted outside of normal fishing operations as allowed under Northeast fishery regulations, 50 CFR part 648, and outside the scope of the exempted fishing activity would be prohibited, including landing fish in excess of a possession limit or below the minimum size.

Six vessels would conduct scallop dredging beginning in June 2017 and continue through April 2018, on approximately 40 trips lasting approximately one day-at-sea (DAS). Within the 40 DAS there would be two pilot DAS in advance of the research DAS to test the design and make any necessary changes, as well as two DAS exclusively for underwater video collection to film fish behavior in relation to the gear. All research trips would complete approximately seven tows per day for a duration of 50 minutes at a standard tow speed between 3.8 to 4.5 knots (or averaging 4.2 knots). Trips would take place in the Southern New England Scallop Dredge Exemption Area where part of the LAGC fleet normally operates.

All tows would be conducted with a single dredge ranging in width from 8 to 10.5 feet (2.4 to 3.2 m) following an alternate paired tow strategy where a pair consists of one control and one experimental tow. Researchers would attach the V bar to the tow cable and anchor the sides to the outer dredge frame with chain and shackles at all connection points for the experimental tows. The V bar will be removed for the control tows. Chains will hang vertically from the V bar to the ocean floor. The chains will be spaced at intervals meant to restrict flatfish from swimming between them. The spacing set up will be determined during the pilot days. Researchers expect that the chains will create a dust cloud designed to keep the

flatfish moving away from the center of the bar towards the sides and out of the dredge path.

Researchers would weigh all scallop catch from both dredges. Samplers would record total weight of bycatch species to the nearest tenth of a pound and individual length measurements to the nearest centimeter. If the volume of the catch is large, samplers would employ subsampling protocols. All bycatch would be returned to the sea as soon as practicable following data collection. Exemption from possession limit and minimum sizes would ensure the vessel is not in conflict with possession regulations while collecting catch data. All catch above possession limits or below minimum sizes would be discarded as soon as practicable following data collection. Exemption from the sea scallop observer program requirements would allow researchers flexibility for catch sampling timing and onboard space accommodations since vessels in the LAGC fleet are typically smaller with limited deck space. We have consulted with the Northeast Fishery Observer Program on the potential exemption. The observer program requirement exemption for this project would not prevent us from achieving observer coverage levels needed in the LAGC scallop fishery.

All research trips would otherwise be conducted in a manner consistent with normal commercial fishing conditions and catch consistent with the LAGC daily possession limit would be retained for sale.

If approved, the applicant may request minor modifications and extensions to the EFP throughout the year. EFP modifications and extensions may be granted without further notice if they are deemed essential to facilitate completion of the proposed research and have minimal impacts that do not change the scope or impact of the initially approved EFP request. Any fishing activity conducted outside the scope of the exempted fishing activity would be prohibited.

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

Dated: May 3, 2017.

Karen H. Abrams,

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

[FR Doc. 2017-09277 Filed 5-5-17; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XF399

Marine Mammals; File No. 21170

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

ACTION: Notice; receipt of application.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that Keith Ellenbogen, Keith Ellenbogen Photography, 795 Carroll St., Brooklyn, NY 11215, has applied in due form for a permit to conduct commercial or educational photography on marine mammals.

DATES: Written, telefaxed, or email comments must be received on or before June 7, 2017.

ADDRESSES: These documents are available upon written request or by appointment in the 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.

Written comments on this application should be submitted to the Chief, Permits and Conservation Division, at the address listed above. 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: Courtney Smith or Amy Hapeman, (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.*), and the regulations governing the taking and importing of marine mammals (50 CFR part 216).

The applicant proposes to film and photograph cetaceans and seals within the U.S. northeast Atlantic waters of the U.S., from the Gulf of Maine (including Cape Cod Bay and Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary) through the New York Bight (Montauk, NY to Cape May, NJ), including the Hudson Canyon. Up to 810 humpback whales (*Megaptera*