

exceed 2,250 lb (1,020.58 kg) for all trips combined.

Spiny Dogfish—whole fish would be retained for reproductive biology research. The spiny dogfish retained would not exceed 50 fish per month from each of the two stock areas (GOM, SNE/MA), or 1,200 fish total for all trips. The maximum weight on any trip would not exceed 390 lb (176.9 kg), and would not exceed 9,360 lb (4,245.62 kg) total for all trips.

Monkfish—whole fish would be retained for maturity and fecundity research. Monkfish retained would not exceed 10 fish per trip, or 120 fish total for all trips. The maximum weight on any trip would not exceed 100 lb (45.36 kg) total weight, and would not exceed 1,200 lb (544.31 kg) for all trips combined.

Cod—whole fish would be retained for tagging demonstrations and educational purposes. Cod to be retained would not exceed 15 fish per trip, or 60 cod for all trips. The maximum weight on any trip would not exceed 150 lb (68.04 kg) total weight, and would not exceed 600 lb (272.16 kg) for all trips combined.

Barndoor Skate—whole and, in some cases, live skates would be retained for age and growth research and species confirmation. The barndoor skates retained would not exceed 20 fish per 3-month period, or 80 skates total for all trips. The maximum weight on any trip would not exceed 75 lb (34.02 kg) total weight, and would not exceed 300 lb (136.08 kg) total for all trips combined.

Thorny Skate—whole and, in some cases, live skates would be retained for age and growth research and species confirmation. Thorny skates retained would not exceed 20 fish per 3-month period, or 80 skates total for all trips. The maximum weight on any trip would not exceed 75 lb (34.02 kg) whole weight, and would not exceed 300 lb (136.08 kg) total for all trips combined.

Black Sea Bass—whole fish would be retained for examination of seasonal and latitudinal patterns in energy allocation. This effort is in support of an ongoing study at the NEFSC to evaluate BIA to measure fish energy density and reproductive potential for stock assessment. Black sea bass retained would not exceed 75 fish per trip or 300 black sea bass total for all trips. The maximum weight on any trip would not exceed 250 lb (113.40 kg) total weight, and would not exceed 1,000 lb (453.59 kg) total for all trips combined.

Atlantic wolffish—whole fish would be retained for maturity, fecundity, and life history research. Atlantic wolffish retained would not exceed 30 fish per month or 360 fish total for all trips. The

maximum weight on any trip would not exceed 120 lb (54.4 kg) and would not exceed 3,000 lb (1,360.8 kg) total for all trips combined.

Cusk—whole fish would be retained for maturity, fecundity, and life history research. Cusk retained would not exceed 30 fish per month or 360 fish total for all trips. The maximum weight on any trip would not exceed 100 lb (45.4 kg) and would not exceed 2,300 lb (1,043.3 kg) total for all trips combined.

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 impact 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: April 3, 2012.

Emily H. Menashes,

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

[FR Doc. 2012-8374 Filed 4-5-12; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XB151

New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC); Public Meeting

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

ACTION: Notice of a public meeting.

SUMMARY: The New England Fishery Management Council (Council) will hold a 3-day meeting from Tuesday through Thursday, April 24–April 26, 2012, to consider actions affecting New England fisheries in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ).

DATES: The meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 24th, Wednesday, April 25th and Thursday, April 26th beginning at 9 a.m. on Tuesday, and 8:30 a.m. on Wednesday and Thursday.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Hilton Hotel, 20 Coogan Boulevard, Mystic, CT 06355-1900; telephone: (860) 572-0731; fax: (860) 572-0328.

Council address: New England Fishery Management Council, 50 Water

Street, Mill 2, Newburyport, MA 01950; telephone: (978) 465-0492.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Paul J. Howard, Executive Director, New England Fishery Management Council; telephone: (978) 465-0492.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Tuesday, April 24, 2012

Following introductions and any announcements, brief reports will be presented by the Council Chairman and Executive Director, NOAA Fisheries Regional Administrator (Northeast Region), Northeast Fisheries Science Center and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council liaisons, as well as NOAA General Counsel, representatives of the U.S. Coast Guard and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, and staff from the Vessel Monitoring Systems Operations and NOAA's Law Enforcement offices. During this period, the Council will receive an overview of activities related to the development of a Standard Bycatch Reporting Methodology amendment and the possible establishment of a joint Mid-Atlantic and New England Council Committee. That discussion will be followed by a review of any experimental fishery permit applications that have been made available since the January 2012 Council meeting.

Prior to a lunch break, the Council will discuss revising its list of management priorities for 2012 in the context of an Endangered Species Act listing for Atlantic sturgeon and the Council resources that may be required to address that issue.

Following a lunch break, the Council may revise its policies concerning procedures for advisory panel and plan development team operations. The Sea Scallop Committee will ask for approval of research priorities to be used in soliciting proposals funded through the NEFMC's sea scallop research set-aside program. During this report, the Northeast Fisheries Science Center will present information about future plans for the federal sea scallop survey, including the integration of Habcam (towed underwater camera) results with existing survey technologies. The Enforcement Committee will provide recommendations and ask for approval of comments related to: Amendment 5 to the Atlantic Herring Fishery Management Plan (FMP), NOAA's revised enforcement priorities, issues related to coral reef protection, sector landings monitoring and correspondence to the Secretary of Commerce requesting NOAA General Counsel/Northeast participation in

NEFMC Enforcement Committee meetings and the continuation of efforts to address the case backlog in New England. The day will conclude with a public listening session during which the Council will hold an informal question and answer session for stakeholders and the public. There also will be an opportunity for anyone to briefly comment on items relevant to Council business that is not otherwise listed on the agenda.

Wednesday, April 25, 2012

The second day of the meeting will begin with an overview of the status of Atlantic sturgeon and the implications of its Endangered Species Act listing for NEFMC fishery management plans, as well as other protected species-related updates. The Monkfish Committee will report next and summarize its discussions about potential remedies to the bycatch of Atlantic sturgeon in the monkfish fishery. There also will be an update on progress to develop Amendment 6 to the Monkfish FMP, an action that will include a catch share management alternative. Prior to a lunch break, representatives of the Northeast Fisheries Science Center will summarize the recent assessment and data updates to 13 Northeast groundfish stocks. The Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee will add to this information by reporting on its review of additional information relating to the status of Gulf of Maine cod. The committee also will provide recommendations for fishing year 2013 Acceptable Biological Catches for a number of stocks in the multispecies complex. The day will conclude with a report from the Groundfish Committee. That group will continue discussions about the management of Gulf of Maine cod, provide an update on the committee's efforts to develop a number of solutions and remedies concerning the sector management program and update the Council about other committee activities.

Thursday, February 2, 2012

The final day of the Council meeting will begin with a report from the Whiting Committee. It will review the recent public hearing comments and then approve final action on the management measures to be included in Amendment 19 to the Northeast Multispecies FMP. The action would establish annual catch limits and accountability measures for stocks of red hake, silver hake and offshore hake. The Habitat Committee will ask for approval of deep sea coral management alternatives to be analyzed further for potential inclusion in Essential Fish

Habitat (EFH) Omnibus 2. Following a lunch break, there will be a report on the Spiny Dogfish Fishery Management Plan during which the Council will be asked to approve a range of alternatives for inclusion in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Amendment 3 to the plan. The document will be the subject of public review and further decision-making by the Mid-Atlantic and New England Councils. The day will conclude with an update on the development of Draft Amendment 5 to the Herring FMP and its Draft Environmental Impact Statement including a review of comments received during the Amendment 5 public hearings held in March, 2012 and the Amendment 5 timeline and schedule for completion. The Council also may address any other outstanding business that related to this agenda.

Although other non-emergency issues not contained in this agenda may come before this Council for discussion, those issues may not be the subjects of formal action during the meeting. Council action will be restricted to those issues specifically listed in this notice and any issues arising after publication of this notice that require emergency action under section 305(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, provided that the public has been notified of the Council's intent to take final action to address the emergency.

Special Accommodations

The 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.

Dated: April 3, 2012.

William D. Chappell,

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

[FR Doc. 2012-8378 Filed 4-5-12; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XA905

Marine Mammals; File No. 16599

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

ACTION: Notice; issuance of permit.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that that a permit has been issued to Dorian Houser, Ph.D., National Marine

Mammal Foundation, 2240 Shelter Island Drive, #200, San Diego, CA 92106, to conduct scientific research on cetaceans stranded or in rehabilitation facilities in the U.S.

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

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Laura Morse or Amy Sloan (301)427-8401.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On January 18, 2012, notice was published in the **Federal Register** (77 FR 2512) that a request for a permit to conduct research on all species of stranded and rehabilitating cetaceans had been submitted by the above-named applicant. The requested permit has been issued 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 parts 222-226).

Researchers may take auditory evoked potential measurements with suction cup sensors or subcutaneous pin electrodes on up to 15 individuals of each species of cetacean. Research will occur in waters or on beaches in the U.S. and in rehabilitation facilities in the U.S. The permit is valid through April 1, 2017.

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.

Documents may be reviewed in the following locations:

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;

Northwest Region, NMFS, 7600 Sand Point Way NE., BIN C15700, Bldg. 1, Seattle, WA 98115-0700; phone (206) 526-6150; fax (206) 526-6426;

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

Southwest Region, NMFS, 501 West Ocean Blvd., Suite 4200, Long Beach, CA 90802-4213; phone (562) 980-4001; fax (562) 980-4018;