

fishery that account for herring's role as forage in the ecosystem (Amendment 8). They will also discuss possible cooperative research priorities for any research set-aside that may be allocated in 2016–18 during the Atlantic herring fishery specifications process and develop recommendations. The Panel plans to review/discuss a draft scoping document for an amendment to the Herring FMP to consider control rules for the Atlantic herring fishery that account for herring's role as forage in the ecosystem and develop recommendations; They will also review/discuss options under consideration in the NMFS-led omnibus Industry-Funded Monitoring Amendment to address observer coverage on Atlantic herring vessels and develop recommendations. The panel will discuss other business as necessary.

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 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 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 Thomas A. Nies, Executive Director, at (978) 465-0492, at least 5 days prior to the meeting date.

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

Dated: December 22, 2014.

Tracey L. Thompson,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XD663

Taking and Importing Marine Mammals; Taking Marine Mammals Incidental to Fisheries Research

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

ACTION: Notice; receipt of application for letter of authorization; request for comments and information.

SUMMARY: NMFS' Office of Protected Resources has received a request from the NMFS Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC) for authorization to take small numbers of marine mammals incidental to conducting fisheries research, over the course of five years from the date of issuance. Pursuant to regulations implementing the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), NMFS is announcing receipt of the NEFSC's request under section 101(a)(5)(A) of the MMPA for the development and implementation of regulations governing the incidental taking of marine mammals. NMFS invites the public to provide information, suggestions, and comments on the NEFSC's application and request.

DATES: Comments and information must be received no later than January 28, 2015.

ADDRESSES: Comments on the application should be addressed to Jolie Harrison, Chief, Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910-3225. The mailbox address for providing email comments is ITP.Cody@noaa.gov. You must include 0648-XD663 in the subject line. NMFS is not responsible for email comments sent to addresses other than the one provided here. Comments sent via email, including all attachments, must not exceed a 25-megabyte file size.

Instructions: All submitted comments are a part of the public record and NMFS will post them to <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/permits/incidental/research.htm> without change. All Personal Identifying Information (for example, name, address, etc.) voluntarily submitted by the commenter may be publicly accessible. Do not submit confidential business information or otherwise sensitive or protected information.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jeannine Cody, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, (301) 427-8401.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Availability

An electronic copy of the NEFSC's application may be obtained by visiting the Internet at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/permits/incidental/research.htm>. The NEFSC is concurrently releasing a draft Environmental Assessment, prepared pursuant to requirements of the

National Environmental Policy Act, for the conduct of their fisheries research. A copy of the draft EA, which would also support our proposed rulemaking under the MMPA, is also available at: <http://nefsc.noaa.gov/rcb/dpea/>.

Background

Section 101(a)(5)(A) of the MMPA (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*) directs the Secretary of Commerce (Secretary) to allow, upon request, the incidental, but not intentional, taking of small numbers of marine mammals by U.S. citizens who engage in a specified activity (other than commercial fishing) if certain findings are made and regulations are issued.

Incidental taking shall be allowed if NMFS finds that the taking will have a negligible impact on the species or stock(s) affected and will not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of the species or stock(s) for taking for subsistence uses, and if the permissible methods of taking and requirements pertaining to the mitigation, monitoring and reporting of such taking are set forth.

NMFS has defined "negligible impact" in 50 CFR 216.103 as "an impact resulting from the specified activity that cannot be reasonably expected to, and is not reasonably likely to, adversely affect the species or stock through effects on annual rates of recruitment or survival." Except with respect to certain activities not pertinent here, the MMPA defines "harassment" as: "Any act of pursuit, torment, or annoyance which (i) has the potential to injure a marine mammal or marine mammal stock in the wild [Level A harassment]; or (ii) has the potential to disturb a marine mammal or marine mammal stock in the wild by causing disruption of behavioral patterns, including, but not limited to, migration, breathing, nursing, breeding, feeding, or sheltering [Level B harassment]."

Summary of Request

On December 17, 2014, NMFS received an application from the NEFSC requesting authorization for take of marine mammals incidental to fisheries research conducted by the NEFSC. The requested regulations would be valid for five years from the date of issuance. The NEFSC plans to conduct fisheries research surveys in the Atlantic Ocean from the U.S.-Canada border to Florida. It is possible that marine mammals may interact with fishing gear (e.g., bottom and pelagic trawls, dredges, video cameras, long lines, and gillnets) used in NEFSC's fisheries research and cooperative research projects, resulting in injury, serious injury, or mortality. In addition, the NEFSC operates active

acoustic devices that have the potential to disturb marine mammals. Because the specified activities have the potential to take marine mammals present within these action areas, the NEFSC requests authorization to take multiple species of marine mammal that may occur in these areas.

Specified Activities

The Federal Government has a responsibility to conserve and protect living marine resources in U.S. federal waters and has also entered into a number of international agreements and treaties related to the management of living marine resources in international waters outside the United States. NOAA has the primary responsibility for managing marine fin and shellfish species and their habitats, with that responsibility delegated within NOAA to NMFS.

In order to direct and coordinate the collection of scientific information needed to make informed management decisions, Congress created six Regional Fisheries Science Centers, each a distinct organizational entity and the scientific focal point within NMFS for region-based federal fisheries-related research. This research is aimed at monitoring fish stock recruitment, abundance, survival and biological rates, geographic distribution of species and stocks, ecosystem process changes, and marine ecological research. The NEFSC is the research arm of NMFS in the Greater Atlantic Region. The NEFSC conducts research and provides scientific advice to manage fisheries and conserve protected species in two geographic research areas: Occurs in the Northeast U.S. Continental Shelf LME but also occurs in the Southeast U.S.

Continental Shelf LME and Adjacent Offshore Areas

Research is aimed at monitoring fish stock recruitment, survival and biological rates, abundance and geographic distribution of species and stocks, and providing other scientific information needed to improve our understanding of complex marine ecological processes. Primary research activities include: Bottom trawl surveys to support assessments of multiple groundfish and shrimp species as well as the status of benthic habitats, pelagic trawl surveys to assess Atlantic herring and Atlantic salmon stocks, dredge and video camera surveys to assess scallop stocks and habitat recovery, longline and gillnet surveys to research life history parameters and abundance of numerous shark species, and extensive cooperative research projects designed to address current or emerging

information needs of the commercial fishing industry such as bycatch reduction efforts and development of new fisheries. Many research activities also include active acoustic systems, plankton nets, and other oceanographic equipment that provide important data on the status and trends of marine ecosystems important for various fisheries and natural resource management processes. The NEFSC proposes to administer and conduct these survey programs over the five-year period. Several of these surveys also use active acoustic devices.

A more detailed description of the fisheries research conducted by the NEFSC may be found in their application, which is available at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/permits/incidental/research.htm>.

Information Sought

Interested persons may submit information, suggestions, and comments concerning the NEFSC's request (see **ADDRESSES**). NMFS will consider all information, suggestions, and comments related to the request during the development of proposed regulations governing the incidental taking of marine mammals by the NEFSC, if appropriate.

Dated: December 22, 2014.

Donna S. Wieting,

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

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COMMITTEE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF TEXTILE AGREEMENTS

Determination Under the Textile and Apparel Commercial Availability Provision of the Dominican Republic-Central America-United States Free Trade Agreement ("CAFTA-DR Agreement")

AGENCY: The Committee for the Implementation of Textile Agreements.

ACTION: Determination to add a product in unrestricted quantities to Annex 3.25 of the CAFTA-DR Agreement.

DATES: *Effective Date:* December 29, 2014.

SUMMARY: The Committee for the Implementation of Textile Agreements ("CITA") has determined that certain 100% polyester composite laminated fabric, as specified below, is not available in commercial quantities in a timely manner in the CAFTA-DR countries. The product will be added to

the list in Annex 3.25 of the CAFTA-DR Agreement in unrestricted quantities.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Laurie Mease, Office of Textiles and Apparel, U.S. Department of Commerce, (202) 482-2043.

For Further Information On-Line: <http://web.ita.doc.gov/tacgi/CaftaReqTrack.nsf> under "Approved Requests," Reference number: 194.2014.11.18.Fabric.ST&RforVFCorp

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Authority: The CAFTA-DR Agreement; Section 203(o)(4) of the Dominican Republic-Central America-United States Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act ("CAFTA-DR Implementation Act"), Public Law 109-53; the Statement of Administrative Action, accompanying the CAFTA-DR Implementation Act; and Presidential Proclamations 7987 (February 28, 2006) and 7996 (March 31, 2006).

Background

The CAFTA-DR Agreement provides a list in Annex 3.25 for fabrics, yarns, and fibers that the Parties to the CAFTA-DR Agreement have determined are not available in commercial quantities in a timely manner in the territory of any Party. The CAFTA-DR Agreement provides that this list may be modified pursuant to Article 3.25(4)-(5), when the President of the United States determines that a fabric, yarn, or fiber is not available in commercial quantities in a timely manner in the territory of any Party. See Annex 3.25 of the CAFTA-DR Agreement; see also section 203(o)(4)(C) of the CAFTA-DR Implementation Act.

The CAFTA-DR Implementation Act requires the President to establish procedures governing the submission of a request and providing opportunity for interested entities to submit comments and supporting evidence before a commercial availability determination is made. In Presidential Proclamations 7987 and 7996, the President delegated to CITA the authority under section 203(o)(4) of CAFTA-DR Implementation Act for modifying the Annex 3.25 list. Pursuant to this authority, on September 15, 2008, CITA published modified procedures it would follow in considering requests to modify the Annex 3.25 list of products determined to be not commercially available in the territory of any Party to CAFTA-DR (*Modifications to Procedures for Considering Requests Under the Commercial Availability Provision of the Dominican Republic-Central America-United States Free Trade Agreement*, 73 FR 53200) ("CITA's procedures").