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August 21, 2013

HIGHLIGHTS

EVENTS

August 22-24

Four **Sea Turtle Release Gear Workshops** in Georgia and South Carolina for snapper-grouper permitted vessels in the South Atlantic.

August 26 - September 12

Seven public hearings in six states (from New Jersey to Georgia) on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement amending the **Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan**.

August 28-29

Public meeting of the **Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council** in San Antonio, Texas.



NOAA's Enforcement Program Closes Illegal Fluke Case

NOAA's Office of Law Enforcement's investigation into Research Set-Aside Program violations led to a successful bust of a New York fisherman who falsified records to avoid reporting more than 86,000 pounds of fluke. In addition to ensuring compliance with sustainable catch levels, effective fisheries law enforcement benefits honest fishermen--once agents exposed the illegal catch and removed it from the market, the price per pound of legally caught fluke increased by nearly 60 percent.

Right Whale, Right Rule

While highly endangered North American right whales are protected from being hunted, fatal ship strikes continue to pose a threat to their survival. The Right Whale Ship Strike Reduction Rule requires large vessels to lower their speed in seasonal management areas. The rule is set to expire in December, but its success in reducing the risk of ship strikes prompted NOAA to propose making it permanent.

September 9-10

Two public hearings on **Proposed Loggerhead Critical Habitat** in Wilmington and Morehead City, North Carolina.

September 9-12

Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Advisory Panel meeting, open to the public.

September 10 and 18

Two **Protected Species Safe Handling, Release, and Identification Workshops** in South Carolina and Texas. All are free.

September 12

Free **Atlantic Shark Identification Workshop** in New Jersey. All are free.

ANNOUNCEMENTS**September 29**

Proposals due for FY 2013 **Saltonstall-Kennedy Grants**

October 7

Applications due for FY 2014 John H. Prescott **Marine Mammal Rescue Assistance Grants**.

FEDERAL REGISTER ACTIONS

Click here for a list of only those actions open for public comment. Scroll search for National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

For a list of all daily actions, check the Federal Register **online**.

Proposed Bluefin Tuna Amendment - Please Comment

By **October 23**, **submit your comments** on the proposed rule to implement Amendment 7 to the 2006 Consolidated Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Fishery Management Plan. The proposed rule includes a variety of management measures to ensure sustainable management of Atlantic bluefin tuna fisheries.

New Swordfish Rules Finalized

Based on the rebuilt status of the U.S. North Atlantic swordfish fishery, this final rule implementing Amendment 8 to the Highly Migratory Species Fishery Management Plan provides additional opportunities for U.S. fishermen to harvest swordfish using selective gears that help avoid bycatch.

Whale Shark Listing Not Warranted

NOAA Fisheries reviewed a petition to list the whale shark (*Rhincodon typus*) as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act and announced a 90-day finding that the petition did not present sufficient evidence to warrant listing.

Thunder Bay Expansion - Extended Comment Period

By **October 18** (formerly August 13), submit your comments on a proposed boundary expansion of Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary in Lake Huron.

Northeast**Proposed Rulemaking for American Lobster - Please Comment**

By **September 19**, submit your comments on an advance notice of proposed rulemaking regarding federal American lobster regulations. Proposed measures would reduce lobster exploitation by 10 percent and reduce trap fishing effort in the southern New England lobster management areas.

Southeast**Request for Info on Red Snapper**

NOAA Fisheries and partnering state agencies are looking for fishermen willing to help with data collection during the 2013 South Atlantic red snapper commercial and recreational seasons. These data, to be collected throughout the region using a variety of methods, will provide critical support for the 2014 red snapper population assessment.

Snapper-Grouper Amendment Correction - Extended Comment Period

By **October 3** (formerly September 3) submit your comments on a notice of intent to implement broadened management measures in Amendment 22 to the South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan. The original Federal Register notice (published August 2) contained an incorrect docket number.

Northwest

Funding Announced for Northwest Habitat Restoration

NOAA Fisheries announced \$3.7 million in funding for habitat restoration projects in Alaska, Oregon, and Washington to restore more than 1,800 acres of habitat benefitting threatened species including steelhead, Chinook, and coho salmon.

Sockeye Return to Washington's Yakima Basin

After the Yakima Basin watershed was dammed in the early 20th century, native sockeye could no longer return to their lakes upstream, and the population declined to extinction. In 2009, with support from NOAA Fisheries, the Yakima Nation implemented a program to reintroduce sockeye into the basin, and this year they witnessed the first returning sockeye in 100 years.

Alaska

Researchers Forecast Strong 2013 Pink Salmon Harvest

The Southeast Alaska Coastal Monitoring Project aims to understand the effects of climate and ocean conditions on year class strength of salmon and other related species. Since 2004, the project has employed a pre-season forecast model for pink salmon, and conditions suggest a strong pink salmon harvest in southeast Alaska this year.

New Cold Water Research Lab

The Hatfield Marine Science Center in Newport, Oregon, recently renovated its Cold Water Research Laboratory, which is specifically designed to accommodate Arctic species. A partnership with the facility will allow the Alaska Fisheries Science Center's Fisheries Behavioral Ecology Program, also based in Newport, to start conducting studies on growth and physiology of Arctic cod and Tanner crabs this year.

Can Juvenile Red and Blue King Crabs Coexist?

Red king crab and blue king crab are two commercially important, federally managed species in Alaska. The two are ecologically similar, and their ranges do not overlap much, indicating that competition leads to the exclusion of one or the other. Researchers at the Alaska Fisheries Science Center's

Kodiak Lab found that red king crab juveniles had a substantial advantage over blue king crab juveniles.

[NOAA Fisheries](#) | laurel.bryant@noaa.gov

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NOAA - Fisheries Service | 1315 East West Highway | Silver Spring | MD | 20910