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Subject: FishNews - July 2, 2014 - Council Appointments, Reducing Large Whale Entanglements, Endangered Species Act, Fisheries Financing Program, and More

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July 2, 2014

HIGHLIGHTS

EVENTS

July-October

Public town hall meetings on **NOAA Fisheries' National Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Policy**, held in conjunction with regional fishery management council meetings.

July-September

Three free **Atlantic Shark Identification Workshops** in Texas and Florida.

July-September

Six free **Protected Species Safe Handling, Release, and Identification Workshops** in Florida, Maryland, Massachusetts, South



2014 Regional Fishery Council Appointments

The U.S. Department of Commerce announced the appointment of 22 new and returning members to the eight regional fishery management councils that partner with NOAA Fisheries to manage the nation's ocean fisheries. Every year, about one-third of council members are appointed to 3-year terms.

New Measures to Reduce Large Whale Entanglements

NOAA Fisheries worked with a Large Atlantic Whale Take Reduction Team to develop measures aimed at reducing the risk of whale entanglements in fishing gear. New measures for New England, the Mid-Atlantic, and the Southeast regions reflect the team's recommendations as well as public feedback collected last summer.

Federal Agencies Finalize Implementation of ESA

Carolina, Texas, New Jersey.

July 15-17

Peer review of NOAA's Gulf of Maine Haddock and Sea Scallop stock assessments, open to the public, in Woods Hole, Massachusetts.

July 24

National Town Hall on National Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Policy in Silver Spring, Maryland.

July 29-31

Peer review of NOAA's Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Atka mackerel stock assessment, open to the public, in Seattle, Washington.

August 7

Public meeting prior to the 65th International Whaling Commission meeting in Silver Spring, Maryland.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

July 7

Nominations due for **U.S. Delegation** to the September 2014 **International Whaling Commission meeting**.

July 7

Nominations due for the **Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee**.

July 14

Letters of intent due for FY2014 federal funding opportunity **Understanding Climate**

NOAA Fisheries and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced a new policy clarifying the interpretation of the phrase "significant portion of its range" in the Endangered Species Act as it applies to decisions to list species as threatened or endangered. The policy will provide consistency in the application of the phrase.

Construction of New Replacement Fishing Vessels - Request for Comments

This week, NOAA Fisheries published an Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to begin the process for public comment on proposed modifications to the Fisheries Financing Program (FFP) to allow financing for new vessel construction under limited circumstances. Briefly, in response to increasing concern over the safety and environmental inefficiencies and an aging U.S. commercial fishing fleet, in fiscal year 2014 Appropriations, Congress increased the annual appropriation for the FFP and removed language prohibiting the use of its loans for the construction of any new fishing vessel that will increase the harvesting capacity in any United States fishery. Comments must be received on or before **July 30**.

Alaska

Bering Sea-Aleutian Islands Flatfish Rule - Open for Public Comment

By **July 30**, submit your comments on a proposed rule to implement Amendment 105 to the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area. The amendment would establish a process for Western Alaska Community Development Quota groups and cooperatives established under the Amendment 80 Program to exchange harvest quota among three flatfish species.

Proposed Steller Sea Lion Protection Measures - Open for Public Comment

By **August 15**, [submit your comments](#) on proposed measures designed to prevent the groundfish fisheries in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area from jeopardizing the western distinct population segment of Steller sea lions. These protection measures would disperse fishing effort to minimize competition for prey between the fishery and the sea lions.

Delisting of Humpback Whale Stock May Be Warranted

NOAA Fisheries found that a petition to designate the Central North Pacific stock of the endangered humpback whale as a distinct population segment and to delist that population segment under the Endangered Species Act presents sufficient evidence to prompt a status review for the species. [Please](#)

Impacts on Fish Stocks and Fisheries to Inform Sustainable Management.

July 14

Nominations due for 2014
Nancy Foster Habitat Conservation Award.

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](#).

[submit](#) pertinent scientific and commercial information by **July 28.**

Pacific Islands

Federal Fishery Managers Recommend New Annual Catch Limits, Other Measures

The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council concluded its June meeting with recommendations regarding annual catch limits and other management measures for federally managed species in Hawaii, American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the Pacific Remote Islands Areas.

Greater Atlantic

Changes in Forage Fish Affect Cod Distribution

A shift in the dominant prey species available to Atlantic cod in the Gulf of Maine led to a shift in cod distribution, a shift in fishing effort distribution, and, ultimately, to apparent conflicts between the 2011 assessment of the cod stock and the experiences of the fishing industry. As cod switched from preying on Atlantic herring to preying on sand lance, they concentrated their feeding in a small area on Stellwagen Bank where the sand lance burrow into the sand-and where fishermen could easily catch the cod in larger numbers.

Recent Whale Entanglement Underscores Need for Management Actions

Canadian authorities have launched a search for an entangled North Atlantic right whale, first spotted by a NOAA Fisheries aerial team over the weekend at a distance too far for U.S. ship-based disentanglement teams to respond. This entanglement reinforces the need for recently strengthened precautionary measures to reduce the risks to large whales posed by fishing operations.

Coastal Statistics Program Announces 2014 Projects

The Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program-a state-federal partnership for marine fisheries data collection and management-has awarded nearly \$2 million to its partners for new and ongoing projects to improve data collection for coastal fisheries in 2014.

Chesapeake Bay Managers Meet to Discuss Bay Science, Management

In June, state managers from around the Chesapeake Bay met for a 2-day series of presentations and discussion regarding striped bass, blue crabs, climate change, and plans for an upcoming workshop on forage fish.

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