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Subject: FishNews - July 30, 2014 - Gray Whale Calves, Fisheries Innovation Fund, State of the Climate Report, Public Comment for CITES Recommendations, and More

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July 30, 2014

EVENTS

July 31

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

August-September

Two free **Atlantic Shark Identification Workshops** in Florida.

August-September

Four free **Protected Species Safe Handling, Release, and Identification Workshops** in Massachusetts, South Carolina, Texas, New Jersey.

August-October

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

HIGHLIGHTS



Podcast: Gray Whale Calves Born in Big Numbers

NOAA Fisheries scientists keep track of how many gray whale calves are born each winter, and it looks like this year was a banner year for calf production. Learn more in this interview with NOAA biologist Wayne Perryman in the latest episode of NOAA Fisheries' podcast series, [On the Line](#).

New Funding Supports Innovation in U.S. Fisheries

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation announced the fourth round of grant awards from its Fisheries Innovation Fund, a program funded by NOAA Fisheries and partners. This year, 12 projects will receive \$1.23 million, which will be matched by more than \$1.39 million from the grantees.

State of the Climate in 2013 Reflects a Warming Planet

A new report, *State of the Climate in 2013*, released by the American Meteorological Society, found that the vast majority of

August 4-19

Eight public hearings on **Reef Fish Amendment 40 - Sector Separation** hosted by the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council across the Gulf states.

August 7

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

August 11-14

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council meeting in Washington, DC.

August 12-13

Caribbean Fishery Management Council meeting in Puerto Rico.

August 16-23

Eight **Sea Turtle Release Gear Workshops** for Snapper-Grouper and Reef Fish Permitted Vessels in the South Atlantic, held in Florida.

August 25-29

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council Meeting in Biloxi, Mississippi.

ANNOUNCEMENTS**July 31**

Extended deadline for nominations for 2014

Nancy Foster Habitat Conservation Award.

August 7

Deadline for recently modified **Federally Permitted Seafood Dealer Reporting Requirements.**

September 19

Proposals due for **Natural Resources Damages Program projects** related to the Nyanza Superfund site in Massachusetts.

worldwide climate indicators continued to reflect trends of a warming planet. Scientists from NOAA's National Climatic Data Center in North Carolina served as the lead editors for the report, to which 425 scientists from 57 countries contributed.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Requests Comments on CITES Recommendations

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service invites the public to provide information and recommendations on animal and plant species the United States should consider proposing to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) of Wild Fauna and Flora.

Alaska**Study on Unseen Crab Mortality Wins Award**

NOAA researchers and partners devised a way to estimate the unobserved mortality of crabs injured by Alaskan groundfish trawls, and their research led to improvements in trawl design that have substantially reduced crab mortality. The study recently won a Best Paper award in *Fishery Bulletin*.

Alaska Fisheries at Risk from Ocean Acidification

New NOAA-led research finds that ocean acidification is driving changes in waters vital to Alaska's valuable commercial fisheries and subsistence way of life. Fisheries in southeast and southwest Alaska are expected to be most affected by acidification, and the communities that rely on them are more vulnerable.

West Coast**Invasive Species Interactions with Salmon**

NOAA researchers are investigating the impacts of non-native fish and invasive native species on the recovery of Pacific Northwest salmon and other native species.

Reproductive Success of Hatchery Fish

More than 5 billion juvenile hatchery salmon are released into the North Pacific Ocean each year and many returning adults spawn in the wild, often with wild fish. However, these hatchery-reared fish have on average only half the reproductive success of wild-born fish. A new study finds this to be the case across systems.

Sockeye Salmon on the Road to Recovery

Columbia River sockeye salmon have once again broken records by returning past Bonneville Dam in numbers not seen since the dam was completed in 1938. Scientists attribute the increase to favorable ocean conditions and improved fish passage.

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](#).

Endangered Snake River sockeye salmon (see story below), a small subset of the Columbia River sockeye nearly extirpated in the 1990s, show the third strongest return since 1975.

Snake River Sockeye Salmon Recovery Plan - Open for Public Comment

By **September 19**, submit your comments on the proposed Endangered Species Act (ESA) Recovery Plan for Snake River sockeye salmon. The plan contains delisting criteria, needed management actions, and time and cost estimates for implementing the recovery actions.

Recovery Plan for Central Valley Salmon and Steelhead

The recovery plan for endangered or threatened salmon and steelhead populations in California's Central Valley provides a road map for prioritizing steps in an otherwise daunting recovery effort. Key actions include providing fish-friendly water flows and temperatures, reconnecting rivers to floodplains, and developing species reintroduction plans.

Pacific Islands

Revised Fishing Effort Limits in Purse Seine Fisheries - Open for Public Comment

By **August 25**, submit your comments on proposed revisions to the 2014 limit on fishing effort by U.S. purse seine vessels. The revision is necessary for the United States to satisfy the obligations of the Convention on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean.

Northern Mariana Islands Marine Conservation Plan

NOAA Fisheries announces the approval of a marine conservation plan for the Northern Mariana Islands.

Insular Fish Research in Guam Waters

Scientists aboard NOAA Ship *Oscar Elton Sette* are at sea this month collecting data in Guam's nearshore and offshore waters. Scientists will sample deep-slope bottomfish species and conduct shallow-water diver surveys of coral reefs. The sampling will support ongoing research efforts of NOAA Fisheries and several partnering Pacific Islands universities.

Southeast

Asian Tiger Shrimp Invade Southeast U.S. Waters

Asian tiger shrimp (*Penaeus monodon*) have been detected in U.S. waters since 1988, but their numbers have been on the rise in recent years. Voracious predators, Asian tiger shrimp can grow up to 12 inches long and weigh nearly a pound. Researchers from

NOAA and the U.S. Geological Survey are trying to learn more about this invader and how it arrived.

Hauling Up Illegal Lobster Traps in the Florida Keys

A NOAA team is removing 300 illegal lobster traps from the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary this summer. Called "casitas," because they act like little gathering places for lobsters, the removal is part of a criminal case against a commercial diver who poached spiny lobsters out of the sanctuary for years.

Greater Atlantic

Restoring Sturgeon to the Connecticut River

Dams pose significant challenges for the anadromous shortnose and Atlantic sturgeon that historically inhabited the Connecticut River. As NOAA Fisheries and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service consult on hydroelectric relicensing projects, the federal agencies have the opportunity to minimize the dams' impacts on migrating sturgeon.

When Restoring Habitat Requires Restoring Fish

Fishery managers are required to define Essential Fish Habitat for all federally managed species, and that habitat includes managed species' prey. NOAA Fisheries is working to restore the populations of alewives and blueback herring (together, "river herring") that are part of the essential fish habitat of New England groundfish fisheries.

River Herring Survey Kicks Off in August

Alewives and blueback herring are important food sources for countless fish species, mammals, and birds of prey. Throughout August, NOAA Fisheries is conducting a voluntary, coastwide survey of individuals who have caught alewives or blueback herring commercially or recreationally.

Exempted Fishing Permit for Lobster Data Collection - Open for Public Comment

By **August 4**, submit your comments on an application by Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation for an exempted fishing permit to continue to explore the use of data recording devices in relaying American lobster data to fisheries managers and scientists.

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