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Subject: FishNews - August 6, 2014 - Next Week: Shark Week, FishWatch User Survey, Gulf of Mexico Dead Zone, International Whaling Commission Public Hearing, Beluga Petition, and More

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August 6, 2014

HIGHLIGHTS

EVENTS

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.



Sharks 365

It's August, which means that **Shark Week** is right around the corner ... it's next week, in fact ... and the Expert Is In! While NOAA does sharks 365 days a year, be sure to follow us next week for all new stories, videos, podcasts, and an evening tweetchat featuring the latest shark science.

Help Us Improve FishWatch

Do you care about sustainable seafood? Have you used www.FishWatch.gov to learn about the seafood you buy at a grocery store or restaurant? We need your feedback! Help us improve FishWatch by participating in a short survey.

Gulf of Mexico Dead Zone is Average-Sized, But Large

Scientists supported by NOAA and the Environmental Protection Agency have mapped the Gulf of Mexico "dead zone," an area with low-oxygen water that forms annually. At 5,052 square miles, the size of this summer's dead zone is close

August 6-19

Five 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**August 7**

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

September 19

Proposals due for **Natural**

to the average size over the past 5 years, but it is still large and poses a threat to the ecosystem that supports valuable Gulf fisheries.

NOAA Holds Public Hearing Ahead of International Whaling Commission

The International Whaling Commission, of which the United States is a member, meets every other year to review the condition of whale stocks and modify conservation measures. NOAA will hold a public meeting in Silver Spring, Maryland, on August 7 to discuss and gather input on tentative U.S. positions for the Commission's September meeting.

Finding on Beluga Petition - Request for Information

NOAA Fisheries found that a petition to designate the Sakhalin Bay-Amur River stock of beluga whales as a depleted stock under the Marine Mammal Protection Act presents sufficient information to warrant a status review. Please submit any information that would contribute to this review by **September 2**.

New Rex Sole Information Now on FishWatch

Check out the new rex sole species profile on [FishWatch](#). As we continue to expand FishWatch, we hope to add a number of new species profiles each year. Stay tuned for more new profiles in the coming months.

Alaska**At-Sea Scales Rule - Open for Public Comment**

By **September 2**, submit your comments on a proposed rule to revise the at-sea scales program for catcher/processor vessels and motherships that are required to weigh catch at sea. The proposed changes are intended to reduce the possibility of scale tampering and to improve the accuracy of catch estimates.

West Coast**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. Endangered Snake River sockeye salmon, a small subset of the Columbia River sockeye nearly extirpated in the 1990s, show the third strongest return since 1975.

Resources Damages Program projects related to the Nyanza Superfund site in Massachusetts.

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](#).

Pacific Islands

Pacific Insular Areas Marine Conservation Plan

NOAA Fisheries announces the approval of a marine conservation plan for Pacific insular areas other than American Samoa, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands.

Southeast

Coastal Migratory Pelagics Rule - Open for Public Comment

By **September 2**, [submit your comments](#) on a proposed rule for the Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources in the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Region. The rule would update annual catch limits, targets, and optimum yield for the Spanish mackerel migratory groups based on the most recent stock assessments.

Snapper-Grouper Actions - Open for Public Comment

By **September 2**, [submit your comments](#) on a proposed action to implement a regulatory amendment to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic. Amendment 21 would redefine the "overfished" threshold for select snapper-grouper species to account for natural variation in recruitment and other environmental factors.

South Atlantic Council Summer Newsletter Available

The latest issue of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's quarterly newsletter is available on the Council's website. This issue covers the recent recreational red snapper season, new requirements for seafood dealers, regulations on bag-limit sale of mackerel, and information on upcoming public hearings.

Greater Atlantic

New Information Shows Continued Cod Decline

NOAA Fisheries prepared a stock assessment update for Gulf of Maine cod, and the results indicate that nearly every indicator of stock condition declined or worsened in 2013. NOAA Fisheries is working with the New England Fishery Management Council to discuss next steps, including a peer review of these results.

Groundfish Disaster Aid Frequently Asked Questions

As part of the FY 2014 budget, Congress approved \$75 million in fishery disaster aid, of which \$32.8 million is being distributed for the Northeast groundfish fishery. These FAQs

address how this aid will be distributed.

Summer Flounder Control Date - Open for Public Comment

By **September 2**, submit your comments on the selection of a control date for the commercial summer flounder fishery. NOAA Fisheries and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council are considering whether and how to limit participation in this fishery.

State of Atlantic Salmon Restoration - Part 1

Atlantic salmon once supported vibrant commercial, recreational, and subsistence fisheries throughout New England. Today, they are listed as endangered. This month, NOAA Fisheries' Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office is running a five-part series on the challenges and successes of restoring this iconic species.

NOAA Teacher at Sea Takes to the Air with Aerial Team

For one week in June, Teacher at Sea alumna Ellen O'Donnell flew with the Northeast Fisheries Science Center aerial survey team on the North Atlantic Right Whale surveys in the Gulf of Maine. The experience gave her a new appreciation for the role of the aerial survey in marine mammal studies, complementing her 2012 participation in a northern right whale survey at sea.

Scientists Tag Loggerheads off Mid-Atlantic Coast

A team of researchers, including some from NOAA's Northeast Fisheries Science Center, tagged 19 juvenile and adult loggerhead sea turtles in Mid-Atlantic waters in early summer. The information collected will help scientists learn more about loggerhead movement and behavior.

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