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Subject: FishNews - September 3, 2014 - Marine Mammal Conservation in the Arctic, Species Recovery Grants, National Saltwater Recreational Policy, and More

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September 3, 2014

HIGHLIGHTS

EVENTS

[September-October](#)

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

[September 10-11](#)

Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Advisory Panel meeting and webinar in Bethesda, Maryland, open to the public.

[September 11](#)

Free Atlantic Shark Identification Workshop in Florida.

[September 11-17](#)



Marine Mammal Conservation in the Arctic

As international interest in the Arctic grows, it is important to identify potential impacts on marine mammals. In March, the United States held an international workshop to discuss these impacts. The [report](#) from that workshop was provided to the International Whaling Commission for consideration during their biennial meeting this month.

NOAA Announces 2014 Species Recovery Grants

NOAA Fisheries announced \$4.7 million in grants through the Species Recovery Grant Program in FY 2014, funding four new awards and continuing funding for 13 multiyear awards. Species Recovery Grants support high-priority recovery actions for threatened and endangered species. Applications for FY 2015 grants are due **November 7**.

Last Call for Input on National Rec Fisheries Policy

By **September 12**, submit your ideas about what should be

Pacific Fishery Management Council Meeting in Spokane, Washington.

September 15-19

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council Meeting in Charleston, South Carolina.

September 23

Free **Protected Species Safe Handling, Release, and Identification Workshops** in Texas and New Jersey.

included in a National Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Policy. The policy will help guide how NOAA Fisheries thinks about issues affecting the recreational fishing community. Comment now on the draft policy goals. *También puede leer y comentar en español!*

Incidental Take Authorization Webpage Redesign

We redesigned the webpage for Incidental Take of Protected Species to make it easier to apply for authorizations, find your application status, and search by sector for current and previous authorizations.

Derelict Fishing Traps Are a Nationwide Challenge

Thousands of fishing traps are lost or abandoned each in year in U.S. waters, and these traps continue to catch fish, crabs, and other species. A new report by NOAA's Marine Debris Program examines the derelict fishing trap problem across the nation.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

September 19

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

September 30

Proposals due for the 2015 **Mid-Atlantic Research Set-Aside** funding.

November 7

Proposals due for FY 2015 **Species Recovery Grants** to States.

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](#).

Alaska

Pribilof Islands Blue King Crab Rule - Open for Public Comment

By **September 29**, submit your comments on a proposed rule to implement an amendment to the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Management Area. The rule would close the Pribilof Islands Habitat Conservation Zone to directed fishing for Pacific cod with pot gear to reduce bycatch of Pribilof Island blue king crab.

West Coast

Anglers Help to Recover Puget Sound Rockfish

NOAA scientists have teamed up with charter boat captains and expert anglers to conduct genetic surveys of threatened rockfish populations in Puget Sound. The sampling is designed to be nonlethal-once scientists have taken a small fin clip, they use a device to quickly return the fish to depth in a process called "rapid recompression."

Marine Snails Sensitive to Ocean Acidification

Researchers are studying what happens to Puget Sound's pteropods, small marine snails, when they are exposed to current ocean conditions and the more acidic conditions expected in the future.

Pacific Islands

Expedition to Monitor Hawaiian Monk Seals in Northwestern Hawaiian Islands

NOAA Ship *Oscar Elton Sette* departed on a 3-week research expedition in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands to study the endangered Hawaiian monk seal. The expedition will also retrieve researchers and their equipment from remote sites as their field season comes to a close for the year.

Western Pacific Council Advisory Panel Openings

Fishermen, members of fishery-related industries, and individuals from fishery- or marine-related organizations are invited to apply for membership on the Advisory Panel for the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council.

Southeast

Gulf Aquaculture Plan - Open for Public Comment

The Fishery Management Plan for Regulating Offshore Marine Aquaculture in the Gulf of Mexico will establish a regional permitting process to manage the development of an environmentally sound and economically sustainable aquaculture industry in federal waters of the Gulf. The Gulf Aquaculture Plan would allow up to 20 offshore aquaculture operations to be permitted in federal waters of the Gulf over a 10-year period. Comments are due **October 27**.

Snapper-Grouper Exempted Fishing Permit - Open for Public Comment

By **September 29**, submit your comments on an application for an exempted fishing permit allowing retention of a limited number of otherwise prohibited specimens in South Atlantic federal waters. The permit is for a study intended to characterize catch and discard mortality in the commercial hook-and-line snapper-grouper fishery.

Nassau Grouper Warrants Listing as Threatened - Open for Public Comment

NOAA Fisheries announced a 12-month finding and listing determination on a petition to list Nassau grouper under the Endangered Species Act. The petition prompted a status review, which found that Nassau grouper meets the definition of a threatened species. Submit comments and information relevant to the final listing by **December 31**.

Greater Atlantic

Scientists Discover Hanging Coral Gardens in the Gulf of Maine

NOAA scientists and partner researchers observed for the first time tall, dense hanging gardens of *Primnoa* coral ("sea fans")

blanketing vertical walls 25 to 40 feet high in the Gulf of Maine. Fishermen have known about the presence of corals in the Gulf for more than a century, but even after 40 years of research with submersible vehicles, scientists are still learning about the corals' ecological setting.

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