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Subject: FishNews - November 12, 2014 - U.S. Goals for ICCAT, Update on Atlantic Bluefin, New Species of Coral, Win-Win for Whales and Lobstermen, and More

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November 12, 2014

HIGHLIGHTS

EVENTS

November 13-19

**Pacific Fishery
Management Council
meeting** in
Costa Mesa, California.

November 15

**Sixth annual Right Whale
Festival** in Jacksonville
Beach, Florida.

November 17

Last day to submit entries
to annual **"Keep the Sea
Free of Debris" Art
Contest.**

November 17-20

**New England Fishery
Management Council
meeting** in Newport,
Rhode Island.

November 18-19



Photo credit: Gilbert Van Ryckevorsel/Tag-A-Giant

U.S. Goals for the 2014 ICCAT Meeting

The annual meeting of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) takes place this week in Genoa, Italy. The U.S. delegation hopes to reach agreements on science-based management measures for internationally shared fisheries and applying a precautionary approach where appropriate. Read more about specific U.S. goals for this 2014 meeting.

Atlantic Bluefin Tuna: News from Latest Assessment

We sat down with Dr. Clay Porch, a NOAA Fisheries scientist who chaired the assessment for the Western stock of bluefin tuna, to hear what the latest science says about the status of bluefin tuna in the Atlantic Ocean.

Two free **Protected Species Safe Handling, Release, and Identification Workshops** in North Carolina and Florida.

November 20
QUEST Webinar on the **Dids, Dos, Don'ts, and Developments of Data-Limited Catch Limits**.

December 4
Free **Atlantic Shark Identification Workshops** in Florida.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

November 13
Proposals due for **river herring research and conservation efforts**.

November 17
Proposals due for **Community-based Marine Debris Prevention and Removal Grants**.

December 1
Proposals due for 2015 **National Wetlands Awards**.

December 15
Proposals due for FY 2014/ 2015 **Saltonstall-Kennedy Grant Competition**.

January 15
Aquaculture solicitations
Proposals due for 2015 **Small Business Innovation Research**.

January 20
Applications due for 2015 **Partnerships for**

West Coast

California Eelgrass Mitigation Guidelines for Agencies

Eelgrass plays a critical role in marine ecosystems, providing shelter, foraging area, oxygen, water filtration, and shoreline stabilization. But because its importance is often overlooked, eelgrass habitats have significantly degraded. NOAA Fisheries is providing [new guidelines to federal agencies](#) that their actions should result in "no net loss" of eelgrass habitat.

NOAA-Led Mission Discovers New Coral Species

In the first intensive exploration of California's offshore areas near the Gulf of Farallones and Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuaries, a NOAA-led research team discovered a new species of deep-sea coral, as well as a nursery area for catsharks and skates.

Pacific Islands

Scientists Remove 57 Tons of Marine Debris from Northwestern Hawaiian Islands

NOAA divers aboard NOAA Ship *Oscar Elton Sette* have returned from a 33-day mission to remove marine debris from the Papahānaumokuākea National Monument in Hawaii. The weight of derelict fishing nets and plastics recovered totaled approximately 57 tons.

Updates on Hawaiian Monk Seal Conservation Efforts

In 2014, with cooperative support from other agencies, the Hawaiian Monk Seal Research Program was able to [expand its survey effort](#) at Ni'ihau and Nihoa Islands, which, despite their large seal populations, are rarely visited. Although [hurricane threats in August required the evacuation](#) of some of the field sites, the team [carried out many activities](#), including the [transport of several seals](#) between the islands and the Marine Mammal Center's monk seal hospital, Ke Kai Ola.

Southeast

Gulf Offshore Aquaculture Plan - Comment Period Reopening

By **November 28** (formerly October 27), submit your comments on the Fishery Management Plan for Regulating Offshore Marine Aquaculture in the Gulf of Mexico. The Plan will establish a regional permitting process to manage an environmentally sound and economically sustainable aquaculture industry in federal waters of the Gulf.

Hawaiian Monk Seal Recovery and Marine Mammal Response.

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](#).

Long-Term Monitoring Plan for Gulf Marine Mammals - Request for Info

By **December 8**, submit information to aid in the development of a long-term monitoring plan for marine mammals in the Gulf of Mexico. The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management is required to develop such a plan in conjunction with rulemaking regarding geological and geophysical survey activities.

Greater Atlantic

Win-Win for Whales and Lobstermen

NOAA Fisheries is working with the fishing industry and state partners to find common ground in protecting whales. Following a series of public listening sessions, we proposed additional changes to the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan that would lessen the economic impact on the industry without reducing the conservation benefit to the whales.

[Submit your comments](#) on these proposed changes by **November 21**.

Gulf of Maine Haddock and Cod Inseason Management

The latest science available shows the condition of the Gulf of Maine haddock stock improving, but also shows the lowest levels of Gulf of Maine cod in 40 years. In response, the New England Fishery Management Council requested that NOAA Fisheries implement immediate short-term measures. NOAA Fisheries hopes that an increase in the haddock quota can help mitigate the necessary decreases in the cod catch levels.

Thermal Transition Dates Continue to Shift

The latest Ecosystem Advisory on the Northeast Shelf Large Marine Ecosystem notes that, based on average temperatures, spring and fall thermal transition dates continue to shift. Projections suggest that, by 2100, the summer portion of the year could expand by as much as 2 months.

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