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Subject: FishNews - January 14, 2015 - IUU Task Force Comments, New Habitat Focus Areas, Invasive Lionfish Web Portal, Conservation of Threatened Corals, and More

Date: Wed, Jan 14, 2015 5:22 pm



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January 14, 2014

HIGHLIGHTS

EVENTS

January 21

Free **Protected Species Safe Handling, Release, and Identification Workshop** in New Hampshire.

January 21 and 27

Public hearings for South Atlantic **Snapper-Grouper Amendment 35** in Florida and South Carolina.

January 21 and February 4

Public scoping meetings for South



NOAA Announces New Habitat Focus Areas

NOAA has selected two sites in the southeast and Caribbean as Habitat Focus Areas-places where the agency can maximize its habitat conservation investments and management efforts to benefit marine resources and coastal communities. [Learn more](#) about these two new areas: Florida's Biscayne Bay, and Puerto Rico's Northeast Reserves and Culebra Island (pictured above.)

Reminder: Presidential Task Force on IUU Fishing and Seafood Fraud

The Task Force is seeking suggestions and guidance on the implementation of the final recommendations released last month. Comments are due **January 20**.

Atlantic **Coastal Migratory Pelagics Amendment 26** in Florida and by webinar.

January 22

Free **Atlantic Shark Identification Workshop** in Kenner, Louisiana.

January 26-29

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council meeting in Point Clear, Alabama.

January 27-29

New England Fishery Management Council meeting in Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

January 28 - February 26

Five public hearings on **proposed critical habitat for arctic ringed seal** in five locations in Alaska.

February 2-10

North Pacific Fishery Management Council meeting in Seattle, Washington.

February 10-12

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council meeting in Raleigh, North Carolina.

25th Anniversary of NOAA's Teacher at Sea Program

NOAA's Teacher at Sea Program celebrates its 25th anniversary this year. Since its inception in 1990, the program has placed [more than 700 educators](#) on NOAA research cruises. The program provides teachers with unique research experiences and training, while the teachers share what they've learned about science at sea with their students and communities. Help us celebrate-- like NOAA Teacher at Sea [on Facebook!](#)

New Invasive Lionfish Web Portal Shares Latest Info

NOAA and the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute have partnered to launch a new web portal to provide managers, researchers, and the public with the latest information on the lionfish invasion in the Atlantic Ocean.

International Workshop on Sustainable Shark Trade

NOAA Fisheries joined participants representing more than 20 countries at a workshop to discuss the implementation of international shark trade regulations adopted by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). The United States strongly supported these measures and is committed to working with international partners to ensure their implementation.

Conservation of Threatened Corals - Request for Information, Comments

NOAA Fisheries is considering proposing regulations to support the conservation of the 20 coral species recently listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. Please submit comments, input on actions that may impact the corals' status, and information on existing conservation efforts by **March 16**.

NOAA Fisheries Stock Assessment Program Review

NOAA Fisheries conducted independent reviews of our fishery stock assessment programs in 2014. The results of the Office of Science and Technology's program review are now available. These results include the panelists' comments and recommendations and the Office's responses and action plan.

2014 Highlights from NOAA's Aquaculture

ANNOUNCEMENTS

January 15

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

January 20

Applications due for 2015 **Partnerships for Hawaiian Monk Seal Recovery and Marine Mammal Response**.

January 23

Applications due for **Coastal Management Fellowships**.

January 28

Pre-proposals due for **Maryland Sea Grant** research funding.

January 29

Applications due for the **2015 NOAA Fisheries/Sea Grant Fellowships in [Marine Resources Economics](#) and [Population and Ecosystem Dynamics](#)**.

January 30

Letters of Intent due for **RESTORE Act funding**.

February 3

Proposals due for grants to support management

Program

Dr. Michael Rubino, Director of NOAA Fisheries' Office of Aquaculture, reviews last year's highlights in marine aquaculture. Be sure to check out the [illustrated timeline](#) of events.

Alaska

Second Round of Chinook Disaster Relief Funds

NOAA Fisheries announced the approval of the second round of fisheries disaster funds to assist fishermen affected by the 2012 commercial Chinook salmon fishery failure. The [Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission](#) will administer distribution of the \$13 million in fishery disaster funds.

Public Hearings on Arctic Ringed Seal Critical Habitat

NOAA Fisheries will host five public hearings in Alaska (in the cities of Nome, Anchorage, Kotzebue, Barrow, and Bethel) on a proposed rule to designate critical habitat for Arctic ringed seals under the Endangered Species Act. The proposed critical habitat in the northern Bering, Chukchi, and Beaufort seas provides essential sea ice conditions.

Surveying Steller Sea Lions with Unmanned Aircraft

Since the 1970s, NOAA Fisheries has used occupied aircraft to take aerial images of Steller sea lions throughout coastal Alaska. However, inclement weather, particularly in the western Aleutian Islands, frequently impedes these surveys. Now, scientists are using unmanned aircraft systems that can fly beneath the clouds to photograph hard-to-reach areas of the island chain.

West Coast

NOAA and Partners Prepare 2015 Drought Strategy

Recent rains in California have not been enough to end the state's multiyear drought. NOAA Fisheries and partner agencies are applying lessons learned in 2014 to prepare for the upcoming season. Their plans are presented in the [2015 Interagency Drought Strategy](#) and the complementary Anadromous Fish Monitoring

objectives of **three Pacific Marine National Monuments**.

February 4

Pre-proposals due for **Mid-Atlantic Regional Sea Grant** research funding.

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](#).

Plan.

Story Map: Salmon and Steelhead Habitat Loss in California's Central Valley

This site tells the story of each of the major dams built in California's Central Valley and their effects on the region's natural salmon and steelhead heritage. Explore the maps to see the past and present salmonid habitat and learn how to help recover these iconic species.

Research Finds Woody Debris Additions Benefit Fish

Scientists at the Northwest Fisheries Science Center completed a comprehensive review of the impacts of adding logs and other woody debris to rivers and streams as a means of improving fish habitat. The review found the wood installments do improve habitat quality and lead to positive responses in salmonids.

Tracking Southern Resident Killer Whales

This winter, NOAA Fisheries scientists are continuing a multi-year satellite tagging study of Southern Resident Killer Whales to help understand their winter habitat use. The information collected will help fill in knowledge gaps identified in the population's recovery plan. Follow the latest updates on the tagged whales' movements here.

Loggerhead "Lost Years" Discovered Off CA Coast

Last year, a NOAA Fisheries research survey discovered numerous juvenile loggerhead turtles more than 200 miles off the southern California coast, revealing new details about a mysterious stage of the endangered turtles' epic migration across the Pacific Ocean. Scientists at the Southwest Fisheries Science Center are excited to fill in this "missing piece of the puzzle."

Veterans Fisheries Corps Program Aids Fish Recovery

The Veterans Fisheries Corps Program provides veterans with training and natural resources work experience restoring fish habitat and conducting research and monitoring. A partnership between federal and state agencies, the program began in Northern California and is now expanding into Southern California. Read an interview with Army veteran and Vet Corps participant Garrett Dennis.

Pacific Islands

Pacific Remote Islands Monument Expansion - Open for Public Comment

By **February 13**, submit your comments on proposed requirements for fishing in the Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument Expansion.

Nominations Sought for WCPFC Advisory Committee

NOAA Fisheries seeks nominations for the permanent advisory committee established under the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Convention Implementation Act. The advisory committee represents groups concerned with the fisheries covered by this international convention and provides input to the U.S. commissioners. Nominations are due **March 2**.

Time to Renew Fishing Permits

Hawaii Longline Limited Entry Permits, Western Pacific General Longline Permits, and Receiving Vessel Permits will expire on **March 3**. You must renew your permit if you intend to continue fishing in 2015.

Winter Edition of Pacific Islands Fishery News Available

The winter edition of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council's quarterly newsletter is now available online. The newsletter, *Pacific Island Fishery News*, covers the Council's 5-year review of its Fishery Ecosystem Plans along with the latest actions for pelagic fisheries, archipelagic fisheries, and protected species in the Western Pacific.

Southeast

Electronic Monitoring and Reporting Plan - Open for Public Comment

By **February 9**, submit your comments on NOAA Fisheries' draft Electronic Monitoring and Electronic Reporting Implementation Plan for the Southeast Region. Implementation and expansion of electronic monitoring and reporting methods can help address the growing demands for timely and accurate fisheries data.

Greater Atlantic

New England Fishery Management Council Appointment

The U.S. Department of Commerce announced the appointment of John Pappalardo of Cape Cod Fishermen's Alliance to the New England Fishery Management Council. Pappalardo, who is replacing a resigning council member, will serve until August of 2017.

New Lobster Management Measures Take Effect May 1

New management measures for the Southern New England stock of American lobster, as recommended by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, will come into effect when the 2015 fishing season begins on May 1. Read the details [here](#).

Virginia Releases Marine Debris Reduction Plan

The Commonwealth of Virginia now has a marine debris reduction plan in place-the first of its kind on the East Coast. Developed by the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program, in cooperation with agencies, academia, nonprofits, businesses, and other stakeholders, the plan centers around five goals and recommends short- and long-term actions.

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