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Subject: FishNews - April 29, 2015 - Pacific Sardines, Pocket Shark, Aquaculture Research Grants, and More

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April 29, 2015

EVENTS

April 30

Last day of **Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee meeting** in San Diego.

April 30

Last day of **Scientific and Statistical Committee meeting** of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council.

May 16

NOAA Open House at the Southeast Fisheries Science Center in Miami.

May 17

Open House at James J. Howard Marine Science Laboratory in Sandy Hook, New Jersey.

HIGHLIGHTS



Boom-Bust Cycle Not New for Pacific Sardines

Eileen Sobeck, head of NOAA Fisheries, shares a message on recent trends in the Pacific sardine population. Sardines are known for their wide swings in population size, even in the absence of fishing pressure. The latest assessment shows a continuation of the decline that scientists, managers, and industry have observed over the past few years, so NOAA Fisheries has decided to close the fishery for the 2015 season.

Pocket Shark Among the World's Rarest Finds

Researchers from NOAA and Tulane University have identified what is possibly the second specimen ever found of the "pocket shark," named for the distinctive "pocket" located above its pectoral fin. This specimen was collected during a 2010 mission in the Gulf of Mexico, and the only other specimen was found off the coast of Peru-36 years ago.

[June 2-3](#)

Two public meetings of **advisory committees to the U.S. Section to the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission** in La Jolla, California.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

[May 11](#)

Applications due for **Summer 2015 Science Camp** (for students about to enter 8th grade) at Inouye Regional Center in Honolulu.

[June 3](#)

Applications due for **FY 2015 NIFA Aquaculture Research Grants**.

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](#).

Deepwater Horizon Barrier Island Project

This year, NOAA will break ground on the restoration of Chenier Ronquille Island in Louisiana's Barataria Basin, one of the islands that was oiled during the 2010 Deepwater Horizon spill. NOAA's support for this project builds on the agency's 15 years of work restoring barrier islands, which serve as the first line of defense during storms.

Aquaculture Research Grants Program

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) released a request for applications for its FY 2015 Aquaculture Research Program. NIFA seeks applied aquaculture research projects that directly address major constraints to the U.S. aquaculture industry in one of four priority areas. Applications are due **June 3**.

Alaska

New Studies Explore Potential Impacts of Climate Change on Arctic Marine Species

NOAA Fisheries scientists released the findings of two research projects that shed light on how climate change may affect some Arctic marine species. The [first study](#) examines the influence of temperature and competition from southerly cod species on the survival of Arctic cod. The [second](#) provides some good news about the ability of northern rock sole to withstand increases in ocean acidity.

NOAA Scientists Survey Alaska Fisheries at Sea

Scientists from the Alaska Fisheries Science Center will embark from Dutch Harbor this week on a new survey season, collecting the data needed to determine sustainable harvest levels. This year, scientists will conduct the annual eastern Bering Sea continental shelf survey and the biennial Gulf of Alaska continental shelf survey.

Whale SENSE Program Expands to Alaska

Whale watching contributes significantly to the economy in Juneau and Southeast Alaska. To support this enterprise while protecting whale populations, NOAA Fisheries introduced a voluntary program called [Whale SENSE](#), originally developed in collaboration with the East Coast whale watching industry, to promote responsible whale watching.

West Coast

Dolphin Energy Use in Noisy Environments

A new study by scientists from the Northwest Fisheries Science Center and the University of California Santa Cruz measures

the biological costs to dolphins trying to communicate over the sounds of ship traffic or noise from other manmade sources. Dolphins spend extra energy to raise their voices in noisy environments, and that cost may add up over time.

Pacific Islands

Observer Program Celebrates More Than 20 Years

Last year, the Pacific Islands Region Observer Program celebrated 20 years of collecting valuable commercial fishing data in service to our nation's fisheries. Observers are trained biologists responsible for monitoring and collecting data on commercial fishing activities. That data is used by scientists to estimate fish population sizes and to advise managers.

Southeast

Gulf of Mexico Red Snapper Recreational Quotas

NOAA Fisheries approved Amendment 40 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico. The rule establishes two components within the recreational sector that fishes for red snapper: a federal for-hire component and a private angling component.

Greater Atlantic

Conserving the Choptank River

Starting in Delaware, the Choptank River winds its way through Maryland's Eastern Shore on its way to the Chesapeake Bay. Competing uses-agriculture, hydropower, and shoreline development-impact the river's water quality and wildlife. In designating this site a "[Habitat Focus Area](#)," NOAA aims to connect with the Choptank community and use pooled resources to address the multiple stressors to this vital watershed.

Northeast Groundfish Measures Effective May 1

NOAA Fisheries approved Framework Adjustment 53 to the groundfish plan and announced fishing year 2015 management measures for the groundfish fishery. This bulletin outlines the regulatory changes in five sections.

Atlantic Bluefish Limits - Open for Public Comment

By **May 12**, please submit your comments on proposed catch limits for the 2015 Atlantic bluefish fishery. This action is intended to establish allowable harvest levels consistent with the Atlantic Bluefish Fishery Management Plan.

Scallop Exempted Fishing Permits - Open for Comment

By **May 12**, please submit your comments on two applications for Exempted Fishing Permits. The permits would allow specific commercial fishing vessels to fish outside of the limited access scallop regulations to support research on gear modifications to reduce bycatch in the scallop dredge fishery.

Second NOAA Ocean Day at Truro Central School

Researchers and staff from the Northeast Fisheries Science Center visited Truro Central School in Truro, Massachusetts, this month for the second NOAA Ocean Day. Organized by former [Teacher at Sea](#) Stacey Klimkosky, the school's librarian and media specialist, the event brings scientists into the classroom to teach students about the ocean and encourage ocean stewardship.

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