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Subject: FishNews - June 10, 2015 - National Fishing and Boating Week, MAFAC Nominations, Pocket Shark CT Scan, Regulations to Protect Marine Mammals, and More

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June 10, 2015

HIGHLIGHTS

EVENTS

June 11

Broadcast of the **National Ocean Council's IUU Fishing and Seafood Fraud Committee**, live at Capitol Hill Ocean Week.

June 11

Last day of the **Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council meeting** in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

June 11

Last day of the meeting of the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council's **Scientific and Statistical Committee** in Honolulu.



It's National Fishing and Boating Week!

This week, NOAA Fisheries joins the 11 million Americans who enjoy saltwater angling in celebrating **National Fishing and Boating Week**. Learn more about our recent milestones in engaging with the recreational fishing community to better realize the social, economic, and environmental benefits this great American pastime provides.

Marine Fisheries Advisory Council Nominations

Nominations are sought for appointments to the Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee (MAFAC), which advises the

June 11-12

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council meeting in Key West, Florida.

June 11-12

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council meeting in Key West, Florida.

June 11-16

Pacific Fishery Management Council meeting in Spokane, Washington.

June 15-18

Western Pacific Fishery Management Council meeting in Honolulu.

June 16-18

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

June 22-25

Council Coordination Committee meeting in Key West, Florida.

June 22-25

Regional Fishery Management Council Administrative Officers meeting in Key West, Florida.

July 29 - July 1

Public meeting of the **Center for Independent Experts** to conduct a peer review of the stock assessment of the General Model for Alaskan Crabs Stocks, in Seattle.

July 9 and 16

Two free **Protected Species Safe Handling**,

Secretary of Commerce on living marine resource matters. Appointees serve up to two consecutive three-year terms. Nominations are due **July 20**.

The Pocket Shark: A Digital Dissection

To learn more about the pocket shark without damaging an extremely rare specimen, scientists have created a high-resolution computed tomography (CT) digital scan. These stunning 3-dimensional images are now available online for anyone interested in studying the pocket shark's anatomy.

NOAA Seeks Comments on Regulations to Protect Marine Mammals

By **July 17**, please submit your comments on a [proposed rule](#) requiring the U.S. Navy to implement protective measures during activities at their Northwest training and testing study area in the state waters off Alaska, Washington, Oregon, and northern California. These measures are intended to reduce the chances of harming marine mammals.

New NOAA Effort to Monitor Underwater Sound

The NOAA Ocean Noise Reference Station Network represents the first large-scale effort to monitor trends in underwater sound across vast swaths of U.S. waters. The network includes a set of 10 undersea listening stations deployed around the country to systematically measure ambient noise levels in the ocean.

Ghost Trap Recovery and Research Ramps Up

"Ghost fishing" can occur when fishing gear lost at sea continues to ensnare fish, crabs, lobsters, and other species. NOAA's Marine Debris Program is funding gear modification research and trap removal projects around the country to address the issue.

Pilot Test of the International Trade Data System

On **July 1**, NOAA Fisheries will launch a pilot test of the International Trade Data System to assess the electronic transmission of import data for tuna, swordfish, and toothfish. [More information](#) is available to determine the ports and dates at which the test will be operational. We will seek public comment [by email](#) through the duration of the test.

2nd Quarter Fish Stock Assessment Report Available

The Fish Assessment Report summarizes information on recently completed stock assessments and provides quarterly updates on the performance of the national stock assessment program. The report for the 2nd quarter of FY 2015 is now available online.

Alaska

Release, and Identification Workshops in Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, and Ronkonkoma, New York.

July 23

Free **Atlantic Shark Identification Workshop** in Panama City, Florida.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

June 12

Proposals due for funding to advance **Mid-Atlantic priorities for climate change adaptation**, sponsored by the [Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean \(MARCO\)](#).

June 30

Applications due to three **National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Councils** (Flower Garden Banks, Stellwagen Bank, and Monitor) for open seats representing recreational fishing interests.

July 2

Proposals due for **Coastal Ecosystem Resiliency Grants**.

July 20

Nominations due to the **Marine Fisheries Advisory Council** (MAFAC).

July 30

Nominations due for six appointments to **U.S. Advisory Panel** and one to the **Joint Management Committee** for the **Pacific Whiting Treaty** between the United States and

News on Yukon River Chinook Salmon Population

NOAA Fisheries and partners released the [2015 Yukon River Salmon Fisheries Outlook](#) late last month, [forecasting the first significant pulse](#) of Chinook to cross the Yukon River Delta around June 15 this year. Other NOAA scientists [continue for a second year](#) to study the migration of juvenile Chinook back out of the Yukon to the open ocean, in hopes of learning more about population trends.

New Age Validation Method for Pacific Cod

Determining the age of Pacific cod, the target of second largest groundfish fishery in Alaska, is relatively difficult and sometimes uncertain. Scientists at the Alaska Fisheries Science Center have introduced a new alternative strategy to determining age that uses stable oxygen isotope signatures. This strategy can be used to validate age readings.

Summer Tours at Ted Stevens Marine Research Institute

NOAA Fisheries invites Juneau residents and their out-of-town guests to get an insider tour of one of NOAA's leading science facilities, the Ted Stevens Marine Research Institute. NOAA is offering free tours for up to 12 people at a time each weekday at 1 p.m. through September.

West Coast

Recovering Predators Create New Challenges

The protection and resurgence of major predators such as seals, sea lions, wolves, and grizzly bears has created new challenges for wildlife managers, as these predators sometimes prey on other protected species or compete with humans-or each other-for food. A new study examines these types of conflicts and calls for multi-species recovery plans that consider the trade-offs between protected species.

Snake River Sockeye Salmon Recovery Plan

NOAA Fisheries [adopted the final version](#) of the Endangered Species Act recovery plan for Snake River Sockeye Salmon. The plan outlines actions the agency will take toward recovering the population and desliting it from the federal list of threatened and endangered species.

Prohibited Species Regulation - Open for Comment

By **June 19**, please submit your comments on a proposal to revise the prohibited species regulations in the fishery management plan for the U.S. West Coast Highly Migratory Species Fisheries. The revisions would explicitly identify exceptions to the regulations in the management plan.

Killer Whale Tracking Program Wraps Up

Canada.

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](#).

NOAA Fisheries scientists wrapped up more than four months of tracking the movements of Southern Resident killer whales off the West Coast, collecting data that will help unravel the mystery of where the whales go and what they do during the winter months.

Southeast

Snapper-Grouper Rule - Open for Public Comment

By **July 6**, please submit your comments on a [proposed rule](#) for Regulatory Amendment 22 to the South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper fishery management plan. The rule would adjust the annual catch limits of gag and wreckfish based on the outcome of populations assessments.

Red Snapper Reallocation - Open for Public Comment

By **July 20**, please submit your comments on a draft environmental impact statement for Amendment 28 to the Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Resources fishery management plan. The statement analyzes the impacts of a proposed reallocation of the red snapper harvest between the commercial and recreational sectors.

Staghorn Corals and Fish Benefit One Another

Staghorn coral, listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act, provide essential fish habitat for spiny lobster, queen conch, and reef fish. NOAA Fisheries scientists studying robust staghorn populations in the Dry Tortugas found that the presence of fish benefits the reef ecosystem in return, supplying valuable nutrients that promote coral growth.

Greater Atlantic

Greenlandic Fishery Catches Imperiled Atlantic Salmon

The North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization agreed to new regulatory measures for the Atlantic salmon fishery that occurs off West Greenland. The new measures do not include an agreed catch limit, but the commitment to add limits to the fishery is viewed as progress.

NOAA Fisheries Seeks Charter Vessel Partner

The Northeast Fisheries Science Center seeks a charter vessel partner to participate in a cooperative research study to estimate trawl gear capture efficiency. This information is needed to improve assessments of commercially important fish stocks in the Northwest Atlantic. Interested parties should submit a quote by **June 13**.

Managing Gear Conflicts on Delaware's Artificial Reefs

Since 1995, Delaware's Division of Fish and Wildlife have used

artificial reefs to create fishing opportunities along the flat sand ocean bottom off Delaware's coast. Over the years, the reefs have become so popular that gear conflicts have arisen between hook-and-line anglers and commercial fishermen setting pots and lines. A [final NOAA Fisheries rule](#) designates Special Management Zones around four of the artificial reefs located in federal waters off of Delaware.

Siting America's First Offshore Wind Farm

America's first offshore wind farm will begin construction this summer in state waters off of Rhode Island. It will be situated in an area set aside for offshore renewable energy development by the Rhode Island Ocean Special Area Management Plan. Read more about NOAA Fisheries' participation in the planning process and our efforts to locate the cable route to avoid sensitive ocean habitat.

New American Lobster Trap Transfer Program

NOAA Fisheries announced a new Lobster Trap Transfer Program that allows lobster permit holders the flexibility to buy and sell lobster trap allocations for some lobster management areas. Trap transfer applications will be accepted in August and September for the 2016 fishing year.

Lobster Fishery Exempted Fishing Permit - Open for Public Comment

By **June 19**, please submit your comments on an exempted fishing permit application that would allow eight commercial lobster vessels to participate in a lobster growth and abundance study off the coast of Massachusetts, under the direction of Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries.

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