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**Subject:** FishNews - July 22, 2015 - Field Guide to Nearshore Fishes, Fish Stock Sustainability Index Increases, Our Living Oceans: Habitat, and More

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**July 22, 2015**

## HIGHLIGHTS

### EVENTS

#### July 23-30

**Public comment meetings** in Georgia and North Carolina to discuss the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's **Draft Vision Blueprint for the Snapper-Grouper Fishery**.

#### July 23

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

#### July 24

**Ted Stevens Day Open House** at the Ted Stevens Marine Research Institute in Juneau, Alaska.

#### July 27-31



#### **Free Field Guide to Nearshore Fishes of Alaska**

Even if you're a not fish biologist in Alaska, download a copy of this free *Handy Field Guide to the Nearshore Marine Fishes of Alaska*. It contains beautiful photos of more than 100 species of fish in their juvenile phases, often looking nothing like their older adult selves.

#### **Fish Stock Sustainability Index Continues to Increase**

NOAA Fisheries updated the Fish Stock Sustainability Index to reflect the status of stocks as of June 30, 2015. The index-which continues to show steady improvement in the status of U.S. marine fish stocks-tracks the performance of 199 key fish stocks

**External Program**

**Review** of the Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center's Protected Species Science in Honolulu. Open to the public.

**July 29**

**Public workshop** via webinar on managing the impacts to salmon from the **Pacific Coast groundfish fisheries**.

**August 3-20**

Five **public hearings** and one **webinar** to solicit public comments on **Draft Amendment 18 to the Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan**.

**August 6 and 11**

Two free **Protected Species Safe Handling, Release, and Identification workshops** in Gulfport, Mississippi, and Key Largo, Florida.

**August 10-14**

**Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council meeting** in New Orleans.

**August 11-13**

**Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council meeting** in New York City.

**August 13**

Free **Atlantic Shark Identification workshop** in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

**August 19-20**

**Caribbean Fishery Management Council meeting** in Mayagüez, Puerto Rico.

important to U.S. commercial and recreational fisheries.

**New Report on Our Living Oceans: Habitat**

NOAA Fisheries recently released *Our Living Oceans: Habitat*, the first comprehensive summary of habitat information for all fishery and protected species under NOAA Fisheries' management. The report provides information on habitat science, trends, and research needs nationally and on a region-specific basis.

**Extended Comment Period for Petition Regulations**

NOAA Fisheries and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced a 60-day extension to the public comment period for proposed revisions to the Endangered Species Act petition regulations. The revisions are designed to improve the inclusiveness and transparency of the petition process. Please submit your comments by **September 18**.

**Modification to the Use of NOAA's Asset Forfeiture Fund**

Recently, NOAA announced changes that were put in place regarding the use of the Asset Forfeiture Fund.

**REMINDER - IUU and Seafood Fraud Committee Seeks Input on Seafood Traceability**

By **July 31**, please [submit your comments and suggestions](#) on the minimum types of information necessary-and the operational standards to be applied for collecting, verifying, and securing the data-for an effective seafood traceability program to combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing and seafood fraud. The National Ocean Council Committee seeks this information as a component of the traceability recommendations detailed in the Presidential Task Force's [Action Plan \(pdf, 639 KB\)](#).

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**Alaska****Climate-Mediated Changes in Pacific Salmon Diets**

Key differences exist between the diets of the five Pacific salmon species that feed in the Bering Sea. These diets can shift with environmental conditions. A multi-year surface trawl survey has allowed scientists to collect data on salmon diets and examine how they may respond to changes in climate.

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**West Coast****New Seawall and Fish Habitat**

The City of Seattle is rebuilding more than 7,000 feet of the Elliot Bay seawall. The original seawall, built between 1916 and 1936, replaced the bay's natural habitats like mudflats and

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### July 24

Proposals due for **2015 mini-grants from the Northeastern Regional Aquaculture Center**.

### July 24

Pre-proposals due for **2016 funding from the Northeastern Regional Aquaculture Center**.

### 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 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](#).

gently sloping beaches that are critical in supporting fisheries and protected species. The new wall will incorporate state-of-the-art design to improve fish habitat while preventing shoreline erosion.

### **Pacific Coast Groundfish - Open for Public Comment**

By **August 7**, please submit your comments on the effects to listed Pacific salmon species from the implementation of the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery Management Plan. There will also be a public work session, via webinar, on **July 29**. NOAA Fisheries seeks information on the amount and distribution of salmon bycatch in the groundfish fisheries.

### **Connecting Habitat Restoration to Species' Needs**

A recent study from the Northwest Fisheries Science Center and partners evaluates how well restoration projects in the Pacific Northwest line up with the needs of threatened and endangered species as outlined in species recovery plans. The study found considerable room for increased efficiencies in restoration funding and placement.

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## *Pacific Islands*

### **Pacific Island Catch Limits - Open for Public Comment**

By **August 5**, please submit your comments on proposed annual catch limits for Pacific Island bottomfish, crustaceans, precious coral, and coral reef ecosystem fisheries, as well as accountability measures for overages of these catch limits. The proposed catch limits and accountability measures would be effective in fishing year 2015.

### **Petition for Purse Seine Rulemaking - Open for Comment**

By **August 17**, please submit your comments on a petition requesting that NOAA Fisheries undertake emergency rulemaking for U.S. purse seine vessels on the high seas and in the U.S. exclusive economic zone. The requested rules would implement the 2015 limit on fishing effort by U.S. purse seine vessels, with some exemptions.

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## *Southeast*

### **Law Enforcement Seeks Info on Injured Dolphin**

NOAA's Office of Law Enforcement seeks tips on a bottlenose dolphin in Madeira Beach, Florida (John's Pass), found suffering from severe boat propeller wounds to its back and tail. The agency seeks information from anyone who witnessed illegal actions such as feeding or chasing the dolphin. Interacting with wild dolphins is dangerous to dolphins and it is against the law.

### **Generic Accountability Measures Amendment - Open for Public Comment**

By **September 14**, please submit your comments on the Generic Accountability Measures and Dolphin Allocation Amendment. This action would amend the fishery management plans for snapper-grouper and golden crab in the South Atlantic, and for dolphin and wahoo in the Atlantic.

### **Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife in the Caribbean**

By **September 14**, please submit your comments on the addition of 10 species of flora and fauna to the Annexes of the Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) in the Wider Caribbean Region Protocol. Before NOAA accepts the amendments to the annexes, we are consulting with the Senate and soliciting public comment through the Federal Register.

### **Habitat Areas of Particular Concern Boundary Expansion**

A recent final rule extends protections for deepwater coral ecosystems by expanding the boundaries of the Oculina Bank, Stetson-Miami Terrace, and Cape Lookout Coral Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (HPAC). The amendment also implements a transit provision through Oculina Bank HPAC for fishing vessels with rock shrimp onboard.

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## ***Greater Atlantic***

### **Groundfish Amendment 18 - Open for Public Comment**

By **August 31**, please submit your comments on the draft environmental impact statement for Amendment 18 to the Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan (the groundfish plan.) The New England Fishery Management Council is expected to take final action on Amendment 18 at its September meeting.

### **Atlantic Surfclam and Quahog Information Collection**

NOAA Fisheries announces a new information collection program for the Atlantic surfclam and ocean quahog individual transferable quota fisheries. The additional information to be collected will help the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council develop an excessive shares cap. Changes to information collection will take effect January 1, 2016.

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