

Subject: FW: Comments
From: "Cotnoir, Sarah" <Sarah.Cotnoir@maine.gov>
Date: Mon, 29 Aug 2011 14:06:44 -0400
To: ALWTRPScoping.Comments@noaa.gov

Here are comments our Department received.

----- Original Message -----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 12, 2011 05:17 PM
To: Olsen, Norman
Subject:

Commissioner (Norm):

I planned on attending the hearing on verticle lines in East Machias last night but was unable to because I was off shore with a whale charter.

As you may know I am a licensed commercial lobster fisherman and have been since high school. I also have a captains license and have been taking whale watching parties out of Milbridge for quite a few years. It is interesting to note that the Federal regulators are looking at the coast generacialy and as a result our lobster fisherman are being required to jepordize their gear and spend a lot of money on unnecessary and ineffective measurers to protect whales.

My experience looking actively for whales has shown that from Englishman's bay to Frenchmans Bay there are no whales inside the States 3 mile limit and in reality I have been unable to find any for the next 5 miles outside the 3 mile limit. In effect the first 8 miles are not visited by whales , unless you consider the Harbor Porpoise, which is actually a small whale. One time in te late 80's I did see a humpback inside he 3 mile limit buy the whale went back offshore within an hour or so.

In my charter business I would like to see whales closer as it would save me a lot of running time but they just don't come in shore away from their feed. As a result most all whales (minki, finback, humpback, and right) I see are actually 14 to 16 miles outside the islands. I have plotted their locations for several years to help me locate them and have no sitings in the past 7 or 8 years inside 8 miles and only one or 2 inside 10 miles out.

I dare say that fisherman fishing inside 8 miles seldom if ever have ever seen a whale in that area. It seems as though the Federal Regulators are not really interested in protecting the whalse bt are more interested in inhibiting fisherman from pursuing their lively hoods.

There is far more potential damage comming for the whales as a result of the proposed offshore wind projects which are proposed for exactly where whales congregate and feed. Will they move away or relocate more inshore once the construction activity and structures are placed in their prefered feeding areas.

I dare say that the whales entaqngled in our area are not carring fishing line from this area. Different zones have different habitat and locations where whales congregate varies as well. Take Lubec in the fall and whales comne near shore or PEI where they come right to shore on the north side of the island. The area I spend my time in however does not support any whale population inside 8 miles off shore and fisherman should not have to make major investments to protect whales that don't exist in the area.

You are invited to join me on my boat and go off shore with me and see first hand where whales in our area do and do not exist or come aboard my boat and look at some of the locations I have plotted where they do exist. I wonder if any of the people reviewing the regulations have ever visited off shore Maine and looked first hand where whales are and why they are in those locations. Many areas could be exempted from the rules being considered and protect fisherman as well as whales.

Rep Jim Parker

[REDACTED]

Subject: reduce lobster trap effort

From: cam tron [REDACTED]

Date: Fri, 26 Aug 2011 11:46:28 -0400

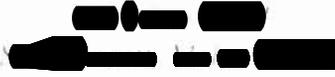
To: ALWTRPScoping.Comments@noaa.gov

Why not allow dragged lobsters to be landed in Maine?

Replace one gear type with another, it's a common practice in fishing communities to adapt and change fisheries, some people will suffer, but money will still come in to the community and fishing will continue.

I realize it violates the conservation ethic of Maine lobstermen, but the stock is exploding, and if you listen to some scientists like Robert Steneck, there are far too many lobsters in Gulf of Maine waters.

W. William Anderson



RECEIVED
AUG 15 2011

BY: _____

August 10, 2011

Mary Colligan, Assistant Regional Administrator For Protected Resources
National Marine Fisheries Service
55 Great Republic Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930

Dear Ms. Colligan:

I can remember when the problems of whale entanglement began to be discussed and I have participated in the development and supported the rules currently in effect. While all of this has been developed and enacted and fishermen have changed their gear to become in compliance with new rules. The number of traps, active fishermen and fishermen with federal permits has only continued to increase. In the past year it has been stated that, we had record landings with record high levels of effort. Through all of this increasing effort I have only seen my per pot landing continue to decline while all costs are rising.

I have been observing a huge investment in additional boats and traps. This investment had been assisted by government financial support in several ways. This has all led to additional buoy lines for whales to become entangled with. Now that all this investment has been made and all these buoy lines have been deployed you want to discuss reducing the risk of entanglement in these buoy lines. I really start to wonder who is leading us and the credibility of whoever is leading us.

I have been lobstering for over 40 years. Fishing has been my main source of income. Buoys and strong buoy lines are very important for several reasons. I am already experiencing losses because of the 600 lb. breakaway requirements. Having buoys on both end of trawls is important for two reasons. First if I loose one end I can just go to the other end to tend my gear. I do loose an end more often with the 600 lb. breakaways.

The other reason having two buoys on trawls is to protect your investment. Other fishermen can see where it is and avoid setting on it or dragging through it. Trawls with only one buoy line do not work well because you do not know where the gear is on bottom and if you loose that one set of buoys you then have to drag a grapple to retrieve your gear and this can be very time consuming and you are not always successful.

While I could see ways to reduce entanglement in the past I am having difficulty seeing ways to deal with your request to reduce buoy lines. I just call it one big tangled mess today. In the 1990s you could move and fish your gear and

make money. Today in most area just haul and dump the gear back where it was and a bunch of fisherman looking to fight and very willing to cut another's buoys off. A wonderful way to live and work.

Sincerely,

W. William Anderson

Aug. 7, 2011

To whoever has to read this,

My Name is Leonard Young I have been lobster fishing for about 40 years. I have fished from the local Bays to 20 mile offshore. I have never entangled a whale and have seldom seen them while lobstering. I find the present rules expensive, frustrating, and see little advantage to whale satting in the biggest area they are used. I am sure I will feel the same way about any new rules, perhaps even worse. Now that I have gotten that off my chest to the points you want comments on.

(1) Any and all rules should target areas of whale Density (high Density). Where that is concerns me.

I have seen charts showing Density levels I have a hard time believing. For example. I have seen one chart which shows Rightwhale sightings that were obviously given by the Cat out of Bar Harbor, the former ferry to Canada. I have fished a lot of the area, shown with sightings for over 25 years and have never seen a right whale there? Seems odd they saw so many. (2) When to manage, goes back to Density if it's seasonal in places than I would think restrictions should be seasonal. Over

(3) how to? I have reservations about suggesting and type of restrictions such as Fishing trips, Quads, 10 trap trawls, ect. because of where the restrictions will be. Right now 3 mile and out would be terrible with the sinking ground line on pairs its terrible, Parting traps of and wearing out rope. If you went to say 10 trap trawls. It would be made 10 times ~~worth~~ worse. If say the line was moved to the 50 fathom edge that might be easier, Although still difficult.

It all comes back to where the whales are. there is no point in rules where they aren't, or should I say where they seldom frequent.

If everybody involved didn't tract the ESA + MMPA liked the word of God might help even more.

Hopefully at the end of all this we all still have jobs. You have a nice Day & thank you for listening. Sincerely

Paul W. [Signature]



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
NORTHEAST REGION
55 Great Republic Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930-2276

JUN - 6 2011

Dear Trap/Pot and Gillnet Fisherman:

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is holding numerous public scoping meetings to solicit public comments on ways to reduce the risk of serious injury or mortality of North Atlantic right, humpback and fin whales as a result of vertical lines (buoy lines) in commercial trap/pot and gillnet fisheries. Please see the attached documents for a list of scoping meetings in your area and instructions on how to provide comments.

NMFS implemented the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan (ALWTRP) to reduce serious injuries and deaths of large whales (North Atlantic right, humpback, and fin) due to incidental entanglement in fishing gear. The ALWTRP is an evolving plan that changes as NMFS learns more about why whales become entangled and how fishing practices might be modified to reduce the risk of entanglement. It has several components including restrictions on where and how gear can be set; research into whale populations and whale behavior, as well as fishing gear interactions and modifications; outreach to inform and collaborate with fishermen and other stakeholders; and a large whale disentanglement program. Since its implementation in 1997, the ALWTRP has been modified on several occasions to further reduce the serious injury and mortality of large whales in commercial gillnet and trap/pot fishing gear.

Despite these efforts, there has been continued serious injury and mortality of large whales from entanglement in commercial trap/pot and gillnet fishing gear. Therefore, NMFS determined that additional modifications to the ALWTRP are warranted. Specifically, NMFS is focusing on reducing the risk of serious injury and mortality of large whales that encounter buoy lines associated with commercial trap/pot and gillnet fishing gear.

NMFS is interested in eliciting guidance on addressing buoy line entanglements by identifying: (1) where to manage (coast wide or based on whale density or fishing density); (2) when to manage (should the vertical line strategy be year round, seasonal or a combination); and (3) how to manage (what management strategies should be considered – traps-per-trawl limits, seasonal or year-round closures, etc. – to drive vertical line reductions).

A scoping document will be available on July 1, 2011. To obtain a copy of the scoping document visit the ALWTRP web page (www.nero.nmfs.gov/whaletrp/) or please contact the ALWTRP Coordinator, Kate Swails (978-282-8481 or Kate.Swails@noaa.gov).

Sincerely,

Patricia A. Kurkul
Regional Administrator



Schedule of ALWTRP Public Scoping Meetings

The dates, times, and locations of the ALWTRP scoping meetings are scheduled as follows:

- 1. Monday, July 11, 2011- E. Machias, ME**
6 - 9 PM
Washington Academy
66 High Street
East Machias, ME 04630
- 2. Tuesday, July 12, 2011- Ellsworth, ME**
6 - 9 PM
Ellsworth City Hall
Auditorium
1 City Hall Plaza
Ellsworth, Maine 04605
- 3. Wednesday, July 13, 2011- Rockland, ME**
6 - 9 PM
Rockland District High School
Auditorium
400 Broadway
Rockland, ME 04841
- 4. Thursday, July 14, 2011-Portland, ME**
6 - 9 PM
Portland City Hall
State of Maine Room
389 Congress St
Portland, ME 04101
- 5. Monday, July 18, 2011- Providence, RI**
5:30-8:30 PM
Providence Public Library
150 Empire Street
Providence, RI 02903
- 6. Tuesday, July 19, 2011- Plymouth, MA**
6 - 9 PM
Plymouth Public Library
Fehlow Room
132 South Street
Plymouth, MA 02360
- 7. Wednesday, July 20, 2011-Chatham, MA**
6 - 9 PM
Chatham Community Center
Large Meeting Room
702 Main Street
Chatham, MA 02633
- 8. Thursday, July 21, 2011-Gloucester, MA**
6 - 9 PM
NMFS Northeast Regional Office
Hearing Rooms A&B
55 Great Republic Dr.
Gloucester, MA 01930
- 9. Tuesday, July 26, 2011-Morehead City, NC**
6 - 9 PM
North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries
5285 Highway 70 West
Morehead City, NC 28557
- 10. Wednesday, July 27, 2011- Virginia Beach, VA** 6 - 9 PM
Oberndorf Central Library
Folio Meeting Rm.
4100 Virginia Beach Boulevard
Virginia Beach, VA 23452
- 11. Thursday, July 28, 2011- Ocean View, DE**
6 - 9 PM
Ocean View Town Hall
John West Park
32 West Ave.
Ocean View, DE 19970
- 12. Friday, July 29, 2011- Manahawkin, NJ**
6 - 9 PM
Stafford Township Municipal Building
Council Meeting Room
260 Bay Avenue
Manahawkin, NJ 08050
- 13. Monday August 22, 2011- Cape Canaveral, FL** 5-8 p.m.
Cape Canaveral Public Library
201 Polk Avenue
Cape Canaveral, FL 32920

F/V SEA SKIPPER

David Young
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

July 20, 2011

To whom it my concern,

I'm writing to oppose any further reduction in vertical lines. In the Outer Cape Lobster management area we already have a haul out period, (January 15th -March 15th) along with 600lbs break away for all traps. We also have the Critical Whale Habits rules to follow from January 1st through May 15th. The Outer cape has also reduced its potential Vertical lines from 54,000 lines to a maximum of 28,000 lines through its trap reduction plan.

Thank you

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'D Young', written in a cursive style.

David Young

July 25, 2011

As a commercial fisherman participating in the Black Sea bass (BSB) pot fishery in Northeast Florida for the last 18 years I have information and suggestions.

On the east coast of Florida the southern boundary for the BSB pot fishery is a line due East of the Vertical Assembly Building at Cape Canaveral. No BSB pot fishery is allowed south of Cape Canaveral. With the proposed regulations forth coming from the South Atlantic Council there will only be 2 licensed participants in the BSB pot fishery in northeast Florida.

They will be limited to a maximum of 50 pots each and will be required to tend their gear and return the pots back to shore at the end of each fishing trip. That is 100 pots (vertical lines) at any one time in use in the BSB pot fishery off northeast Florida.

As a BSB pot fisherman I tend my gear constantly moving it after short soaks of 2 hours or less. During the last 18 years I have never used more than 20 traps on a fishing trip. The live bottom areas and reefs that I fish are in 60 to 90 feet of water and are 15 to 30 miles off shore. In my entire life of fishing these areas I have never seen Atlantic Right whale activity there. The Atlantic Right whales I have seen are on the beach within 3 miles of shore moving North and South during the Winter months.

The BSB pots I use are 2"x2" square mesh vinyl coated wire 24"long x24"wide x24"height with 8 pounds of iron rebar on bottom of the pot. They have a bio-degradable panel and a vertical buoy line 100-feet in length. The vertical line is sinking Chesapeake crab line #8 approx ¼ in wide and is marked with orange paint. The vertical line is attached to the pot with a slip knot and hog ring. The buoy is attached with 6 hog rings only and should have a 600 pound breaking strength. I have 2 buoys per line attached with hog rings only and no knots in line from pot to buoy.

If I were to see Atlantic Right whale activity in the area I fish I would not set my gear or I would haul it and move to a different area. The fact is that I have not seen Atlantic Right whale activity in the offshore areas where I fish in 40 years of experience fishing the same areas. The risk of entanglement to whales in the Florida BSB pot fishery is so small as to be non-existent.

Summary of BSB pot fishery Northeast Florida

- Only 2 Florida commercial participants (proposed limited entry)
- A total of 100 vertical lines maximum allowed for the entire fishing area
- BSB pot gear is tended and returned to shore at end of fishing trip, gear is fished much like hook and line gear
- Florida areas fished is 15 to 30 miles offshore and not in normal Atlantic Right whale migration lanes
- Atlantic Right Whale sightings in areas fished are non-existent (local knowledge)
- No documented Atlantic Right whale interaction with BSB pot gear

- 100 vertical lines of the type used in fla.BSB pot fishery laid side by side measure only 25 inches across (small light weight gear)
- The risk of entanglement to whales in the Florida BSB pot fishery is so small as to be non-existent.

Recommendations for future gear improvements.

- Time release devise or biodegradable material on vertical line. With the small amount of gear fished in the BSB pot fishery and the fact that the gear will be returned to shore at the end of fishing trip makes replacing degradable devises feasible.
- Entire vertical line could be made of biodegradable material. With small amount of gear fished in the BSB pot fishery it could be replaced each year.

Jimmy Hull

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Mr. and Mrs. Tom Smith

JUN 23 2011

Re: ALWTRP scoping

The regulations we have make it difficult for fishermen to survive. Are further restrictions necessary or part of the relentless effort to appease insatiable environmentalists? We prefer no further restrictions, but if they are forthcoming, make them minimal.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Smith", written in a cursive style.

Mr. and Mrs. Tom Smith

Subject: Right whale comments

From: [REDACTED]

Date: Sat, 23 Jul 2011 04:06:06 +0000 (GMT)

To: ALWTRPScoping.Comments@noaa.gov

My name is Fred Dockery, and I am a commercial crabber from Charleston SC. I fish seaward of the colreg line in the winter and use breakaway floats and mark my lines with an orange blaze. The South Carolina's coast differs from other states and should be considered independently. Our waters get deeper very gradually, and much of the area outside the colreg line that we fish is actually inshore, as there is an additional bar that must be crossed before reaching unobstructed deep water. The inlet I fish (Stono Inlet) has such a bar nearly a mile and half outside the colreg line. These factors greatly reduce the likelihood of a whale interaction, and to my knowledge there has yet to be one in SC.

I would also like to note that our current landings data does not accurately reflect how many of us fish how many traps offshore. I would like to see this fixed before any sweeping decisions that affect those of us who do fish offshore in full compliance are made. This could be figured out in the very near term by adding a category to our landings sheet, and educating dealers who fill out those reports on the importance of getting the right information from their fishers.

I'm all for doing the right thing, but lets do it based on good information.

Fred Dockery

Subject: PUBLICCOMMENT ON FEDERAL REGISTER FW: this agency sits on its butt while the whales die - SHIP STRIKES ALSO KILL BUT THE FISH LINES -YOU DONT DO A THING ABOUT THEM

From: [REDACTED]

Date: Tue, 14 Jun 2011 17:34:42 -0400

To: info@opsociety.org, info@oceana.org, information@sierraclub.org, foe@foe.org, info@emagazine.com, today@nbc.com, letters@newsweek.com, info@peta.org, info@seashepherd.org

CC: info@wdc.greenpeace.org, info@thepewtrust.org, ALWTRPScoping.Comments@noaa.gov, mary.colligan@noaa.gov

ACTION CANNOT WAIT UNTIL 2014 FOR NOAA TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THIS KILLING OF WHALES. I NOTE THAT THIS AGENCY IS SKEWING THE COMMENTS AND GOING ONLY TO AGENCIES WHERE FISHING PROFITEERS LIVE SO THAT THEY GET NO ACTION TO STOP THE WHALE KILLING. THERE ARE ZERO MEETINGS IN WHALE PROTECTION COUNTRY. ZERO. THIS AGENCY IS ALSO SPENDING ALOT OF TAX PAYER DOLLARS ON SOMETHING THAT WAS TOLD TO YOU YEARS AGO - STOP THE COMMERCIAL FISH PROFITEERS FROM KILILING THE WHALES. YOU HAD THAT MESSAGE FIFTY YEARS AGO AND HAVE CONTINUED TO DO NOTHING BUT SIT ONYOUR BUTTS. INSTEAD OF ALL THESE MEETINGS HAVE A TWO DAY MEETING ON WEBINAR THAT THE ENTIRE COUNTRY CAN JOIN IN ON. YOU WILL HEAR ENOUGH TO MAKE YOU UNDERSTAND THAT AMERICAN LOVES ITS WHALES AND WANTS THEM PROTECTED FROM THE RAPACIOUS, GREEDY, SALIVATING KILLING COMMERCIAL FISH PROFITEERS.
JEAN PUBLIC ADDRESS IF REQUIRED

[Federal Register Volume 76, Number 114 (Tuesday, June 14, 2011)]
[Notices]
[Pages 34654-34656]
From the Federal Register Online via the Government Printing Office [www.gpo.gov]
[FR Doc No: 2011-14743]

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RIN 0648-XA472]

Marine Mammals; Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of intent (NOI) to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS); notice of public scoping meetings; request for comments.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces its intention to amend the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan (ALWTRP). An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), to analyze impacts to the environment of the management alternatives under consideration. The purpose of this action is to notify the public of upcoming scoping meetings to solicit public comments on ways to reduce the risk of serious injury or mortality of right, humpback, and finback whales as a result of entanglement in vertical lines associated with commercial trap/pot and gillnet fisheries off the U.S. East Coast. NMFS requests comments on management options for this action. These options will form the basis of the alternatives that will later be analyzed through the EIS process.

DATES: Written comments must be postmarked or transmitted via facsimile (fax) at the appropriate address or number (see ADDRESSES section) no later than 5 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on September 12, 2011.

The public scoping meetings will be held in July and August 2011. For specific dates, times, and locations see SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION section.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments by any of the following methods:

[cir] Fax: (978) 281-9394.

[cir] Mail: Paper, disk, or CD-ROM comments should be sent to Mary

[[Page 34655]]

Colligan, Assistant Regional Administrator for Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service, 55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930. Mark the outside of the envelope, "Comments on the ALWTRP Scoping."

[cir] E-mail: ALWTRPScoping.Comments@noaa.gov.

Copies of the background documents provided to the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team (ALWTRT) in advance of the November 2010 and April

2011 ALWTRT meeting and general information on the ALWTRP can be obtained from the ALWTRP Web site at: <http://www.nero.nmfs.gov/whaletrp>. Copies of the most recent marine mammal stock assessment reports may be obtained by writing to Gordan Waring, NMFS, 166 Water St., Woods Hole, MA 02543 or can be downloaded from the Internet at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/sars/>. A document that summarizes major issues, legal requirements, and identifies potential management options will also be posted on the ALWTRP Web site on or about July 1, 2011, and made available to the public at scoping meetings. The above documents can also be obtained by contacting Kate Swails, Kate.Swails@noaa.gov or (978) 282-8481.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Kate Swails, NMFS, Northeast Region, 978-282-8481; Barb Zoodsma, NMFS, Southeast Region, 904-321-2806; or Kristy Long, NMFS, Office of Protected Resources, 301-713-2322.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Large whale entanglements and entanglements resulting in serious injuries and mortalities are still occurring; therefore, NMFS believes modifications to the ALWTRP are needed to meet the goals of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA). Under the MMPA, NMFS is required to reduce the incidental mortality and serious injury to three strategic large whale stocks--the Western Stock of the North Atlantic right whales (*Eubalaena glacialis*), the Gulf of Maine stock of humpback whales (*Megaptera novaeangliae*), and the Western North Atlantic stock of fin whales (*Balaenoptera physalus*)--incidentally taken in commercial fisheries to below the Potential Biological Removal (PBR) level for each stock.

ALWTRT

At the 2003 ALWTRT meeting, the ALWTRT agreed to manage entanglement risk by first reducing the risk associated with groundlines and then reducing the risk associated with vertical lines in commercial trap/pot and gillnet gear. Risk reduction of groundline was addressed in October 2007 with the implementation of the sinking groundline requirement for all fisheries throughout the entire East coast (72 FR 57104, October 5, 2007).

At the 2009 ALWTRT meeting, the Team agreed on a schedule to develop a management approach to reduce the risk of serious injury and mortality due to vertical line. As a result of this schedule NMFS committed to publishing a final rule to address vertical line entanglement by 2014. The approach for the vertical line rule will focus on reducing the risk of vertical line entanglements in high impact areas versus a wide-broad scale management scheme. Using fishing gear survey data and whale sightings per unit effort (SPUE) a model was developed to determine the co-occurrence of fishing gear density and whale density.

The ALWTRT Northeast Subgroup met in November 2010 and the Mid-Atlantic/Southeast Subgroup met in April 2011 to review the co-occurrence model and consider its implications for an overall management strategy to address vertical line entanglements.

The Team agreed NMFS should use the model to consider and develop possible options to address fishery interactions with large whales by reducing the potential for entanglements, minimizing adverse effects if entanglements occur, and mitigating the effects of any unavoidable entanglements.

Management Options

This notice provides an opportunity for public involvement. NMFS requests comments on management options for this action. Additionally, NMFS is seeking information on the range of impacts that should be considered for the various options. Background documents provided to the ALWTRT and general public in advance of the November 2010 and April 2011 meetings are available for review (see ADDRESSES section). A scoping document summarizing major issues, legal requirements, and identifying potential management options will be made available prior to the scoping meetings (see ADDRESSES section). Comments received on this action will assist NMFS in determining the alternatives for rulemaking to reduce interactions of right, humpback and fin whales with commercial fisheries as a result of vertical lines.

The ALWTRP (50 CFR 229.32) is a multi-faceted plan that includes area closures, gear modification requirements in areas open to fixed gear fishing, gear research to develop new modifications to current practices and/or fishing techniques, a right whale Sighting Advisory System, and a disentanglement program to free whales incidentally caught in fishing gear. Within the comment period established by this notice (see DATES section), NMFS will hold 15 public scoping meetings to gather public comment on the development and implementation of new management measures for the ALWTRP.

Schedule of Public Scoping Meetings

The dates, times, and locations of the meetings are scheduled as follows:

1. Monday, July 11, 2011--East Machias, ME 6-9 p.m.

Washington Academy, 66 High Street, East Machias, ME 04630.

2. Tuesday, July 12, 2011--Ellsworth, ME 6-9 p.m.

Ellsworth City Hall (Auditorium), 1 City Hall Plaza, Ellsworth, ME 04605.

3. Wednesday, July 13, 2011--Rockland, ME 6-9 p.m.
Rockland District High School (Auditorium), 400 Broadway, Rockland, ME 04841.
4. Thursday, July 14, 2011--Portland, ME 6-9 p.m.
Portland City Hall (State of Maine Room), 389 Congress St., Portland, ME 04101.
5. Monday, July 18, 2011--Providence, RI 5:30-8:30 p.m.
Providence Public Library, 150 Empire St., Providence, RI 02903.
6. Tuesday, July 19, 2011--Plymouth, MA 6-9 p.m.
Plymouth Public Library (Fehlow Room), 132 South St., Plymouth, MA 02360.
7. Wednesday, July 20, 2011--Chatham, MA 6-9 p.m.
Chatham Community Center (Large Meeting Room), 702 Main St., Chatham, MA 02633.
8. Thursday, July 21, 2011--Gloucester, MA 6-9 p.m.
NOAA Northeast Regional Office (Hearing Room A&B), 55 Great Republic Dr., Gloucester, MA 01930.
9. Tuesday, July 26, 2011--Morehead City, NC 6-9 p.m.
NC Division of Marine Fisheries Central District Office, 5285 Highway 70 West, Morehead City, NC 28557.
[[Page 34656]]
10. Wednesday, July 27, 2011--Virginia Beach, VA 6-9 p.m.
Meyera E. Obendorf Central Library (Folio Room), 4100 Virginia Beach Blvd., Virginia Beach, VA 23452.
11. Thursday, July 28, 2011--Ocean View DE 6-9 p.m.
Ocean View Town Hall (John West Park), 32 West Ave., Ocean View, DE 19970.
12. Friday, July 29, 2011--Manahawkin, NJ 6-9 p.m.
Stafford Township (Council Meeting Room), 260 E. Bay Ave., Manahawkin, NJ 08050.
13. Monday August 22, 2011--Cape Canaveral, FL 5-8 p.m.
Cape Canaveral Public Library, 201 Polk Avenue, Cape Canaveral, FL 32920.
14. Tuesday August 23, 2011--Jacksonville, FL 6-9 p.m.
Jacksonville Port Authority (JAXPORT), Board Room, 2831 Talleyrand Avenue, Jacksonville, FL 32206.
15. Wednesday August 24, 2011--Garden City, GA 6-9 p.m.
Garden City City Hall, 100 Central Avenue (at intersection of Dean Forest Rd. and Constantine Rd.), Garden City, GA 31405.

Special Accommodations

These meetings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Kate Swails (978) 282-8481.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1361 et seq.

Dated: June 8, 2011.

Helen M. Golde,
Deputy Director, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 2011-14743 Filed 6-13-11; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-P

7/20/11

Proposal

Highest overall reduction should be (0%). This is a serious proposal.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joel Bois

JOEL BOIS

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

B. Anyone is welcome to come fishing with me anytime.

①

to Mary Coligan: Sept 4 2011

In the over 30 YEARS
OF LOBSTERING I HAVE NEVER
SEEN A North Atlantic right
humpback AND FIN WHALES IN
BUZZARD BAY, VINGARD SOUND,
BUZZARD BAY BOU, GAS HEAD
MARTHA VINGARD OR SOUTH OF
NOMANO ISLAND. TO IMPOSE MORE
REGULATION ON A FISHERY THAT
HAS BEEN DESTROYED BY THE
EPA WITH MANDATED
REGULATIONS ON THE STATE'S
CHEMICAL TREATMENT PLANTS USING

(2)

Sodium Hypochlorite and Sodium Bisulfite is typical of what government does best. I ask that you use some basic common sense or rational thought in deciding any new regulations in this matter. If you are trying to put the lobsterman out of business by using whales as an excuse, then it will soon be obvious. The truth always prevails. I ask that

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NMFS DOES NOT IMPOSE
MORE CRUSHING REGULATION
ON AREAS THAT HAVE NO
HISTORY OF WHALES IN
THEIR VICINITY.

Sincerely

DAVID J. BOLTON JR.
~~David J. Bolton Jr.~~

F/V HOKI-DO

[REDACTED]

Subject: vertical line comments

From: [REDACTED]

Date: Mon, 12 Sep 2011 13:59:17 -0700 (PDT)

To: ALWTRPScoping.Comments@noaa.gov

CC: Kate.Swails@noaa.gov

I apologize for the last minute comments. I attended a vertical line meeting at NOAA in Gloucester, MA in July of this year. I expressed this concern then and I just wanted to document it now: The lack of statistical data from the first ALWTRT implementation - switching floating groundline to sinking groundline.

NOAA's basic fundamentals are science and conservation. According to the documents provided at the meeting, in 2007 this switch to sinking groundline was implemented and according to the representatives at the meeting, should have been in full compliance by 2009. It is 2011, which means this gear modification has only been in full effect for about 2.5 years. The last scientific paper issued from NOAA, pertaining to whale entanglements was in 2008. I may be wrong and maybe there has been a more recent one, or one soon to be published. With that said, where is the data to show statistical significance that the sinking groundline modification even made an impact? NOAA being a science-based program, should concede that at least 5 years are needed before any significant data can be illustrated as to the effect this modification will have before implementing another one (vertical line reduction).

My point is, in theory, the groundline modification sounds great, and fisherman have made it work. But theory and practicality are only synonymous when time is given to prove such methods. Give the first modification time. Maybe NOAA will find that it made no impact whatsoever, maybe it has decreased whale entanglements or maybe, just maybe it made it worse. Example - fish farms sound great in theory and there are millions being pumped into this aqua-business to research and expand the possibilities to combat over-fishing and bycatch. But now that theory, that great idea, has come to the realization that there are side effects to this -pollution, disease, threatening wild stocks and eating up resources such as small pelagic fish...

There will be secondary effects from the groundline modification. Wait to see what those are first by investing the money into researching any significant differences, when enough time has passed to make it scientifically worthy. It's a possibility that with the change over, there is now more ghost gear and that somehow causes more entanglements. Humpbacks have been documented to dig up sand lance by scraping the bottom - and if ghost gear (in a ball and tangled no less) happens to be there because some fisherman lost a trawl and without the floating line, makes it much much more difficult to grapple back, there may be an issue here.

Also, in NOAA's statistical analysis, it would be nice to see percentages of whales, based on their current population stock, be used in scientific papers vs. the actual number of whales involved in these entanglements. Meaning, 10 whales sounds awful but we both know 10 right whales affected are much worse than 10 humpbacks based on population size. And don't include minke whales if ALWTRT is only concerned with humpbacks, fins and rights.

Sorry this is rushed and thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Maren M. Olson

fisherman from Gloucester, MA