

SERO, Protected Resources Division's Briefing Document for the June 2017 SAFMC Meeting

Endangered Species Act (ESA) Listing Actions and Other Rulemaking

Sea Turtle Conservation and Recovery Actions in Relation to the Southeastern United States Shrimp Fishery [Updated]

- On December 16, 2016, NOAA Fisheries published a proposed rule that, if implemented, would require all shrimp trawlers using skimmer trawls, pusher-head trawls, and wing nets to use TEDs designed to exclude small turtles in their nets.
- Public hearings were held during January 2017 in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and North Carolina. The comment period on the proposed rule ended on February 14, 2017
- OMB has deemed this rule significant, thus any final rule will require OMB review.

Atlantic Sturgeon Critical Habitat [Updated]

- NOAA Fisheries proposed designation of Atlantic sturgeon critical habitat in June 2016. The public comment period was open for 105 days and three public hearings were held in June in GA, SC, and NC.
- 17 units of critical habitat are currently proposed, ranging from the Roanoke River, NC, to the St. Marys River GA/FL. Critical habitat designations are only proposed for rivers; no estuary or marine habitats are proposed for designation.
- Per extension of a court-ordered deadline, NOAA Fisheries must publish a final rule or find a final rule unwarranted on or before July 18, 2017

ESA Section 7-Related Actions

Reinitiation of Additional FMP Consultations [No Change]

- Section 7 consultation on several SA and SA/Gulf of Mexico FMPs (Coastal Migratory Pelagic, Dolphin-Wahoo, Spiny Lobster FMPs) has been reinitiated and/or is needed to address newly listed species/DPSs (e.g., Green sea turtle NA and SA DPSs, Nassau grouper). SERO is currently prioritizing completion of these and all other SERO federal fishery consultations.

Marine Mammal Protection Act Actions and News

Final 2016 Marine Mammal Stock Assessment Reports [New]

- The Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) requires NMFS and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to prepare stock assessment reports (SARs) for all marine mammal stocks occurring in waters under U.S. jurisdiction. SARs must be reviewed annually for strategic stocks and at least once every three years for other stocks. If the status of a marine mammal stock has changed or its status can be determined more accurately, the stock's report must be revised.
- NOAA Fisheries expects to issue a notice announcing availability of the final 2016 SARs and response to public comments in June 2016.

Pelagic Longline Take Reduction Plan Proposed Rule Development [No change]

- SERO is working in a proposed rule to update regulatory and non-regulatory requirements of the Pelagic Longline Take Reduction Plan based on consensus recommendations from the Pelagic Longline Take Reduction Team after meetings in December 2015 and September and October

2016 (recommendations can be found in the Key Outcomes Memorandums at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/interactions/trt/pl-trt.html>).

Bottlenose Dolphin Take Reduction Plan [No Change]

- The next meeting of the BDTRT will be an in-person meeting December 5-7, 2017. The main purpose of the meeting will be to assess the Bottlenose Dolphin Take Reduction Plan progress in meeting its short- and long-term goals for each affected strategic stock of bottlenose dolphins.