

taken from the Roanoke River; however, sampling effort has been low. The Final Recovery Plan for shortnose sturgeon mandates that surveys be conducted to identify and determine the status of extant populations of shortnose sturgeon.

Dated: February 10, 2000.

Wanda L. Cain,

Chief, Endangered Species Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 020700D]

Endangered Species; Permits

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

ACTION: Receipt of application for ESA section 10(a)(1)(A) enhancement permit #1237.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that NMFS has received a permit application from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Walla Walla District at Walla Walla, WA (Corps).

DATES: Comments or requests for a public hearing on this application request must be received at the appropriate address or fax number (see **ADDRESSES**) no later than 5:00pm pacific standard time on March 17, 2000.

ADDRESSES: Written comments on this application should be sent to the Protected Resources Division (PRD), F/NWO3, 525 NE Oregon Street, Suite 500, Portland, OR 97232-2737. Comments may also be sent via fax to 503-230-5435. Comments will not be accepted if submitted via e-mail or the internet. The application and related documents are available for review by appointment in the Protected Resources Division, F/NWO3, 525 NE Oregon Street, Suite 500, Portland, OR 97232-2737 (ph: 503-230-5400, fax: 503-230-5435).

Documents may also be reviewed by appointment in the Office of Protected Resources, F/PR3, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910-3226 (301-713-1401).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Robert Koch, Portland, OR (ph: 503-230-5424, fax: 503-230-5435, e-mail: Robert.Koch@noaa.gov).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Authority

Issuance of permits and permit modifications, as required by the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531-1543) (ESA), is based on a finding that such permits/modifications: (1) Are applied for in good faith; (2) would not operate to the disadvantage of the listed species which are the subject of the permits; and (3) are consistent with the purposes and policies set forth in section 2 of the ESA. Authority to take listed species is subject to conditions set forth in the permits. Permits and modifications are issued in accordance with and are subject to the ESA and NMFS regulations governing listed fish and wildlife permits (50 CFR parts 222-226).

Those individuals requesting a hearing on the application listed in this notice should set out the specific reasons why a hearing on the application would be appropriate (see **ADDRESSES**). The holding of such hearing is at the discretion of the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA. All statements and opinions contained in the permit action summary are those of the applicant and do not necessarily reflect the views of NMFS.

Species Covered in this Notice

The following species and evolutionarily significant units (ESU's) are covered in this notice:

Chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*): threatened, naturally produced and artificially propagated Snake River (SnR) spring/summer; threatened SnR fall; endangered, naturally produced and artificially propagated upper Columbia River (UCR) spring.

Sockeye salmon (*O. nerka*): endangered, naturally produced and artificially propagated SnR.

Steelhead (*O. mykiss*): threatened SnR; endangered naturally produced and artificially propagated UCR; threatened middle Columbia River (MCR).

To date, protective regulations for threatened SnR and MCR steelhead under section 4(d) of the ESA have not been promulgated by NMFS. This notice of receipt of an application requesting takes of these species is issued as a precaution in the event that NMFS issues protective regulations that prohibit takes of threatened SnR and MCR steelhead. The initiation of a 30-day public comment period on the application, including its proposed takes of threatened SnR and MCR steelhead does not presuppose the contents of the eventual protective regulations.

Application Received

The Corps requests a 5-year ESA section 10(a)(1)(A) enhancement permit to replace permit #895, which is due to expire on December 31, 2000. The permit is requested for annual takes of ESA-listed SnR salmon/steelhead for the purposes of enhancement, and incidental takes of ESA-listed UCR and MCR salmon/steelhead, associated with the transportation of juvenile anadromous fish around the mainstem dams and reservoirs on the Snake and Columbia Rivers in the Pacific Northwest. The purpose of the Corps' Juvenile Fish Transportation Program (JFTP) is to increase juvenile fish survival over the alternative of in-river passage, given current in-river migratory conditions. The collection and transportation of juvenile salmonids is projected to occur March 25 through October 31 each year at Lower Granite, Little Goose, and Lower Monumental Dams, and March 25 through December 15 each year at McNary Dam. The Corps proposes to load the juvenile fish into trucks or barges at the hydropower facilities for transportation to below Bonneville Dam on the Columbia River. Further handling of the ESA-listed fish does not occur except when salmonids are handled for smolt monitoring and research purposes by researchers holding separate permits. Indirect mortalities of ESA-listed juvenile fish associated with the JFTP are requested by the Corps. The Corps also requests annual incidental takes, including incidental mortalities, of ESA-listed adult fish associated with fallbacks at the juvenile fish transportation facilities.

The Corps' JFTP is a mitigation measure recommended by NMFS' *Reinitiation of Consultation on 1994-1998 Operation of the Federal Columbia River Power System (FCRPS) and Juvenile Transportation Program in 1995 and Future Years* biological opinion issued on March 2, 1995 and the 1998 supplement to that opinion. However, NMFS is in the process of consulting with the Federal action agencies, including the Corps, on the long-term management strategy for the FCRPS, pursuant to section 7 of the ESA. Issuance of the proposed permit will depend on the completion of that consultation process and the requirements of any biological opinion resulting from the consultation.

Dated: February 10, 2000.

Wanda L. Cain,

Chief, Endangered Species Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

[I.D. 120999H-1]

Extension of Comment Period for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, and Incidental Take Permit Application and Proposed Habitat Conservation Plan Submitted by Plum Creek Timberlands, L. P. for Lands in Montana, Idaho, and Washington

AGENCIES: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Commerce; Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), Interior.

ACTION: Notice; extension of public comment period.

SUMMARY: This notice announces the extension of the comment period announced in the **Federal Register** notice dated December 17, 1999, for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for proposed issuance of an Incidental Take Permit (Permit), pursuant to the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA), to Plum Creek Timberlands, L.P., (and its partners Plum Creek Timber Company, Inc., and Plum Creek Timber I L. L. C.), Plum Creek Marketing Inc., Plum Creek Land Company, Plum Creek Northwest Lumber, Inc., Plum Creek Northwest Plywood, Inc., and Plum Creek MDF, Inc. (Plum Creek).

DATES: Written comments must be received at the appropriate address or fax number by 5:00pm Mountain Standard Time on March 17, 2000.

ADDRESSES: Written comments should be sent to Ted Koch, Project Biologist, FWS, 1387 S. Vinnell Way, Room 368, Boise, Idaho 83709 (fax: 208/387-5262); or Bob Ries, Project Biologist, NMFS, 530 S. Albury Street, Suite #2, Moscow, Idaho 83843 (fax: 208/882-4109). Comments will not be accepted if submitted via e-mail or the internet.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ted Koch, 208/378-5243, fax 208/378-5262, e-mail Ted_Koch@fws.gov; or Bob Ries,

208/882-6148, fax 208/882-4109, e-mail Bob.Ries@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This notice extends the comment period announced in the **Federal Register** on December 17, 1999 (64 FR 70695). Issuance of the Permit is pursuant to section 10(a)(1)(B) of the ESA. The December 17, 1999, notice informed the public that NMFS and FWS have received an application by Plum Creek for a Permit, and invited the public to comment on the proposal to issue the Permit, Habitat Conservation Plan, DEIS, and Implementing Agreement.

Dated: February 4, 2000.

Thomas J. Dwyer,

Acting Regional Director, Region 1, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Dated: February 11, 2000.

Wanda L. Cain,

Chief, Endangered Species Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 020700C]

Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Shrimp Fishery of the Gulf of Mexico; Scoping Meetings

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

ACTION: Notice of scoping meetings; request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) will conduct scoping meetings to receive comments on a Draft Options Paper for Amendment 10 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Shrimp Fishery of the Gulf of Mexico (Shrimp Amendment 10).

DATES: Written comments will be accepted until 5 p.m. on March 6, 2000. The scoping meetings will be held from February 28 through March 1, 2000. See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** for specific dates and times.

ADDRESSES: Written comments should be sent to the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, 3018 U.S. Highway 301, North, Suite 1000, Tampa, Florida 33619; telephone: (813) 228-2815. Copies of the Draft Options Paper are also available from the Council.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Richard Leard, Senior Fishery Biologist, Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council; telephone: (813) 228-2815.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The scoping meetings will be convened to receive comments on the need for additional bycatch reduction requirements for the shrimp fishery in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) south and east of 85°30' W. long. Amendment 9 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Shrimp Fishery of the Gulf of Mexico (FMP), approved by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) on July 30, 1997, and implemented by final rule on May 14, 1998 (April 14, 1998; 63 FR 18139), required the use of a NMFS-certified bycatch reduction device (BRD) in shrimp trawls used in the EEZ from Cape San Blas, Florida (85°30' W. long.) to the Texas/Mexico border and provided for the certification of the Fisheye BRD in the 30 mesh position. The purpose of this action was to reduce the bycatch mortality of juvenile red snapper by 44 percent from the average mortality for the years 1984-89. Amendment 9 to the FMP exempted shrimp trawls fishing for royal red shrimp outside of 100 fathoms, as well as groundfish and butterfish trawls. It also excluded small try nets and no more than two ridged frame roller trawls that do not exceed 16 feet (4.9 m). Amendment 9 to the FMP did not require BRDs south and east of 85-30' West long. because few juvenile red snapper were found as bycatch in this area. Because of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act's requirement to reduce bycatch to the extent practicable, the Council is considering the need for additional measures to reduce bycatch.

Scoping meetings for the Draft Options Paper on Shrimp Amendment 10 will begin at 7:00 p.m. and end at 10:00 p.m. at all of the following locations:

1. Monday, February 28, 2000—New Orleans Airport Hilton, 901 Airline Drive, Kenner, LA 70062

2. Tuesday, February 29, 2000—Mississippi Department of Marine Resources, 1141 Bayview Avenue, Biloxi, MS 39530

3. Wednesday, March 1, 2000—Adam's Mark Hotel Mobile, 64 South Water Street, Mobile, AL 36602

Special Accommodations

These meetings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language