months of plan implementation, the incidental mortality or serious injury of marine mammals taken in the course of commercial fishing operations to levels less than the PBR level (16 U.S.C. 1387). The long-term goal of the plan is to reduce, within 5 years of its implementation, the incidental mortality or serious injury of marine mammals taken in the course of commercial fishing operations to insignificant levels approaching a zero mortality and serious injury rate, taking into account the economics of the fishery, the availability of existing technology, and existing state or regional fishery management plans (16 U.S.C. 1387).

The Secretary of Commerce (Secretary) shall establish a take reduction team to address mortality or serious injury of strategic stocks of marine mammals interacting with Category I or II fisheries. Not later than 6 months after the date of establishment of a take reduction team, the Team is required to submit a draft take reduction plan for such stock to the Secretary, consistent with the other provisions of section 118 of the MMPA. The Secretary is required to take the draft take reduction plan submitted by the team into consideration and publish in the **Federal Register** the draft plan submitted by the team, any changes proposed by the Secretary with an explanation of the reasons therefor, and proposed regulations to implement such plan, for public review and comment.

Public Scoping Process

The BDTRT was established on November 7, 2001. A **Federal Register** notice announcing the convening of the BDTRT and its first meeting was published on October 24, 2001 (66 FR 53782). The Team met a total of five times before delivering consensus recommendations for the BDTRP to NMFS on May 7, 2002, and also met in April 2003 to review updated bottlenose dolphin abundance information and to augment the original recommendations where they did not meet the statutory requirements of the MMPA. The dates of the six meetings were: November 7–8, 2001; January 23–25, 2002; February 27–March 1, 2002; March 27–28, 2002; April 23–25, 2002; and April 1–3, 2003. Team meetings were open to the public and a public comment period was held following each day of meetings. Additionally, NMFS held three public meetings with potential Team members and other interested members of the public on May 15–16, 2001; July 11–12, 2001; and November 6, 2001. No additional scoping meetings are scheduled.

NMFS hired a commercial fisheries liaison to engage the commercial fishing sector by sharing information about the purpose of the Team, meeting dates and locations, and the discussion topics for upcoming meetings. The liaison used dockside visits, commercial fishing publications, and a commercial fishing expo to disseminate the information. NMFS generated and distributed a fact sheet about the Team and upcoming Team meetings, developed a Web site regarding the issue, and used mail and electronic mail to distribute information about meeting logistics and summaries to over 200 interested persons.

Analysis of Alternatives

NMFS will be analyzing alternatives that are reasonably expected to reduce mortality and serious injury of western North Atlantic coastal bottlenose dolphins to less than the PBR level within 6 months of implementation of the BDTRP. NMFS will be analyzing all reasonable alternatives, which include a status quo alternative and the recommendations submitted by the Team. The Team's recommendations can be obtained by contacting Katie Moore or Tanya Dobrzynski (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**).

NMFS will provide an opportunity for comment on the draft EA in conjunction with publication of the proposed regulations to implement the BDTRP. At that time, NMFS will also consider public comments received during the public comment period on the NOI to prepare an EIS for the BDTRP.

Dated: July 25, 2003.

Rebecca Lent,

Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 03–19521 Filed 7–30–03; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 072403B]

New England Fishery Management Council; Public Meetings

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

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: The New England Fishery Management Council (Council) is scheduling a public meeting of its Herring Advisory Panel in August, 2003.

DATES: The meeting will held on Wednesday, August 20, 2003, at 10 a.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Sheraton South Portland, 363 Main Mall Road, South Portland, ME 04106; telephone: (207) 775-6161.

Council address: New England Fishery Management Council, 50 Water Street, Newburyport, MA 01950.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Paul J. Howard, Executive Director, New England Fishery Management Council (978) 465-0492.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The panel will review progress to date on development of alternatives for analysis in Amendment 1 to the Herring Fishery Management Plan (FMP). They will also develop Advisory Panel recommendations for the Herring Committee to consider regarding the range of alternatives for analysis in Amendment 1.

Although non-emergency issues not contained in this agenda may come before this group for discussion, those issues may not be the subject of formal action during this meeting. Action will be restricted to those issues specifically listed in this notice and any issues arising after publication of this notice that require emergency action under section 305(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, provided the public has been notified of the Council's intent to take final action to address the emergency.

Special Accommodations

This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Paul J. Howard (see **ADDRESSES**) at least 5 days prior to the meeting dates.

Dated: July 25, 2003.

Richard W. Surdi,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 03–19518 Filed 7–30–03; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 072403A]

North Pacific Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

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

ACTION: Notice of a public meeting.

SUMMARY: The North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) Improved Retention/Improved