

Dated: August 22, 2014.

Lois Rossi,

Director, Registration Division, Office of
Pesticide Programs.

[FR Doc. 2014-21101 Filed 9-4-14; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6560-50-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 216

[Docket No. 140429386-4386-01]

RIN 0648-XD275

Petition To Designate Sakhalin Bay- Amur River Beluga Whales Stock as Depleted Under the Marine Mammal Protection Act; Finding

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

ACTION: Notice of 60-day petition
finding; extension of public comment
period.

SUMMARY: NMFS received a petition to
“designate the Sakhalin Bay-Amur River
stock of beluga whales (*Delphinapterus
leucas*) as a depleted stock under the
Marine Mammal Protection Act
(MMPA).” On August 1, 2014, NMFS
announced that the petition presented
substantial information indicating that
the petitioned action may be warranted
and that NMFS would initiate a status
review promptly. NMFS also solicited
information from the public that may
contribute to the status review. NMFS is
extending the comment period for 30
days.

DATES: The comment period for the
petition finding published August 1,
2014, at 79 FR 44733, is extended.
Information and comments must be
received by close of business on
September 29, 2014.

ADDRESSES: The petition and a list of
references contained in this notice are
available in electronic form via the
Internet at [http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/
pr/](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/). A copy of the petition and/or its
supporting documents may be requested
from Chief, Marine Mammal and Sea
Turtle Conservation Division, Office of
Protected Resources, National Marine
Fisheries Service, 1315 East-West
Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910.

You may submit comments, identified
by NOAA-NMFS-2014-0056, by any of
the following methods:

Electronic Submissions: Submit all
electronic public comments via the

Federal eRulemaking Portal [http://
www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov).

Mail: Send comments or requests for
copies of reports to: Chief, Marine
Mammal and Sea Turtle Conservation
Division, Office of Protected Resources,
National Marine Fisheries Service, 1315
East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD
20910-3226, Attn: Beluga petition.

Instructions: All comments received
are a part of the public record and will
generally be posted to [http://
www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) without change.
All Personal Identifying Information (for
example, name, address, etc.)
voluntarily submitted by the commenter
may be publicly accessible. Do not
submit Confidential Business
Information or otherwise sensitive or
protected information.

NMFS will accept anonymous
comments (enter N/A in the required
fields, if you wish to remain
anonymous). You may submit
attachments to electronic comments in
Microsoft Word, Excel, WordPerfect, or
Adobe PDF file formats only.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr.
Shannon Bettridge, Office of Protected
Resources, Silver Spring, MD;
shannon.bettridge@noaa.gov; (301) 427-
8402.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

On April 23, 2014, NMFS received a
petition from the Animal Welfare
Institute, Whale and Dolphin
Conservation, Cetacean Society
International and Earth Island Institute
to “designate the Sakhalin Bay-Amur
River stock of beluga whales as depleted
under the MMPA.” The petition asserts
this group of whales constitutes a stock
and that this stock is below its optimum
sustainable population (OSP) and
qualifies for a depleted designation. It
also argues that the causes of the stock’s
decline include: large-scale commercial
hunting from 1915–1963; unsustainable
removal quotas; hunting permits;
incidental mortality from fishing
operations; accidental drowning during
live-capture operations; vessel strikes;
and other anthropogenic threats.

The MMPA allows interested parties
to petition NMFS to initiate a status
review to determine whether a species
or stock of marine mammals should be
designated as depleted. Section
115(a)(3) of the MMPA (16 U.S.C.
1383b(a)(3)) requires NMFS to publish a
notice in the **Federal Register** that such
a petition has been received and is
available for public review. Within 60
days of receiving a petition, NMFS must
publish a finding in the **Federal
Register** as to whether the petition

presents substantial information
indicating that the petitioned action
may be warranted.

Pursuant to Section 115(a)(3)(A) of the
MMPA, NMFS published a notice in the
Federal Register that the petition had
been received and was available for
public review (79 FR 28879, May 20,
2014). In response to its announcement
that the petition had been received,
NMFS received 17 comments, all
expressing support for the petitioned
action. Several non-governmental
organizations submitted letters of
support, providing information similar
or identical to the information provided
in the petition. These comments and
supporting information can be found at
www.regulations.gov (Docket ID:
NOAA-NMFS-2014-0056).

Pursuant to Section 115(a)(3)(B) of the
MMPA, NMFS published a notice in the
Federal Register stating that after
reviewing information presented in the
petition, readily available in our files,
and submitted through the public
comment process, the petition presented
substantial information indicating that
the petitioned action may be warranted
and that NMFS will initiate a status
review (79 FR 44733, August 1, 2014).

NMFS subsequently received a
request by the Georgia Aquarium to
extend the public comment period by 60
days to provide all stakeholder parties,
including the Aquarium, an adequate
opportunity to provide NMFS with the
information necessary to make an
accurate determination on the status of
the species. In this notice NMFS is
extending the public comment period
until October 6, 2014, to allow adequate
time for the public to provide scientific
information relevant to the status of the
Sakhalin Bay-Amur River beluga
whales. To provide a more extended
public comment period would preclude
NMFS from meeting its statutory
requirements under the MMPA. The
MMPA mandates NMFS to promptly
initiate a status review and if the status
review supports the petitioned action,
publish in the **Federal Register** and
solicit comments on a proposed rule as
to the status of the stock, along with the
reasons underlying the proposed status
determination no later than 210 days
after receipt of the petition.

Information Solicited

To ensure that the status review is
based on the best scientific information
available, we are soliciting scientific
information relevant to the status of the
Sakhalin Bay-Amur River beluga whales
from the public, including individuals
and organizations concerned with the
conservation of marine mammals,
persons in industry which may be

affected by the determination, and academic institutions. Specifically, we are soliciting information related to (1) the identification of Sakhalin Bay-Amur

River beluga whales as a stock, (2) the historical or current abundance of this group, and (3) factors that may be affecting the group.

Dated: August 29, 2014.

Donna S. Wieting,

*Director, Office of Protected Resources,
National Marine Fisheries Service.*

[FR Doc. 2014-21090 Filed 8-29-14; 4:15 pm]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-P