

Alabama sturgeon in the **Federal Register** (64 FR 14676). Section 4(b)(5)(E) of the Act (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) requires that we hold a public hearing if it is requested within 45 days of the publication of the proposed rule. Sheldon Morgan, Chairman, Alabama-Tombigbee Rivers Coalition, requested a public hearing within the allotted time period. On May 25, 1999, we published a notice in the **Federal Register** announcing a public hearing and extending the comment period until July 5, 1999 (64 FR 28142). We held a public hearing on June 24, 1999, at the Montgomery Civic Center in Montgomery, Alabama. We published another extension of the comment period on July 12, 1999 (64 FR 37492). While the proposed rule was out for comment, we received a wide range of comments on numerous issues which will be addressed in our final determination. The purpose of reopening the comment period through February 10, 2000, is to enter into the record Dr. Stephen Fain's 1999 study, *The Development of a DNA Procedure for the Forensic Identification of Caviar*, and any comments we receive that address the relationship of this study to the proposed listing of the Alabama sturgeon as endangered.

#### Public Comments Solicited

We intend that any final action resulting from this proposal will be as accurate and as effective as possible. Therefore, we request comments or suggestions from the public, other concerned governmental agencies, the scientific community, industry, or any other interested party concerning this study and its relation to the proposed rule. In making a final decision, we will take into consideration the comments we receive and their relationship to the proposed action. Such communications may lead to a final determination that differs from this proposal.

The previous comment period on this proposal closed on September 10, 1999. To allow all interested parties time to submit their comments for the record, we are reopening the comment period until February 10, 2000.

Please submit Internet comments as an ASCII file, avoiding the use of special characters and any form of encryption. Please also include "Attention: [Alabama sturgeon]" and your name and return address in your Internet message. If you do not receive a confirmation from the system that we have received your Internet message, contact us directly at the above address or by telephone at 601/965-4900. Finally, you

may hand-deliver comments to the above address. Our practice is to make comments, including names and home addresses of respondents, available for public review during regular business hours. Individual respondents may request that we withhold their home address from the rulemaking record, which we will honor to the extent allowable by law. There also may be circumstances in which we would withhold from the rulemaking record a respondent's identity, as allowable by law. If you wish us to withhold your name and/or address, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comment. However, we will not consider anonymous comments. We will make all submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials or organizations or businesses, available for public inspection in their entirety. Comments and materials received will be available for public inspection, by appointment, during normal business hours at the above address.

#### References Cited

Fain, S.R., J.P. Lemay, J. Shafer, R.M. Hoesch, and B.H. Hamlin. 1999. Unpublished report. National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Laboratory, Ashland, OR. 23 pp. with figures.

#### Author

The primary author of this notice is Paul Hartfield (see **ADDRESSES** section).

#### Authority

The authority for this action is the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*).

Dated: January 4, 2000.

#### H. Dale Hall,

*Acting Regional Director, Fish and Wildlife Service.*

[FR Doc. 00-564 Filed 1-10-00; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4310-55-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

#### 50 CFR Part 226

[I.D. 110599D]

RIN 0648-AL82

#### Designated Critical Habitat: Reproposed Critical Habitat for Johnson's Seagrass; Notice of Public Hearing

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

**ACTION:** Proposed rule; notice of public hearing.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS has scheduled an additional public hearing to be held on the proposed designation of critical habitat for threatened Johnson's seagrass.

**DATES:** The public hearing will be held from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. on January 31, 2000.

**ADDRESSES:** The public hearing will be held in the Annex Building of NMFS' Southeast Fisheries Science Center, 75 Virginia Beach Drive, Miami, FL. A sign will be posted in the main lobby directing people to the building located to the left rear of the main building.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Layne Bolen, Panama City Laboratory, Protected Resources Division, NMFS, 850-234-6541 ext. 237, layne.bolen@noaa.gov, or Marta Nammack, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 301-713-1401, marta.nammack@noaa.gov.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** On December 2, 1999 (64 FR 67536), NMFS published a reproposed rule to designate critical habitat for Johnson's seagrass under the Endangered Species Act. Public comments were solicited, a public hearing was announced, and the comment period was set to expire on January 3, 2000. NMFS extended the public comment period to February 2, 2000 (65 FR 111, January 3, 2000), in order to provide at least 60 days for public comment following publication in the **Federal Register**. NMFS has now scheduled an additional public hearing (see **DATES** and **ADDRESSES**).

Dated: January 6, 2000.

#### Don Knowles,

*Director, Office of Protected Resources.*

[FR Doc. 00-629 Filed 1-10-00; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3510-22-F**