

Debra Thompson

From: Stephen Giesbrecht
Sent: Thursday, October 10, 2019 10:49 AM
To: Assembly
Subject: FW: Critical Habitat Designation For ESA-Listed Humpback Whales

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Sent: Thursday, October 10, 2019 9:49 AM
To: Stephen Giesbrecht <sgiesbrecht@petersburgak.gov>
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Critical Habitat Designation For ESA-Listed Humpback Whales

Hi Steve,

This is late-breaking information and didn't make our latest community report, but NMFS has come out with proposed critical habitat designations for three ESA-listed distinct population (DPS) segments of humpback whales. The Mexican DPS has habitat listed in SE Alaska. Fishery actions (primarily pot gear entanglements but gillnets are referenced too) and ship strikes are identified as threats to the species based on past observed harm or mortality to the whales. The proposed rule is being driven as a result of a settlement agreement from a lawsuit by the Center for Biological Diversity. Dungeness crab is likely to be most impacted among fisheries in Southeast when it comes time for NMFS to put restrictions in place to protect the whales. We are still early on in the process.

The full proposed rule (including maps on p. 36-38) is at the link. Public comments are being taken until December 9th, with requests for public hearings having to be submitted by November 25th. NMFS has not published details on any hearings but if there are strong sentiments among your Assembly about wanting to have a hearing in Petersburg, let me know and I will draft a request up.

<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2019-10-09/pdf/2019-21186.pdf>

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