DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

[1.D. 110299C]

Marine Mammals; File No. 932–1489–01


ACTION: Issuance of permit amendment.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that the Marine Mammal Health and Stranding Response Program (MMHSPR), National Marine Fisheries Service, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910, has been issued an amendment to scientific research and enhancement Permit No. 932–1489–01.

ADDRESS: The permit and related documents are available for review upon written request or by appointment:

See SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ruth Johnson 301/713–2289.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On March 25, 1999, notice was published in the Federal Register (64 FR 14435) that a request for a scientific research and enhancement permit to take all species in the Orders Cetacea, Pinnipedia, Sirenia, and polar bear, sea otter and marine otter had been submitted by the above-named organization. The permit was issued July 2, 1999 (64 FR 37933) under the authority of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (MMPA; 16 U.S.C. 1361 et seq), the Regulations Governing the Taking and Importing of Marine Mammals (50 CFR part 216), the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA; 16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq), the regulations governing the taking, importing, and exporting of endangered fish and wildlife (50 CFR parts 217–227), and the Fur Seal Act of 1966, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1151 et seq) to only take species of the Orders Cetacea and Pinnipedia (except walrus). The Permit is amended to include species of Order Sirenia and polar bear, sea and marine otters. The amendment is issued under authority of the above citations and the MMPA (16 U.S.C. 1361 et seq), applicable regulations (50 CFR part 18), ESA (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq), and applicable regulations (50 CFR part 17).

Issuance of this permit, as required by the ESA, was based on a finding that such permit (1) was applied for in good faith, (2) will not operate to the disadvantage of the endangered species which is the subject of this permit, and (3) is consistent with the purposes and policies set forth in section 2 of the ESA.

Documents may be reviewed in the following locations:

Permits and Documentation Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13705, Silver Spring, MD 20910 (301/713–2289);

Alaska Region, National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA, P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802–1668 (907/586–7221);

Northeast Region, National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA, One Blackburn Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930–9250 (978/281–9250);

Northwest Region, National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA, 7600 Sand Point Way, NE, BIN C15700, bldg. 1, Seattle, WA 98115–5770;

Southeast Region, National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA, 9721

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NMFS, also announces a schedule change for the NPOA-Seabirds. NMFS will host a public meeting to receive comments from members of the public on the draft NPOA-Seabirds. To accommodate people unable to attend a meeting or wishing to provide written comments, NMFS solicit written comments on the NPOA-Seabirds.

DATES: A public hearing on the NPOA-Seabirds will be held at 3:00 p.m. on January 19, 2000. Submit comments on the NPOA-Seabirds to the appropriate address or fax number by 5:00 p.m. on January 18, 2000.

ADDRESSES: The public meeting will be held at NOAA-NMFS Headquarters, 1315 East-West Highway, SSRC Room 14836, Silver Spring, MD 20910.

Comments on the NPOA-Seabirds may be sent to: David Kerstetter, NOAA-NMFS/SEA, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910, or by fax to 301–713–2313. Comments will not be accepted via e-mail or internet.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: David Kerstetter, 301–713–2276, ext. 107, or fax 301–713–2313.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The United States, through a collaborative effort of NMFS and the FWS, is developing a NPOA-Seabirds pursuant to the endorsement of the International Plan of Action for the Reduction of Incidental Catch of Seabirds in Longline Fisheries by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Committee on Fisheries (COFI) Meeting in February 1999. The United States has committed itself to developing this NPOA-Seabirds and reporting to COFI on its implementation no later than 2001. A previous Federal Register document dated September 8, 1999 (64 FR 48987), provided a tentative time frame for the completion of this project and an outline of the contents of the NPOA-Seabirds. Time Frame:

NPOA-Seabirds

December 27, 1999: Release draft NPOA-Seabirds for public comment via posting of the document on the NMFS web site (www.nmfs.gov). The document will also be provided in hard copy upon request (see ADDRESSES).

January 2000: Public comment period on draft NPOA-Seabirds.

January 19, 2000: Public meeting on NPOA-Seabirds.

February 2000: Release final NPOA-Seabirds via a Federal Register notice of availability and posting on the NMFS web site (www.nmfs.gov). The document will also be provided in hard copy upon request (see ADDRESSES).

Special Accommodations

The public meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to David Kerstetter (see FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT) at least 7 days prior to the meeting.


Gary C. Matlock,
Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.