

a variety of local user groups, as well as the general public, plus seven local, state and federal government jurisdictions. Since its establishment, the Advisory Council has played a vital role in advising the Sanctuary and NOAA on critical issues and is currently focused on the sanctuary's development of a new 5-year management plan.

The Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary encompasses 842 square miles of ocean, stretching between Cape Ann and Cape Cod. Renowned for its scenic beauty and remarkable productivity, the sanctuary supports a rich diversity of marine life including marine mammals, more than 30 species of seabirds, over 100 species of fishes, and hundreds of marine invertebrates and plants.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1431, et seq.

(Federal Domestic Assistance Catalog Number 11.429 Marine Sanctuary Program)

Dated: June 20, 2006.

Daniel J. Basta,

Director, National Marine Sanctuary Program, National Ocean Services, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 062306A]

Magnuson-Stevens Act Provisions; General Provisions for Domestic Fisheries; Application for Exempted Fishing Permits

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

ACTION: Notice; proposal for an exempted fishing permit to conduct experimental fishing; request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Administrator, Northeast Region, NMFS (Regional Administrator) has made a preliminary determination that the subject exempted fishing permit (EFP) application from the East Coast Pelagic Association (ECPA) that would allow herring vessels to possess haddock while testing modified mid-water herring trawls designed to reduce haddock bycatch contains all the required information and warrants further consideration. The Regional Administrator has also made a preliminary determination that the activities authorized under the EFP would be consistent with the goals and

objectives of the Atlantic Herring and Northeast (NE) Multispecies Fishery Management Plans (FMPs). However, further review and consultation may be necessary before a final determination is made to issue the EFP.

DATES: Comments on this document must be received on or before July 14, 2006.

ADDRESSES: Comments on this notice may be submitted by e-mail. The mailbox address for providing e-mail comments is DA6-161@noaa.gov. Include in the subject line of the e-mail comment the following document identifier: "Comments on ECPA EFP Proposal for Modifications to Herring Midwater Trawls to Increase Escapement of Non-Target Species." Written comments should be sent to Patricia A. Kurkul, Regional Administrator, NMFS, Northeast Regional Office, 1 Blackburn Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930. Mark the outside of the envelope, "Comments on ECPA EFP Proposal for Modifications to Herring Midwater Trawls to Increase Escapement of Non-Target Species." Comments may also be sent via facsimile (fax) to (978) 281-9135.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ryan Silva, Fishery Management Specialist, phone: 978-281-9326, fax: 978-281-9135.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: As part of an experiment titled, "Research Project to Examine Modifications to Herring Midwater Trawls to Increase Escapement of non-target species (i.e., haddock)," exempted vessels would test trawl modifications designed to reduce haddock bycatch in the herring fishery and research the vertical distribution and behavior of herring and haddock during the seasonal and spatial overlap that occurs between these species on Georges Bank. The experiment is being coordinated by the Gulf of Maine Research Institute (GMRI) on behalf of several research partners. The EFP application was submitted by one of the project partners, the ECPA. If approved, the EFP would authorize participating vessels to possess haddock during research activities. Haddock would not be marketed for human consumption. All catch of herring would be reported and accounted for through vessel trip reports (VTR) and interactive voice reporting (IVR). Incidental catch of haddock would be estimated using the NMFS Observer Program sampling protocols established for the herring fishery, and reported to NMFS following each research trip. Both herring and haddock catch would be deducted from the total allowable catch (TAC) specifications for herring Management

Area 3 and the 0.2 percent haddock TAC as proposed in Framework 43 to the NE Multispecies FMP, respectively. The herring catch for this project is estimated at 3,500 - 5,000 mt. The 2006 haddock catch cap allocated to the herring fishery under Framework 43 is 73.2 mt (161,377 lb). If the overall haddock catch cap is harvested, the project would be stopped.

The applicant intends to compare bycatch rates of 2 modified trawl designs and a standard midwater herring trawl. At any given time during the requested 26 research days, up to 4 vessels would conduct normal fishing activity in herring Management Area 3. Nets would be deployed by a combination of vessels, including up to two sets of midwater pair trawl vessels and two single midwater trawl vessels. The number of tows made per day would be dependent on weather, proper gear deployment and availability of herring, but can be estimated at 3-5 per day. Average duration of each tow is 3-4 hours at an estimated speed of 3.5 - 4 knots. In addition, participating vessels would research the vertical distribution and reaction behavior of herring and haddock during the seasonal and spatial overlap that occurs between these species on Georges Bank. Research is proposed for the period July 15 - October 30, 2006.

Regulations under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act require publication of this notification to provide interested parties the opportunity to comment on applications for proposed EFPs. The applicant may place requests for minor modifications and extensions to the EFP throughout the year. EFP modifications and extensions may be granted without further notice if they are deemed essential to facilitate completion of the proposed research and minimal so as not to change the scope or impact of the initially approved EFP request.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1801 et seq.

Dated: June 23, 2006.

James P. Burgess,

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

[FR Doc. E6-10190 Filed 6-28-06; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration****[I.D. 061906A]****Marine Mammals; File No. 984-1814**

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

ACTION: Notice; issuance of permit.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that Dr. Terrie Williams, Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, Center for Ocean Health - Long Marine Laboratory, University of California, 100 Shaffer Road, Santa Cruz, CA 95060 has been issued a permit to conduct research on Weddell seals (*Leptonychotes weddellii*).

ADDRESSES: The permit and related documents are available for review upon written request or by appointment in the following office(s):

Permits, Conservation and Education Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13705, Silver Spring, MD 20910; phone (301)713-2289; fax (301)427-2521; and

Southwest Region, NMFS, 501 West Ocean Blvd., Suite 4200, Long Beach, CA 90802-4213; phone (562)980-4001; fax (562)980-4018.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Kate Swails or Tammy Adams, (301)713-2289.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On January 17, 2006 notice was published in the **Federal Register** (71 FR 2527) that a request for a scientific research permit to take the species identified above had been submitted by the above-named individual. The requested permit has been issued under the authority of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*), and the Regulations Governing the Taking and Importing of Marine Mammals (50 CFR part 216).

The applicant will capture up to 20 adults and disturb up to 40 adults annually. The animals will have a data logger/video system attached, muscle biopsies and blood samples collected, and blubber thickness measured. Study results are expected to increase understanding of the foraging behavior of this marine mammal species. The animals will be recaptured up to three times to remove or tend to the instruments. The permit also authorizes research-related mortality of up to two seals per year. The permit is issued for five years.

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), a final determination has been made that the activity proposed is categorically excluded from the requirement to prepare an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement.

Dated: June 22, 2006.

P. Michael Payne,

Chief, Permits, Conservation and Education Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 06-5814 Filed 6-28-06; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration****[I.D. 062106A]****Marine Mammals; File Nos. 1034-1854 and 1070-1783**

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

ACTION: Notice; receipt of applications.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that applications have been received for a permit and a permit amendment for scientific research on marine mammals.

DATES: Written, telefaxed, or e-mail comments must be received on or before July 31, 2006.

ADDRESSES: The applications and related documents are available for review upon written request or by appointment in the following office(s):

Permits, Conservation and Education Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13705, Silver Spring, MD 20910; phone (301)713-2289; fax (301)427-2521;

Northwest Region, NMFS, 7600 Sand Point Way NE, BIN C15700, Bldg. 1, Seattle, WA 98115-0700; phone (206)526-6150; fax (206)526-6426; and

Southwest Region, NMFS, 501 West Ocean Blvd., Suite 4200, Long Beach, CA 90802-4213; phone (562)980-4001; fax (562)980-4018.

Written comments or requests for a public hearing on these applications should be submitted to the Chief, Permits, Conservation and Education Division, F/PR1, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13705, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Those individuals requesting a hearing should set forth the specific reasons why a hearing would be appropriate.

Comments may also be submitted by facsimile at (301)427-2521, provided

the facsimile is confirmed by hard copy submitted by mail and postmarked no later than the closing date of the comment period.

Comments may also be submitted by e-mail. The mailbox address for providing email comments is *NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov*. Include in the subject line of the e-mail comment the following document identifier, as applicable: File No. 1034-1854 or 1070-1783.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Amy Sloan or Tammy Adams, (301)713-2289.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The subject permit (File No. 1034-1854) and amendment to Permit No. 1070-1783 are requested under the authority of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*), and the Regulations Governing the Taking and Importing of Marine Mammals (50 CFR part 216).

File No. 1034-1854: Dr. Markus Horning, Department of Fisheries & Wildlife, Oregon State University, Hatfield Marine Science Center, 2030 SE Marine Science Drive, Newport, OR 97365, has applied for a permit to conduct research on Weddell seals (*Leptonychotes weddellii*) to study aging; and specifically, to compare oxygen handling, body condition, muscle physiology, and foraging behavior in young adults and old adults. Over a 2-year period, up to 48 animals would have some or all of the following procedures performed: capture, sedation; morphometrics; ultrasound; blood and muscle samples taken; administration of Evans blue dye and deuterium oxide; external data recorders attached to pelage and internal data recorders administered by gavage; release; recapture to add device to manipulate energy expenditure; and recapture to remove instruments. Up to 250 animals seals would be incidentally harassed during these activities. Samples would be imported into the U.S. for analyses. A 5-year permit is requested to accommodate potential future studies and import of additional samples.

File No. 1070-1783: Dr. Alejandro Acevedo-Gutierrez, Biology Department, Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA 98225-9160, has requested an amendment to Permit No. 1070-1783 for research on seals in Washington. This permit, issued on March 13, 2006 (71 FR 14503), authorizes aerial and vessel surveys of harbor seals (*Phoca vitulina*) and fecal sample collections from rookeries and haul-out sites in inland waters of Washington. The permit holder requests