

(1) The proposed activity would only occur in a small area which supports a small proportion (<0.01 percent) of the ringed seal populations in the Beaufort Sea.

(2) Geotechnical operators will avoid moderate and large pressure ridges, where seal and pupping lairs are likely to be present.

(3) Mitigation and monitoring procedures such as using an experienced native hunter to conduct pre-operational survey and monitoring of ringed seal lairs and breathing holes within the proposed action area and travel corridor, mapping the travel corridor and work areas that are free of ringed seal lairs with GPS coordination, and establishing a rollington traveling route prior to the seal pupping season to discourage the use of these areas by seals during the pupping season, will be implemented.

As a result, NMFS believes the effects of on-ice geotechnical operations are expected to be limited to short-term and localized behavioral changes involving relatively small numbers of ringed seals. NMFS has preliminarily determined, based on information in the application and supporting documents, that these changes in behavior will have no more than a negligible impact on the affected ringed seal population within the proposed action area. Also, the potential effects of the proposed on-ice geotechnical operations during 2007 will not have an unmitigable adverse impact on subsistence uses of this species.

Proposed Authorization

NMFS proposes to issue an IHA to CPAI for conducting on-ice geotechnical operations in the U.S. Beaufort Sea, provided the previously mentioned mitigation, monitoring, and reporting requirements are incorporated. NMFS has preliminarily determined that the proposed activity would result in the harassment of small numbers of ringed seals; would have no more than a negligible impact on the affected ringed seal stock; and would not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of ringed seals for subsistence uses.

Dated: January 16, 2007.

James H. Lecky,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 111706C]

Incidental Take of Marine Mammals; Taking of Marine Mammals Incidental to Missile Launch Operations from San Nicolas Island, CA

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

ACTION: Notice of issuance of a letter of authorization.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), as amended, notification is hereby given that a letter of authorization (LOA) to take three species of marine mammals incidental to missile launch operations from San Nicolas Island, CA (SNI) has been issued to the Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division (NAWC-WD), Point Mugu, CA.

DATES: This authorization is effective from February 3, 2007, through February 2, 2008.

ADDRESSES: The application, LOA, and Navy monitoring report are available for review in the Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910 or by contacting one of the individuals mentioned below (See **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Kenneth Hollingshead or Candace Nachman, NMFS, (301) 713-2289.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Section 101(a)(5)(A) of the MMPA (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*) directs NMFS to allow, on request, the incidental, but not intentional, taking of small numbers of marine mammals by U.S. citizens who engage in a specified activity (other than commercial fishing) within a specified geographical region, if certain findings are made by NMFS and regulations are issued. Under the MMPA, the term "taking" means to harass, hunt, capture, or kill or to attempt to harass, hunt, capture or kill marine mammals.

Authorization may be granted for periods up to five years if NMFS finds, after notification and opportunity for public comment, that the taking will have a negligible impact on the species or stock(s) of marine mammals and will not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of the species or stock(s) for subsistence uses. In addition, NMFS must prescribe regulations that include permissible

methods of taking and other means effecting the least practicable adverse impact on the species and its habitat and on the availability of the species for subsistence uses, paying particular attention to rookeries, mating grounds, and areas of similar significance. The regulations must include requirements pertaining to the monitoring and reporting of such taking. Regulations governing the taking incidental to target missile operations on San Nicolas Island, CA, were published on September 2, 2003 (68 FR 52132), and remain in effect until October 2, 2008.

Pursuant to these regulations, NMFS has issued an LOA to the NAWC-WD. Issuance of the LOA is based on findings made in the preamble to the final rule that the total takings by this project will result in only small numbers (as the term is defined in 50 CFR 216.103) of marine mammals being taken. In addition, given the implementation of the mitigation requirements contained in the LOA, the resultant incidental harassment will have no more than a negligible impact on the affected marine mammal stocks or habitats and will not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of such species or stock for taking for subsistence uses. NMFS also finds that the applicant will meet the requirements contained in the implementing regulations and LOA, including monitoring and reporting requirements. This LOA will be renewed annually based on a review of the activity, completion of monitoring requirements and receipt of reports required by the LOA.

According to the draft technical report, the NAWC-WD performed a total of five missile launches between February and September 2006. Two Advanced Gun System (AGS) guided rounds were launched on 14 February; one Falcon rocket was launched on 6 April; and two AGS launches occurred on May 15, 2006. California sea lions were observed during four of five launches on all three launch dates. Northern elephant seals were observed during three launches on two dates. Harbor seals were observed during four launches on all three launch dates. Based on monitoring efforts between February and September 2006, the NAWC-WD estimates that approximately 295 sea lions, 13 harbor seals, and no elephant seals were affected by launch sounds. There was no evidence of injury or mortality during or immediately succeeding the launches for any pinniped species.

Dated: January 10, 2007.

James H. Lecky,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 011707C]

North Pacific Fishery Management Council; Public Meetings

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

ACTION: Notice of public meetings.

SUMMARY: The North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) and its advisory committees will hold public meetings, in Portland, OR.

DATES: The North Pacific Fishery Management Council will meet on February 5-13, 2007. See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** for specific dates and times. All meetings are open to the public, except executive sessions.

ADDRESSES: The meetings will be held at the Benson Hotel, 309 Southwest Broadway, Portland, OR 97205.

Council address: North Pacific Fishery Management Council, 605 W. 4th Avenue, Suite 306, Anchorage, AK 99501-2252.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

David Witherell, Council staff, telephone: (907) 271-2809.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Council will begin its plenary session at 8 a.m. on Wednesday, February 7, continuing through February 13, 2007. The Council's Advisory Panel (AP) will begin at 8 a.m., Monday, February 5 and continue through Saturday February 10. The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) will begin at 8 a.m. on Wednesday, February 5 and continue through Friday February 7, 2007. The Enforcement Committee will meet Tuesday, February 6, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. in the Parliament Room 3&4; the Ecosystem Committee will meet February 6, from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. in the Parliament Room 3&4.

Council Plenary Session: The agenda for the Council's plenary session will include the following issues. The Council may take appropriate action on any of the issues identified.

1. Reports

Executive Director's Report (including Magnuson-Stevens Act Update)

NMFS Management Report (including legal opinion on Community Development Quotas (CDQ) (T) and Agency report on Area 2A catch sharing plan)

Enforcement Report
U.S. Coast Guard Report
Alaska Department of Fish & Game Report

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Report
U.S. Department of State Report
International Pacific Halibut Commission Report

Protected Species Report (including SSC review of List of Fisheries methodology and Steller Sea Lion Mitigation (SSLMC) ranking tool)
2. Programmatic Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement: Review and adopt revised workplan.
3. American Fisheries Act (AFA) Pollock Cooperatives (Coop): Review Coop reports for 2006, and plans for 2007.

4. Seabird Interactions: Final action to revise regulations. (T)
5. Charter Halibut Management: Review report on Area 2A catch sharing plan (report under B-2); initial review of moratorium analysis; review workplan for regulatory amendment package (SSC only).

6. Trawl License Limitation Program (LLP) Recency: Initial review of analysis. (T)

7. Trawl License Limitation Program Recency: Preliminary review of analysis and direction as necessary.

8. Bering Sea and Aleutian Island split for Pacific cod: Review discussion paper; Pacific cod genetics workshop (SSC only).

9. Gulf of Alaska (GOA) Groundfish Management Issues: Review discussion paper on sector splits and latent licenses.

10. Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS) Requirements: Preliminary review of draft analysis to implement comprehensive VMS program.

11. Groundfish Management: Initial review Dark Rockfish management amendment package; review summary of Center for Independent Experts Report on rockfish (SSC only); review discussion paper on GOA arrowtooth Maximum Retainable Amount (MRA). (T)

12. Bering Sea Aleutian Island Crab (BSAI): Initial review of BSAI crab overfishing definition analysis; discussion paper on Aleutian Island crab custom processing caps; review information on crab vessel use caps; discuss proposed contents of crab rationalization 18 month review report.

13. Salmon Bycatch: Update on BSAI Amendment 84; review discussion paper on process to estimate interim

caps/spatial analysis, and refine alternatives as necessary.

14. Habitat Conservation: Initial review of analysis to adjust the Aleutian Island Habitat Conservation Area; preliminary review of analysis to conserve Bering Sea habitat.

15. Staff Tasking: Review Committees and tasking and take action as necessary; review progress report on Aleutian Island Fishery Ecosystem Plan.
16. Other Business

The SSC agenda will include the following issues:

1. Protected Species
2. Seabird Interactions (T)
3. Halibut Charter Management
4. Trawl LLP Recency
5. Pacific cod genetics
6. VMS requirements
7. Groundfish Management
8. BSAI Crab
9. Salmon Bycatch
10. Habitat Conservation
11. Aleutian Island Fishery Ecosystem Plan

The Advisory Panel will address the same agenda issues as the Council.

Special Accommodations

These meetings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Gail Bendixen at (907) 271-2809 at least 7 working days prior to the meeting date.

Dated: January 17, 2007.

James P. Burgess,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 011707B]

Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council); Public Meeting

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

ACTION: Notice of a public meeting.

SUMMARY: The Joint Canada-U.S. Review Panel for Pacific hake / Whiting will hold a work session which is open to the public.

DATES: The Joint Canada-U.S. Review Panel will meet beginning at 1 p.m., Monday, February 5, 2007 and will continue on Tuesday, February 6, 2007