

determination of the issuance of the IHA.

Preliminary Determinations

NMFS has preliminarily determined that the impact of conducting the seismic survey in the SBC may result, at worst, in a temporary modification in behavior (Level B Harassment) of small numbers of 26 species of marine mammals. This activity is expected to result in a negligible impact on the affected species or stocks. There are no subsistence uses of affected marine mammals in this area.

For reasons stated previously in this document, this determination is supported by: (1) The likelihood that, given sufficient notice through relatively slow ship speed, marine mammals are expected to move away from a noise source that is annoying prior to its becoming potentially injurious; (2) the fact that marine mammals would have to be closer than 35 m (114 ft) in water less than 1,000 m to be exposed to levels of sound which could result in Level A harassment (injury); (3) the 35 m distance is conservative as it is for the airgun opening at full chamber size (45 in³) and the airgun will likely be operating at reduced chamber size; and (4) the marine mammal detection ability by trained observers is high at that very short distance from the vessel. As a result, no take by injury or death is anticipated, and the potential for temporary or permanent hearing impairment is very low and will be avoided through the incorporation of the proposed mitigation measures.

While the number of marine mammals potentially harassed will depend on the distribution and abundance of marine mammals in the vicinity of the survey activity, the number of potential harassment takings is estimated to be small, less than a few percent of any of the estimated population sizes, and has been mitigated to the lowest level practicable through incorporation of the measures mentioned previously in this document.

Proposed Authorization

As a result of these preliminary determinations, NMFS proposes to issue an IHA to SIO for conducting a marine geophysical survey in the Santa Barbara Channel, November 2008, provided the previously mentioned mitigation, monitoring, and reporting requirements are incorporated.

Dated: August 22, 2008.

Helen M. Golde,

Deputy Director, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.
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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XI06

Marine Mammal Authorization Program Integration of Registration for Selected West Coast Fisheries

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

ACTION: Notice; expansion of integrated registration program.

SUMMARY: NMFS is providing notice that it is increasing the number of fisheries for which the Marine Mammal Authorization Program (MMAP) registration is integrated with existing state and Federal fishery licensing and permitting programs, beginning with the 2009 List of Fisheries (LOF). NMFS is integrating MMAP registration at this time only for specific Category I or II fisheries regulated under fishery management plans (FMPs) administered by the Southwest Regional Office, or fisheries under permits issued by the state of California. Fishermen who participate in a Category I or II fishery for which registration is not integrated with existing state or Federal permitting programs must continue to register directly with NMFS through the MMAP.

ADDRESSES: For West Coast fisheries, registration information and marine mammal injury/mortality reporting forms may be obtained from the following regional office: NMFS, Southwest Region, Sustainable Fisheries Division, Attn: Lyle Enriquez, 501 West Ocean Blvd., Suite 4200, Long Beach, CA 90802.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Patricia Lawson, Office of Protected Resources, 301-713-2322; or Lyle Enriquez, Southwest Regional Office, 562-980-4025.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: According to the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), all fishermen who participate in a Category I or II fishery listed in the annual LOF must be registered with a MMAP (section 118(c)(2)(A)). A fishery is classified on the LOF based on whether it has frequent (Category I), occasional (Category II), or remote

(Category III) likelihood of incidental mortality and serious injury (or bycatch) of marine mammals. The MMAP provides an authorization for commercial fishermen which allows the incidental (i.e., non-intentional) taking of marine mammals pursuant to the MMPA during the course of commercial fishing operations. Participants in Category III fisheries are not required to register with the MMAP. Fishermen participating in any commercial fishery, regardless of category, are required to report all incidental injuries and mortalities of marine mammals to NMFS within 48 hours of returning from a fishing trip. For a complete description of requirements for fishermen participating in Category I, II, and III fisheries, please consult 50 CFR part 229, subpart A.

Rather than requiring all participants in Category I and II fisheries to register individually, the MMPA directs NMFS to integrate registration with existing state or Federal fishery permitting or licensing programs (section 118(c)(5)(A)). NMFS' goals for the integrated registration program include ensuring consistency in registration procedures across a greater number of fisheries, increasing the number of registrants to better reflect the level of participation in the fisheries, and conducting outreach to the fishing industry with regard to MMPA requirements. Using data from existing fishery licensing programs, the MMAP integration will reduce the registration burden on the fishing industry while facilitating the protection and conservation of marine mammals through increased outreach efforts. In a licensing system that is integrated with the MMAP, fishermen are not required to submit an MMAP registration/renewal form or the \$25 processing fee to NMFS in order to receive or renew their MMAP Authorization Certificates.

NMFS will integrate the following fisheries that are managed under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*: the Coastal Pelagics FMP (California anchovy, mackerel, and sardine purse seine fishery) fisheries, and the Highly Migratory Species FMP (California pelagic longline, California tuna purse seine, and California/Oregon drift gillnet fisheries) fisheries. In order to integrate state-managed fisheries, NMFS is obtaining fishery license-holder information from the State of California. Category I and II state managed fisheries that NMFS will integrate include the California angel shark/halibut and other species set gillnet; and California squid purse seine fisheries. NMFS will make an annual

data request to the state of California for permit or license-holder information. Using this information, NMFS will mail MMAP Authorization Certificates, marine mammal injury/mortality reporting forms, and other program information to each permit or license-holder. Fishermen who participate in an integrated Category I or II state fishery do not need to take any additional action to register under the MMAP, as long as they hold a valid state fishing permit or license for the affected fishery. However, fishermen who participate in Category I or II state and/or Federal fisheries not yet integrated with the MMAP registration system (i.e., fisheries for which no Federal or state permits are required) must contact the NMFS, Southwest Regional Office, Sustainable Fisheries Division (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**), in order to register and receive an MMAP Authorization Certificate. If a fisherman participating in a Category I or II fishery, who expects to receive automatic registration, does not receive an Authorization Certificate by January 1 of each calendar year hereafter, the fisherman should contact NMFS (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**) to inquire about the status of his/her registration. Alternatively, he/she may apply for registration directly, following the procedures in 50 CFR 229.4(b). In any case, every fisherman fishing in a Category I or II fishery must have an Authorization Certificate.

NMFS will work with the permit-issuing agencies in each state to identify and attempt to limit mailing of Authorization Certificates to only those participants in Category I and II fisheries. Some permit systems, however, do not allow identification of fishermen using specific gear types in a way that matches the fishery designation referenced in the LOF. In cases where NMFS or the state permit-issuing agency cannot confidently determine which specific fishery identified in the LOF each fisherman participates in, based on the permit or license information, NMFS may inadvertently issue Authorization Certificates to fishermen participating in Category III fisheries. This approach, which may be confusing to Category III fishermen who are not required to be registered under the MMAP, is necessary to ensure that fishermen who must register with the MMAP are not unintentionally excluded from notification.

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

Dated: August 25, 2008.

Emily H. Menashes,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.
[FR Doc. E8-20006 Filed 8-27-08; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XK01

North Pacific Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

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

ACTION: Notice of a public meeting.

SUMMARY: The North Pacific Fishery Management Council's Crab Plan Team (CPT) will meet in Seattle, WA.

DATES: The meeting will be held on September 16-18, 2008, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

ADDRESSES: Alaska Fishery Science Center, 7600 Sand Point Way NE, Bldg 4, Observer Room, Seattle, WA 98115.

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

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Diana Stram, North Pacific Fishery Management Council; telephone: (907) 271-2809.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Plan Team will address the following issues: Overview of Crab Rationalization program; discussion of Economic Data review issues; summary of 3-year review documentation for Crab Rationalization Program; Structure and content for Economic Stock Assessment Fishery Evaluation Report (SAFE); NMFS 2008 summer trawl survey overview; NMFS catch accounting data; handling mortality rates utilized for Crab, Groundfish, and Scallop fisheries; Stock assessment overviews for Eastern Bering Sea snow crab, Bristol Bay red king crab, Eastern Bering Sea Tanner crab, St. Mathew Blue king crab, Norton Sound red king crab, Aleutian Island golden king crab, Pribilof Island red and golden king crab; Adak red king crab.

Although non-emergency issues not contained in this agenda may come before this group for discussion, in accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act), those issues may not be the subject of formal action during these meetings. Actions

will be restricted to those issues specifically identified in this notice and any issues arising after publication of this notice that require emergency action under section 305 (c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, provided the public has been notified of the Council's intent to take final action to address the emergency.

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: August 25, 2008.

Tracey L. Thompson,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.
[FR Doc. E8-19953 Filed 8-27-08; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XK02

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's (Council) Gulf of Alaska (GOA) and Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands (BS/AI) groundfish plan teams will meet in Seattle, WA.

DATES: The meetings will be held September 22-24, 2008. The meetings will begin at 9 a.m. on Monday, September 22, and continue through Wednesday, September 24, 2008.

ADDRESSES: The meetings will be held at the Alaska Fisheries Science Center, 7600 Sand Point Way N.E., Building 4, Observer Training Room (GOA Plan Team) and Traynor Room (BS/AI Plan Team), Seattle, WA.

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

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jane DiCosimo or Diana Stram, North Pacific Fishery Management Council; telephone: (907) 271-2809.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Agenda: Principal business is to prepare and review the draft Economic Report, the