

come before the STAR Panel participants for discussion, those issues may not be the subject of formal STAR Panel action during this meeting. STAR Panel action will be restricted to those issues specifically listed in this notice and any issues arising after publication of this notice that require emergency action under Section 305(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, provided the public has been notified of the STAR Panel participants' intent to take final action to address the emergency.

#### Special Accommodations

This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Ms. Carolyn Porter at (503) 820-2280 at least 5 days prior to the meeting date.

Dated: May 20, 2011.

**Tracey L. Thompson,**

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

[FR Doc. 2011-12927 Filed 5-24-11; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3510-22-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

**RIN 0648-XA292**

#### Marine Mammals; File No. 16087

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

**ACTION:** Notice; issuance of permit.

**SUMMARY:** Notice is hereby given that a permit has been issued to NMFS National Marine Mammal Laboratory, Seattle, WA, to conduct research on marine mammals.

**ADDRESSES:** The permit and related documents are available for review upon written request or by appointment in the following offices:

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) 713-0376;

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.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Tammy Adams or Amy Sloan, (301) 713-2289.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** On March 14, 2011, notice was published in the **Federal Register** (76 FR 13603) that a request for a permit to conduct research on marine mammals had been submitted by the above-named applicant. 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 permit authorizes taking marine mammals in California, Oregon, and Washington to investigate population status, health, demographic parameters, life history and foraging ecology of California sea lions (*Zalophus californianus*), Pacific harbor seals (*Phoca vitulina*), and northern elephant seals (*Mirounga angustirostris*), with incidental harassment of northern fur seals (*Callorhinus ursinus*). The permit is valid for field studies from July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2016.

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: May 19, 2011.

**P. Michael Payne,**

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

[FR Doc. 2011-13001 Filed 5-24-11; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3510-22-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

**RIN 0648-XA341**

#### Marine Mammals; File No. 15324

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

**ACTION:** Notice; issuance of permit.

**SUMMARY:** Notice is hereby given that a permit has been issued to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Wildlife Conservation, Juneau, AK, to conduct research on marine mammals.

**ADDRESSES:** The permit and related documents are available for review upon written request or by appointment in the following offices:

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) 713-0376; and Alaska Region, NMFS, P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802-1668; phone (907) 586-7221; fax (907) 586-7249.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Tammy Adams or Laura Morse, (301) 713-2289.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** On April 4, 2011, notice was published in the **Federal Register** (76 FR 18533) that a request for a permit to conduct research on marine mammals had been submitted by the above-named applicant. 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 permit authorizes taking spotted (*Phoca largha*), ringed (*Phoca hispida*), bearded (*Erignathus barbatus*), and ribbon seals (*Histiophoca fasciata*) in the Bering, Chukchi, and Beaufort Seas of Alaska to monitor the status and health of all four species by analyzing samples from the subsistence harvest and by documenting movements and habitat use by tracking animals with satellite transmitters. The permit is valid for field studies from January 2012 through December 2016.

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: May 20, 2011.

**Tammy C. Adams,**

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

[FR Doc. 2011-12977 Filed 5-24-11; 8:45 am]

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

**RIN 0648-XA444**

#### Marine Mammals and Endangered Species; File Nos. 14245, 1596-03, and 14726-01

**AGENCY:** National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and

Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

**ACTION:** Notice; issuance of permit and permit modifications.

**SUMMARY:** Notice is hereby given that NMFS has issued a permit and two permit modifications to conduct research on marine mammals or sea turtles.

**ADDRESSES:** The permit, permit modifications, and related documents are available for review upon written request or by appointment in the following offices: See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Amy Hapeman (for all permits) or one of the following analysts: Carrie Hubard (For File No. 14245), Colette Cairns (for File No. 1596-03) or Kristy Beard (for File No. 14726-01) at (301)713-2289.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** On April 27, 2010 and December 29, 2010, notices were published in the **Federal Register** (75 FR 26715 and 81970, respectively) that a request for a permit to conduct research on 33 species of cetaceans and harass eight species of pinnipeds had been submitted by the NMFS National Marine Mammal Laboratory (NMML; File No. 14245). 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.*), 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 and threatened species (50 CFR parts 222-226), and the Fur Seal Act of 1966, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1151 *et seq.*). The NMML (Dr. John Bengtson, Responsible Party), Alaska Fisheries Science Center, 7600 Sand Point Way, NE, Seattle, WA 98115-6349 has been issued a 5-year permit to conduct research in the Pacific, Atlantic, and Arctic Oceans on marine mammals including endangered blue (*Balaenoptera musculus*), sei (*B. borealis*), fin (*B. physalus*), sperm (*Physeter macrocephalus*), North Pacific right (*Eubalaena japonica*), bowhead (*Balaena mysticetus*), humpback (*Megaptera novaeangliae*), Southern Resident killer (*Orcinus orca*), and Cook Inlet beluga (*Delphinapterus leucas*) whales to monitor cetaceans for scientific and management purposes. Research activities include aerial and vessel surveys, biopsy sampling, tagging, and/or captures and a suite of sampling procedures associated with captures. During vessel surveys

researchers may opportunistically collect sloughed skin, fecal samples, and carcass remains. Research activities in the Southern Ocean were withdrawn by NMML after the close of the public comment period. In addition, NMFS did not authorize requested capture activities for Cook Inlet beluga whales. The permit is valid through May 1, 2016.

On May 12, 2010, notice was published in the **Federal Register** (75 FR 26715) that a modification of Permit No. 1596-02 had been requested by the NMFS Southwest Fisheries Science Center (SWFSC; File No. 1596-03) for research on sea turtles. The SWFSC (Dr. Lisa Ballance, Responsible Party), 3333 N. Torrey Pines Ct., La Jolla, CA 92037 was issued a modification to Permit No. 1596-02, issued May 3, 2009 (74 FR 38585). Permit No. 1596-02 authorizes the SWFSC to conduct research on leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*) sea turtles captured off the western coast of the continental United States to continue long-term monitoring of the status of the species. Researchers may capture, measure, weigh, blood and tissue sample, photograph, flipper and passive integrated transponder (PIT) tag, fat biopsy, ultrasound, satellite tag, and attach a VHF/TDR/sonic tag/video system, VHR/TDR/sonic tag/GPS unit, or VHR/TDR/sonic tag/GPS/video camera system to leatherback sea turtles. Animals with the video camera system may be re-approached to collect the unit and then sampled, tagged, and have another video camera unit attached. This permit modification, No. 1596-03, authorizes the SWFSC to directly attach a tag to the animal's medial ridge in place of the previously authorized harness attachment. Researchers may also attach a VHF/TDR/Sonic tag/GPS/Video camera system by suction cup to the free-swimming turtle prior to capture. These tags would provide valuable information on leatherback movements and behavior in the Pacific Ocean between their foraging areas and nesting beaches. The modification is valid until the permit expires February 1, 2012.

On February 3, 2011, notice was published in the **Federal Register** (76 FR 6118) that a modification to Permit No. 14726 had been requested by Dr. Blair Witherington (File No. 14726-01) for research on sea turtles. Dr. Witherington, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, 9700 South A1A, Melbourne Beach, FL, 32951 was issued a modification to Permit No. 14726, issued September 3, 2010 (75 FR 61133). Permit No. 14726 authorizes him to locate and describe areas of the Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico near

Florida that serve as developmental habitat for pelagic stage juvenile and neonate loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*), green (*Chelonia mydas*), Kemp's ridley (*Lepidochelys kempii*), hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), and leatherback sea turtles, to quantify threats to pelagic sea turtles, and to gather information on their life-history, genetics, movements, behavior, and diet. Researchers are authorized to capture by dip net, flipper and PIT tag, measure, weigh, and oral swab sea turtles. A subset of animals may be skin biopsied, lavaged or have a satellite tag attached. The permit modification authorizes Dr. Witherington to: (1) Increase the number and life stages of sea turtles that may be taken annually; (2) authorize fecal sampling for all animals and satellite tagging for a subset of green sea turtles; and (3) expand the authorized study area to include the entire Gulf of Mexico. This work will: (1) Identify threats to pelagic sea turtles, and (2) document the density, condition, diet, and potential Mississippi Canyon 252 oil exposure of pelagic sea turtles associated with floating *Sargassum* as part of the post-spill Natural Resources Damage Assessment of the BP Deepwater Horizon event. The modified permit is valid through December 31, 2011.

The requested permit modifications have been granted under the authority of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA; 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) and the regulations governing the taking, importing, and exporting of endangered and threatened species (50 CFR 222-226).

An environmental assessment (EA) or supplemental EA was prepared for each permit request analyzing the effects of the permitted activities on the human environment in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*). Based on these analyses, NMFS determined that issuance of the permit and permit modifications would not significantly impact the quality of the human environment and that preparation of an environmental impact statement was not required. That determination is documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), signed on the following dates for each permit: File No. 14245: April 22, 2011, File No. 1596-03: April 15, 2011, and File No. 14726-01: April 7, 2011.

As required by the ESA, issuance of the permits and permit modifications was based on a finding that such permits: (1) Were applied for in good faith; (2) will not operate to the disadvantage of such endangered species; and (3) are consistent with the

purposes and policies set forth in section 2 of the ESA.

Documents may be reviewed at: all of the following locations for File No. 14245, the Southwest Region for File No. 1596-03, and the Southeast Region for File No. 14726-01:

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)713-0376;

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

Alaska Region, NMFS, P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802-1668; phone (907)586-7221; fax (907)586-7249;

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

Pacific Islands Region, NMFS, 1601 Kapiolani Blvd., Rm 1110, Honolulu, HI 96814-4700; phone (808)944-2200; fax (808)973-2941;

Northeast Region, NMFS, 55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930; phone (978)281-9328; fax (978) 281-9394; and

Southeast Region, NMFS, 263 13th Avenue South, Saint Petersburg, Florida 33701; phone (727)824-5312; fax (727)824-5309.

Dated: May 19, 2011.

**P. Michael Payne,**

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

[FR Doc. 2011-12999 Filed 5-24-11; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3510-22-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XA201

#### Takes of Marine Mammals Incidental to Specified Activities; Seabird and Pinniped Research Activities in Central California, 2011-2012

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

**ACTION:** Notice; proposed incidental harassment authorization; request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS has received an application from PRBO Conservation Science (PRBO), for an Incidental Harassment Authorization (IHA) to take marine mammals, by harassment, incidental to conducting proposed

seabird and pinniped research activities on Southeast Farallon Island, Año Nuevo Island, and Point Reyes National Seashore in central California. Pursuant to the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), NMFS is requesting comments on its proposal to issue an IHA to PRBO to incidentally harass, by Level B harassment only, four species of marine mammals during the specified activity from July, 2011 through June, 2012.

**DATES:** Comments and information must be received no later than June 24, 2011.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments on the application should be addressed to P. Michael Payne, Chief, Permits, Conservation and Education Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910. The mailbox address for providing e-mail comments is [ITP.Cody@noaa.gov](mailto:ITP.Cody@noaa.gov). NMFS is not responsible for e-mail comments sent to addresses other than the one provided here. Comments sent via e-mail, including all attachments, must not exceed a 10-megabyte file size.

All comments received are a part of the public record and will generally be posted to <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/permits/incidental.htm#applications> without change. All Personal Identifying Information (for example, name, address, etc.) voluntarily submitted by the commenter may be publicly accessible. Do not submit confidential business information or otherwise sensitive or protected information.

A copy of the application containing a list of the references used in this document may be obtained by writing to the above address, telephoning the contact listed here (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**) or visiting the Internet at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/permits/incidental.htm#applications>. Documents cited in this notice may be viewed, by appointment, during regular business hours, at the aforementioned address.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Jeannine Cody, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS (301) 713-2289, ext. 113.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### Background

Section 101(a)(5)(D) of the MMPA (16 U.S.C. 1371 (a)(5)(D)) directs the Secretary of Commerce to authorize, upon request, the incidental, but not intentional, taking of small numbers of marine mammals of a species or population stock, by United States citizens who engage in a specified activity (other than commercial fishing) within a specified geographical region if

certain findings are made and, if the taking is limited to harassment, a notice of a proposed authorization is provided to the public for review.

Authorization for the incidental taking of small numbers of marine mammals shall be granted if NMFS finds that the taking will have a negligible impact on the species or stock(s), and will not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of the species or stock(s) for subsistence uses (where relevant). The authorization must set forth the permissible methods of taking, other means of effecting the least practicable adverse impact on the species or stock and its habitat, and requirements pertaining to the mitigation, monitoring and reporting of such takings. NMFS has defined "negligible impact" in 50 CFR 216.103 as "an impact resulting from the specified activity that cannot be reasonably expected to, and is not reasonably likely to, adversely affect the species or stock through effects on annual rates of recruitment or survival."

Section 101(a)(5)(D) of the MMPA established an expedited process by which citizens of the United States can apply for an authorization to incidentally take small numbers of marine mammals by harassment. Section 101(a)(5)(D) of the MMPA establishes a 45-day time limit for NMFS' review of an application followed by a 30-day public notice and comment period on any proposed authorizations for the incidental harassment of small numbers of marine mammals. Within 45 days of the close of the public comment period, NMFS must either issue or deny the authorization.

Except with respect to certain activities not pertinent here, the MMPA defines "harassment" as:

any act of pursuit, torment, or annoyance which (i) has the potential to injure a marine mammal or marine mammal stock in the wild [Level A harassment]; or (ii) has the potential to disturb a marine mammal or marine mammal stock in the wild by causing disruption of behavioral patterns, including, but not limited to, migration, breathing, nursing, breeding, feeding, or sheltering [Level B harassment].

#### Summary of Request

NMFS received an application on January 10, 2011, from PRBO requesting the taking by harassment, of small numbers of marine mammals, incidental to conducting seabird and pinniped research activities on Southeast Farallon Island, Año Nuevo Island, and Point Reyes National Seashore in central California (CA). PRBO, along with partners Oikonos Ecosystem Knowledge