

Application and the Gear Specification Form, 20 minutes.

Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours: 71.

Estimated Total Annual Cost to Public: \$640 in recordkeeping/reporting costs.

IV. Request for Comments

Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden (including hours and cost) of the proposed collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized and/or included in the request for OMB approval of this information collection; they also will become a matter of public record.

Dated: August 15, 2011.

Gwellnar Banks,

Management Analyst, Office of the Chief Information Officer.

[FR Doc. 2011-21183 Filed 8-18-11; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XA648

Endangered Species; File No. 16548

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

ACTION: Notice; receipt of application.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that the Springfield Science Museum, 21 Edwards Street, Springfield, Massachusetts 01103 [David J. Stier, Responsible Party], has applied in due form for a permit to hold and transport shortnose sturgeon (*Acipenser brevirostrum*) for the purposes of enhancement.

DATES: Written, telefaxed, or e-mail comments must be received on or before September 19, 2011.

ADDRESSES: The application and related documents are available for review by

selecting "Records Open for Public Comment" from the *Features* box on the Applications and Permits for Protected Species (APPS) home page, <https://apps.nmfs.noaa.gov>, and then selecting File No. 16548 from the list of available applications.

These documents are also available 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) 427-8401; fax (301) 713-0376; and

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

Written comments on this application should be submitted to the Chief, Permits, Conservation and Education Division, at the address listed above. Comments may also be submitted by facsimile to (301) 713-0376, or by email to NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov. Please include the File No. 16548 in the subject line of the email comment.

Those individuals requesting a public hearing should submit a written request to the Chief, Permits, Conservation and Education Division at the address listed above. The request should set forth the specific reasons why a hearing on this application would be appropriate.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jennifer Skidmore or Colette Cairns, (301) 427-8401.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The subject permit is requested 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 parts 222-226).

The Springfield Science Museum is requesting a permit to continue enhancement activities previously authorized under Permit No. 1555. Activities would include the acquisition of up to five captive-bred, non-releasable shortnose sturgeon. The display would be used to increase public awareness of the shortnose sturgeon and its status by educating the public on shortnose sturgeon life history and the reasons for the species decline. The proposed project to display endangered cultured shortnose sturgeon responds directly to a recommendation from the NMFS recovery plan outline for this species. The permit would not authorize any takes from the wild, nor would it authorize any release of captive sturgeon into the wild. The permit is requested for a duration of five years.

Dated: August 16, 2011.

P. Michael Payne,

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

[FR Doc. 2011-21253 Filed 8-18-11; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XZ21

Notice of Availability of a Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for Hawaiian Monk Seal Recovery Actions

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

ACTION: Notice of Availability of a Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement; request for comments.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces the availability of the "Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) for Hawaiian monk seal Recovery Actions." Publication of this notice begins the official public comment period for the Draft PEIS. The purpose of the Draft PEIS is to evaluate, in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the potential direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of implementing the alternative approaches for funding, undertaking, and permitting the management, research and enhancement activities on Hawaiian monk seals, as well as other components of the marine ecosystem and human environment.

DATES: See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**.

ADDRESSES: Written comments on the Draft PEIS must be postmarked by October 17, 2011. Comments on the Draft PEIS for this action may be submitted by:

- E-mail: monkseal@noaa.gov.
- Mail: 1601 Kapiolani Blvd., Suite 1110, Honolulu, HI 96814.
- Public Hearings: Oral and written comments will be accepted during the upcoming public hearings. See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION, PUBLIC HEARINGS** (below) for dates and locations of public hearings for this issue.

The draft PEIS is available on the following Web site: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/permits/eis/hawaiianmonkseal.htm>. To be included on a mailing list and receive newsletters and copies of the Draft and Final PEIS, please e-mail monkseal@noaa.gov or send your mailing or email address to

the Marine Mammal Branch Chief, Protected Resources Division, NOAA NMFS Pacific Islands Regional Office, 1601 Kapiolani Blvd., Suite 1110, Honolulu, HI 96814.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jeff Walters (phone: 808-944-2200); or via the following email address: monkseal@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NMFS is the Federal agency responsible for management and recovery of Hawaiian monk seals under the Endangered Species Act (ESA; 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) and the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA; 16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*). In 1976, NMFS listed Hawaiian monk seals as “endangered” under the ESA and “depleted” under the MMPA. As required under section 4 of the ESA, NMFS published a Recovery Plan for the species in 1983, which was revised in 2007.

NMFS administers funds that have been appropriated by Congress and allocated within NMFS’ annual budget for the purpose of carrying out recovery actions for Hawaiian monk seals. This PEIS would satisfy the NEPA compliance requirements for funding and undertaking recovery actions for Hawaiian monk seals, including the requirements for obtaining MMPA and ESA permits.

Background

The Hawaiian monk seal (*Monachus schauinslandi*) is a critically endangered species found only in the U.S., within the Hawaiian Archipelago and at Johnston Atoll. The population is estimated to have 1,125 individuals remaining and is declining by roughly 4.5% each year.

Since the 1980’s, NMFS has conducted research to understand, and enhancement activities to mitigate, threats to the survival of monk seals. Most of this work has been in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI) where the majority of seals live and breed. More recently, a natural increase in the number of seals in the Main Hawaiian Islands (MHI) has prompted researchers and managers to begin studying and aiding seals in the MHI.

Despite measures taken to save the monk seal, the species is not showing signs of recovery. In the NWHI, young seals are continuing to starve to death, nursing and newly weaned pups are being killed by sharks, seals are getting entangled in marine debris, and sea level rise threatens terrestrial habitats. Low juvenile survival over the past two decades is the primary cause of the population’s decline. There is insufficient recruitment into the

breeding population, and the population decline will likely continue without intervention.

On October 1, 2010, NMFS provided public notice (75 FR 60721) that it would prepare a PEIS to assess the impacts of implementing specific management actions and administering a research and enhancement program to improve survival of Hawaiian monk seals. The 45 day public scoping period was extended 15 days (75 FR 69398), and the comment period ended November 30, 2010.

Scoping was the first step in this NEPA process (as required under 40 CFR 1501.7). Scoping provided an opportunity for the public and agencies to express their views and identify issues to be addressed in the Draft PEIS regarding activities that may be performed on Hawaiian monk seals in an effort to recover the species.

As part of scoping, NMFS hosted public meetings to introduce the project proposal, describe the PEIS process, and solicit input on the issues and alternatives to be evaluated. Public scoping meetings were held in October 2010 on the islands of O’ahu, Hawai’i, Maui, Moloka’i, and Kaua’i. During the scoping comment period, 139 public comments were received. A report summarizing these comments is available on the project Web site: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/permits/eis/hawaiianmonkseal.htm>.

Issues identified by the public during the scoping process include, but are not limited to, concerns regarding bringing young seals to the MHI and returning them to the NWHI, Native Hawaiian beliefs and culture, fisheries interactions, and human-seal encounters. Substantive comments received during the scoping period have been addressed in the Draft PEIS.

Alternatives

NMFS has evaluated a preferred alternative and three other alternatives in the Draft PEIS. These are summarized as follows:

Alternative 1: Status Quo Alternative: Under the Status Quo Alternative, research and enhancement activities would be carried out as currently permitted under the MMPA and ESA. New permits could be issued in the future to maintain the current levels of research and enhancement activities. Some elements of this alternative include:

- Population assessment (e.g., counting, marking for identification);
- Health and disease studies (e.g., tissue sampling, taking measurements);
- Foraging studies (e.g., telemetry, scat collection);

- De-worming research (e.g., fecal samples, testing anti-parasite treatments);

- Translocation of weaned pups within the NWHI to improve juvenile survival;

- Mitigation of fishery interactions (e.g., disentanglement, removal of hooks); and

- Mitigation of adult male aggression (e.g., removal of aggressive males).

Alternative 2: No Action: Under this alternative, the above-mentioned permitted research and enhancement activities on Hawaiian monk seals would stop in 2014 when the current MMPA-ESA permit expires. No new permits would be issued.

Alternative 3: Limited Translocation: Alternative 3 would include all currently permitted activities and further address the recommendations of the Hawaiian Monk Seal Recovery Plan by including new research and enhancement activities. New activities would include, but would not be limited to:

- Expanding the scope and number of seal translocations, including (1) moving seals with unmanageable human interactions from the MHI to NWHI, (2) taking seals age three years and older from the MHI to NWHI to examine their subsequent survival, and (3) using a two-stage translocation program whereby weaned pups are taken from areas of lower survival to areas of higher survival. This would include the option of returning the seals to their birth island or nearby site at age three years and older, but would exclude moving seals from the NWHI to the MHI.

- Research and development of tools for modifying undesirable seal behavior related to interactions with humans and fishing gear in the MHI.

- Potential implementation of de-worming as a tool to improve juvenile survival.

- Supplementing monk seal diet using feeding stations in NWHI locations where seals are released after being cared for in captivity.

- Vaccination studies and potential use of vaccines to mitigate infectious diseases (West Nile Virus and Morbilliviruses).

- Chemical alteration of aggressive male monk seal behavior using a testosterone suppressant.

- Expanded surveys and use of new tools (such as remote cameras and unmanned remotely operated aircraft).

A distinctive feature of Alternative 3 is that translocations of young animals from the NWHI to the MHI would not be permitted.

Alternative 4: Enhanced Implementation (Preferred Alternative): Alternative 4, the enhanced implementation alternative, is the Preferred Alternative. This alternative would encompass all the activities under Alternative 3, with the additional option to temporarily translocate weaned pups from the NWHI to the MHI to improve survival. At age three years, surviving translocated seals would be returned to the NWHI.

Alternative 4 encompasses the range of actions considered most promising to prevent the extinction of the species. Before any translocation between the NWHI and MHI would be attempted, extensive outreach and engagement with local stakeholders would be conducted, and programs to reduce seal-human interactions, including interactions between seals and fishing gear, would be developed and implemented.

Public Involvement

Comments will be accepted at public hearings (see below) and during the public comment period, and must be submitted to NMFS by October 17, 2011 (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**). We request that you include in your comments: (1) Your name, address, and affiliation (if any); and (2) background documents to support your comments as appropriate.

Public hearings will take place on the following dates, times, and locations:

1. Monday, September 12, 2011, 5:30 p.m.–8:30 p.m., Central Union Church, 1660 South Beretania Street, Honolulu, O'ahu.
2. Tuesday, September 13, 2011, 6 p.m.–8:30 p.m., Hale Mahaolu Home Pumehana, 290 Kolapa Place, Kaunakakai, Moloka'i.
3. Wednesday, September 14, 2011, 6 p.m.–9 p.m., Mokuapapa Discovery Center, 308 Kamehameha Avenue, Suite 109, Hilo, Hawai'i.
4. Thursday, September 15, 2011, 6 p.m.–9 p.m., Kihei Community Center, 303 East Lipoa Street, Kihei, Maui.
5. Saturday, September 17, 2011, 9 a.m.–12 p.m. and 4 p.m.–7 p.m., Wilcox Elementary School, 4319 Hardy Street, Lihua'e, Kaua'i.

Special Accommodations

These meetings are accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Rachel Sprague, (808) 944-2200 (phone) or (808) 973-2941 (fax), at least 5 days before the scheduled meeting date.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.* and 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*

Dated: August 11, 2011.

Samuel D. Rauch III,
Deputy Assistant Administrator for
Regulatory Programs, National Marine
Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 2011-21274 Filed 8-18-11; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XA289

Small Takes of Marine Mammals Incidental to Specified Activities; Pile Driving in the Columbia River, WA

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 a complete and adequate application from the Port of Vancouver, USA (Port) for an Incidental Harassment Authorization (IHA) to take marine mammals, by harassment, incidental to pile driving during construction of the Terminal 5 Bulk Potash Handling Facility. Pursuant to the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), NMFS is proposing to issue an IHA to incidentally harass, by Level B harassment only, three species of marine mammals during the specified activity within a specific geographic area and is requesting comments on its proposal.

DATES: Comments and information must be received no later than September 19, 2011.

ADDRESSES: Comments on the application and this proposal should be addressed to Michael Payne, Chief, Permits, Conservation and Education Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910-3225. The mailbox address for providing email comments is ITP.Magliocca@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.

Instructions: 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> 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 address specified above, telephoning the contact listed below (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**), or visiting the internet at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/permits/incidental.htm>. Documents cited in this notice may also be viewed, by appointment, during regular business hours, at the aforementioned address.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Michelle Magliocca, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, (301) 427-8401.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Sections 101(a)(5)(A) and (D) of the MMPA (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*) direct the Secretary of Commerce to allow, upon 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 specific geographical region if certain findings are made and either regulations are issued or, if the taking is limited to harassment, a notice of a proposed authorization is provided to the public for review.

Authorization for incidental takings shall be granted if NMFS finds that the taking will have a negligible impact on the species or stock(s), will not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of the species or stock(s) for subsistence uses (where relevant), and if the permissible methods of taking and requirements pertaining to the mitigation, monitoring and reporting of such takings are set forth. 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) further established 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 marine mammals. Within 45 days of the close of the comment period, NMFS must either issue or deny the authorization.