

distributed to the Board, but may not be reviewed prior to the meeting date. Seats will be available on a first-come, first-serve basis.

*Special Accommodations:* These meetings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Mrs. Jennifer Hinden using the methods under the **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** section by Monday, September 26, 2016.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

Established by Section 209 of the Act and as amended the National Sea Grant College Program Amendments Act of 2008 (Pub. L. 110–394), the duties of the Board are as follows:

(1) In general. The Board shall advise the Secretary and the National Sea Grant College Program Director (Director) concerning:

(A) Strategies for utilizing the Sea Grant College Program to address the Nation's highest priorities regarding the understanding, assessment, development, management, utilization, and conservation of ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes resources;

(B) The designation of Sea Grant Colleges and Sea Grant Institutes; and

(C) Such other matters as the Secretary refer to the Board for review and advice.

(2) Biennial Report. The Board shall report to the Congress every two years on the state of the National Sea Grant College Program. The Board shall indicate in each such report the progress made toward meeting the priorities identified in the strategic plan in effect under section 204(c). The Secretary shall make available to the Board such information, personnel, and administrative services and assistance as it may reasonably require carrying out its duties under this title.

The Board shall consist of 15 voting members who will be appointed by the Secretary for a 4-year term. The Director and a director of a Sea Grant program who is elected by the various directors of Sea Grant programs shall serve as nonvoting members of the Board. Not less than 8 of the voting members of the Board shall be individuals who, by reason of knowledge, experience, or training, are especially qualified in one or more of the disciplines and fields included in marine science. The other voting members shall be individuals who, by reason of knowledge, experience, or training, are especially qualified in, or representative of, education, marine affairs and resource management, coastal management, extension services, State government,

industry, economics, planning, or any other activity which is appropriate to, and important for, any effort to enhance the understanding, assessment, development, management, utilization, or conservation of ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes resources. No individual is eligible to be a voting member of the Board if the individual is (A) the director of a Sea Grant College or Sea Grant Institute; (B) an applicant for, or beneficiary (as determined by the Secretary) of, any grant or contract under section 205 [33 U.S.C. 1124]; or (C) a full-time officer or employee of the United States.

Dated: September 14, 2016.

**Jason Donaldson,**

*Chief Financial Officer, Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.*

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**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

**RIN 0648-XE883**

**Taking and Importing Marine Mammals; Taking Marine Mammals Incidental to Northeast Fisheries Science Center Fisheries Research**

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

**ACTION:** Notice of issuance of Letter of Authorization.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), as amended, and implementing regulations, notification is hereby given that a Letter of Authorization (LOA) has been issued to the NMFS Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC) for the take of marine mammals incidental to fisheries research conducted in the Atlantic coast region.

**DATES:** Effective through September 9, 2021.

**ADDRESSES:** The LOA and supporting documentation is available online at: [www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/permits/incidental/research.htm](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/permits/incidental/research.htm). In case of problems accessing these documents, please call the contact listed below.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Ben Laws, 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 specified 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.

An 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.”

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**

On December 17, 2014, we received an adequate and complete request from NEFSC for authorization to take marine mammals incidental to fisheries research activities. On July 9, 2015 (80 FR 39542), we published a notice of proposed rulemaking in the **Federal Register**, requesting comments and information related to the NEFSC request for thirty days. We subsequently published corrections to the notice of proposed rulemaking in the **Federal Register** on August 6, 2015 (80 FR 46939), and August 17, 2015 (80 FR 49196), including an extension of the comment period. The final rule was published in the **Federal Register** on August 11, 2016 (81 FR 53061). For

detailed information on this action, please refer to those documents. The regulations include mitigation, monitoring, and reporting requirements for the incidental take of marine mammals during fisheries research activities in the specified geographic region.

NEFSC conducts fisheries research using pelagic trawl gear used at various levels in the water column, bottom-contact trawl gear, pelagic and demersal longlines with multiple hooks, gillnets, fyke nets, dredges, pots, traps, and other gear. If a marine mammal interacts with gear deployed by NEFSC, the outcome could potentially be Level A harassment, serious injury (*i.e.*, any injury that will likely result in mortality), or mortality. We pooled the estimated number of incidents of take resulting from gear interactions and assessed the potential impacts accordingly. NEFSC also uses various active acoustic devices in the conduct of fisheries research, and use of these devices has the potential to result in Level B harassment of marine mammals. Level B harassment of pinnipeds hauled out on land may also occur as a result of visual disturbance from vessels conducting NEFSC research.

The NEFSC conducts fisheries research surveys in the Atlantic coast region which spans the United States-Canadian border to Florida. This specified geographic region includes the following subareas: the Gulf of Maine, Georges Bank, Southern New England waters, the Mid-Atlantic Bight, and the coastal waters of northeast Florida. The NEFSC is authorized to take individuals of 10 species by Level A harassment, serious injury, or mortality (hereafter referred to as M/SI + Level A) and of 19 species by Level B harassment.

#### Authorization

We have issued an LOA to NEFSC authorizing the take of marine mammals incidental to fisheries research activities, as described above. Take of marine mammals will be minimized through implementation of the following mitigation measures: (1) Required monitoring of the sampling areas to detect the presence of marine mammals before deployment of pelagic trawl nets, bottom-contact trawl gear, pelagic or demersal longline gear, gillnets, fyke nets, pots, traps, and other gears; (2) Required implementation of standard tow durations of not more than 30 minutes to reduce the likelihood of incidental take of marine mammals; (3) Required implementation of the mitigation strategy known as the “move-on rule,” which incorporates best professional judgment, when necessary

during trawl and longline operations; (4) Required compliance with applicable vessel speed restrictions; and (5) Required compliance with applicable and relevant take reduction plans for marine mammals. Additionally, the rule includes an adaptive management component that allows for timely modification of mitigation or monitoring measures based on new information, when appropriate. The NEFSC will submit reports as required.

Based on these findings and the information discussed in the preamble to the final rule, the activities described under these LOAs will have a negligible impact on marine mammal stocks and will not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of the affected marine mammal stock for subsistence uses.

Dated: September 13, 2016.

**Donna S. Wieting,**

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

[FR Doc. 2016-22582 Filed 9-19-16; 8:45 am]

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

#### Science Advisory Board (SAB); Meeting

**AGENCY:** Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR) National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Department of Commerce (DOC).

**ACTION:** Notice of open meeting.

**SUMMARY:** The Science Advisory Board (SAB) was established by a Decision Memorandum dated September 25, 1997, and is the only Federal Advisory Committee with responsibility to advise the Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere on strategies for research, education, and application of science to operations and information services. SAB activities and advice provide necessary input to ensure that National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) science programs are of the highest quality and provide optimal support to resource management.

**Time and Date:** The meeting will be held Thursday November 17, 2016 from 9:45 a.m. EST to 5:45 p.m. EST and on Friday November 18, 2016 from 8:30 a.m. EST to 1:45 p.m. EST. These times and the agenda topics described below are subject to change. Please refer to the Web page [www.sab.noaa.gov/](http://www.sab.noaa.gov/)

*SABMeetings.aspx* for the most up-to-date meeting times and agenda.

**Place:** The meeting will be held at The Nature Conservancy, 4245 North Fairfax Drive, Suite 100, Arlington, Virginia 22203.

**Status:** The meeting will be open to public participation with a 15-minute public comment period on November 17 from 5:30–5:45 p.m. EST (check Web site to confirm time). The SAB expects that public statements presented at its meetings will not be repetitive of previously submitted verbal or written statements. In general, each individual or group making a verbal presentation will be limited to a total time of two (2) minutes. Individuals or groups planning to make a verbal presentation should contact the SAB Executive Director by November 10, 2016 to schedule their presentation. Written comments should be received in the SAB Executive Director's Office by November 10, 2016, to provide sufficient time for SAB review. Written comments received by the SAB Executive Director after November 10, 2016, will be distributed to the SAB, but may not be reviewed prior to the meeting date. Seating at the meeting will be available on a first-come, first-served basis.

**Special Accommodations:** These meetings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for special accommodations may be directed no later than 12:00 p.m. on November 10, 2016, to Dr. Cynthia Decker, SAB Executive Director, SSMC3, Room 11230, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910; Email: [Cynthia.Decker@noaa.gov](mailto:Cynthia.Decker@noaa.gov).

**Matters To Be Considered:** The meeting will include the following topics: (1) Report from the Review of the Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences (CIRES); (2) Updates from the NOAA Administrator and Chief Scientist; (3) Discussion on the Ecosystem Services Valuation Report; (4) Discussion on the GOES-R Level 0 Data report; (5) Discussion on RESTORE Act Metrics and Communication report; (6) SAB Strategy Discussion and Implications for NOAA; and (7) Discussion of the SAB Working Group Concept of Operations.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Dr. Cynthia Decker, Executive Director, Science Advisory Board, NOAA, Room 11230, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Email: [Cynthia.Decker@noaa.gov](mailto:Cynthia.Decker@noaa.gov); or visit the NOAA SAB Web site at <http://www.sab.noaa.gov>.