

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE****National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

RIN 0648–XD900

**Marine Mammals; File No. 18786–02**

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

**ACTION:** Notice; receipt of application for permit amendment.

**SUMMARY:** Notice is hereby given that the NMFS Office of Protected Resources, Marine Mammal Health and Stranding Response Program (Responsible Party: Teri Rowles, D.V.M., Ph.D.), 1315 East West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910, has applied for an amendment to Scientific Research Permit No. 18786–01.

**DATES:** Written, telefaxed, or email comments must be received on or before October 5, 2017.

**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 home page, <https://apps.nmfs.noaa.gov>, and then selecting File No. 18786–02 from the list of available applications.

These documents are also available upon written request or by appointment in the Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13705, Silver Spring, MD 20910; phone (301) 427–8401; fax (301) 713–0376.

Written comments on this application should be submitted to the Chief, Permits and Conservation 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](mailto:NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov). Please include the File No. in the subject line of the email comment.

Those individuals requesting a public hearing should submit a written request to the Chief, Permits and Conservation 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:** Shasta McClenahan or Amy Sloan, (301) 427–8401.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The subject amendment to Permit No. 18786–02 is requested 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 (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), and the Fur Seal Act of 1966, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1151 *et seq.*).

Permit No. 18786, issued on June 30, 2015 (80 FR 44939), authorizes the permit holder to: (1) Carry out response, rescue, rehabilitation and release of threatened and endangered marine mammals under NMFS jurisdiction (Cetacea and Pinnipedia [excluding walrus]), and disentanglement of all marine mammals under NMFS jurisdiction, pursuant to sections 109(h), 112(c), and Title IV of the MMPA; and, carry out such activities as enhancement pursuant to section 10(a)(1)(A) of the ESA; (2) Conduct health-related, bona fide scientific research studies on marine mammals and marine mammal parts under NMFS jurisdiction pursuant to sections 104(c) and Title IV of the MMPA and section 10(a)(1)(A) of the ESA, including research related to emergency response that may involve compromised animals, and research on healthy animals that have not been subject to emergency response (*e.g.*, baseline health studies); (3) Conduct Level B harassment on all marine mammal species under NMFS jurisdiction incidental to MMHSRP activities in the U.S.; and (4) Collect, salvage, receive, possess, transfer, import, export, analyze, and curate marine mammal specimens under NMFS jurisdiction for purposes delineated in numbers (1) and (2) above.

The permit holder is requesting the permit be amended to include authorization to: (1) Increase the number of dolphins captured, handled, and released for research by 200 takes; (2) increase the number of research takes for non-ESA listed pinniped species by 200 takes for directed research and by 500 takes for sampling under other permitted research; (3) increase the number of research takes for non-ESA listed large whales by 400 takes; (4) add 10 dedicated research takes for the proposed ESA-listed Gulf of Mexico subspecies of Bryde’s whale (*Balaenoptera edeni*); and (5) clarify that new methods and tools may be used during emergency response.

An environmental assessment (EA) was prepared for the original permit (No. 18786) in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), to examine whether significant environmental impacts could result from issuance of the proposed scientific

research permit. Based on the analyses in the EA, NMFS determined that issuance of the permit 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 June 29, 2017. The activities in this proposed amendment are consistent with the analyses in the original EA and no additional NEPA analysis is required for the issuance of this amendment. The original EA and FONSI are available upon request.

Concurrent with the publication of this notice in the **Federal Register**, NMFS is forwarding copies of this application to the Marine Mammal Commission and its Committee of Scientific Advisors.

Dated: August 30, 2017.

**Julia Harrison,**

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

[FR Doc. 2017–18681 Filed 9–1–17; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3510–22–P**

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE****National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

RIN 0648–XF665

**Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Assessment on the Issuance of Incidental Take Authorizations in Cook Inlet, Alaska**

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

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The National Marine Fisheries Service announces its intent to prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA) to analyze the environmental impacts of issuing annual incidental harassment authorizations (IHAs) pursuant to the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) for the taking of marine mammals incidental to anthropogenic activities in the waters of Cook Inlet, Alaska, for the 2018 season; and its intent to continue an annual cycle for issuing MMPA IHAs in Cook Inlet such that companies planning to submit IHA applications for work to be conducted in Cook Inlet in 2018 do so by no later than October 1, 2017. We refer prospective applicants to our 2016 Technical Guidance for Assessing the Effects of Anthropogenic Sound on Marine Mammal Hearing (

[www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/acoustics/guidelines.htm](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/acoustics/guidelines.htm)).

**DATES:** Applicants should submit applications to the Permits and Conservation Division in the Office of Protected Resources by October 1, 2017.

**ADDRESSES:** Applications should be addressed to Jolie Harrison, Chief, Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910. The mailbox address for providing applications is [itp.youngkin@noaa.gov](mailto:itp.youngkin@noaa.gov). Applications sent via email, including all attachments, must not exceed a 25-megabyte file size. NMFS is not responsible for applications sent to addresses other than those provided here.

**Instructions:** All applications received are a part of the public record and will generally be posted to <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/permits/incidental.htm>. 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.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Sara Young, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, (301) 427-8484.

**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 for a period of one year or less, a notice of proposed authorization is provided to the public for review. The term “take” under the MMPA means “to harass, hunt, capture or kill, or attempt to harass, hunt, capture, or kill.” 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].”

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.”

**Concern for Cook Inlet Beluga Whales**

Cook Inlet is a semi-enclosed tidal estuary located in southcentral Alaska and home to the Cook Inlet beluga whale, a small resident population that was designated as depleted under the MMPA and listed as an endangered species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) in 2008. The stock has not recovered, despite implementation of subsistence hunting regulations in 1999, and cessation of hunting in 2007. In May 2015, NMFS unveiled its “Species in the Spotlight: Survive to Thrive” initiative. This initiative includes targeted efforts vital for stabilizing eight species—including the Cook Inlet beluga whale—identified among the most at risk for extinction. The approach involves intensive human efforts to stabilize these species, with the goal that they will become candidates for recovery. NMFS issued a **Federal Register** Notice in January 2017 announcing availability of its ESA Recovery Plan for the Cook Inlet Beluga Whale (82 FR 1325; January 5, 2017).

Due to the reduced number of ITA requests in the region, combined with current funding constraints, NMFS’ intention of preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for oil and gas activities in Cook Inlet has been postponed (79 FR 61616; October 14, 2014). Should the number of ITA requests, or anticipated requests, noticeably increase, NMFS will re-evaluate whether preparation of an EIS is necessary.

**MMPA Authorization Cycle (Application Deadlines)**

To support NMFS’ efforts to prepare an EA that covers multiple MMPA incidental harassment authorizations for the 2018 open water season, NMFS is continuing an application cycle for incidental harassment authorizations that include Cook Inlet beluga whales. NMFS requests prospective MMPA

incidental harassment authorization applicants for the 2018 open water season to submit their applications by October 1, 2017 (unless the activity is scheduled to occur before May, in which case they should be submitted earlier). Receipt of those MMPA applications by October 1, 2017, will aid NMFS in the development of an EA to support timely and well-informed MMPA incidental harassment authorizations.

Dated: August 30, 2017.

**Donna S. Wieting,**

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

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**BILLING CODE 3510-22-P**

**CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE**

**Agency Information Collection Activities; Submission to the Office of Management and Budget for Review and Approval; Comment Request; Generic Information Collection Request for the Collection of Qualitative Feedback on Agency Service Delivery; Proposed Information Collection; Comment Request**

**AGENCY:** Corporation for National and Community Service.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) has submitted a public information collection request (ICR) entitled Generic Information Collection Request for Qualitative Feedback on Agency Service Delivery for review and approval in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995. Copies of this ICR, with applicable supporting documentation, may be obtained by calling the Corporation for National and Community Service, Amy Borgstrom, at 202-606-6930 or email to [aborgstrom@cns.gov](mailto:aborgstrom@cns.gov). Individuals who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TTY-TDD) may call 1-800-833-3722 between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday.

**DATES:** Comments may be submitted, identified by the title of the information collection activity, by October 5, 2017.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments may be submitted, identified by the title of the information collection activity, to the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Attn: Ms. Sharon Mar, OMB Desk Officer for the Corporation for National and Community Service, by any of the following two methods by 30