

approved providers for fishing years 2019 and 2020.

ADDRESSES: The list of NMFS-approved sector monitoring service providers is available at: <http://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/sustainable/species/multispecies/>, or by sending a written request to: 55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930, Attn: Kyle Molton.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Kyle Molton, Fishery Management Specialist, (978) 281-9236, email Kyle.Molton@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan (FMP) includes a requirement for industry-funded monitoring of catch by sector vessels. Sectors must contract with independent third-party service providers to provide at-sea monitoring services to their vessels. In order to provide at-sea monitoring services to sectors, monitoring companies must apply to, and be approved by, NMFS. Once approved, service providers must meet specified performance requirements outlined in 50 CFR 648.87(b)(4),

including required coverage levels, in order to maintain eligibility.

At-Sea Monitoring Service Provider Approval Process

Applications approved this year will cover both fishing year 2019 and fishing year 2020 (May 1, 2019, through April 30, 2021). There will be an opportunity in 2019 for additional monitoring companies to apply for approval to provide services in fishing year 2020.

The regulations at § 648.87(b)(4) describe the criteria for approval of at-sea monitoring service providers. We approve service providers based on: (1) Completeness and sufficiency of applications; and (2) determination of the applicant’s ability to meet the performance requirements of a sector monitoring service provider. We must notify service providers, in writing, if approval is withdrawn for any reason.

Approved Monitoring Service Providers

We received complete applications from four companies: A.I.S., Inc.; East West Technical Services, LLC; Fathom Research, LLC; and MRAG Americas, Inc. These four companies were

previously approved for fishing years 2017 and 2018. In fishing year 2018, a number of sectors have realized at-sea monitoring coverage levels below the target coverage level. We are working with the approved providers and sectors to increase coverage levels, and we have scheduled additional at-sea monitor certification trainings to increase monitor staffing levels.

We approved all four companies to provide at-sea monitoring services in fishing years 2019 and 2020 because they have met the application requirements, documented their ability to comply with service provider standards, and have a sufficient track record of providing at-sea monitoring services. We expect providers will have adequate staff and resources to fulfill performance requirements during the approval term. We will closely monitor the performance of approved providers, and we will be prepared to withdraw approval during the current approval term, or disapprove a provider in future fishing years if we determine performance standards are not being met.

TABLE 1—APPROVED PROVIDERS FOR FISHING YEARS 2019 AND 2020

Provider	Address	Phone	Fax	Website
A.I.S., Inc	14 Barnabas Rd., P.O. Box 1009, Marion, MA 02738.	508-990-9054	508-990-9055	www.aisobservers.com .
East West Technical Services, LLC ...	1415 Corona Ln., Vero Beach, FL 32963.	860-910-4957	860-223-6005	www.ewts.com .
Fathom Research, LLC	855 Aquidneck Ave., Unit 9, Middletown, RI 02842.	508-990-0997	508-991-7372	www.fathomresearchllc.com .
MRAG Americas, Inc	8950 Martin Luther King Jr. Street N., Suite 202, Saint Petersburg, FL 33702.	978-768-3880	978-768-3878	www.mragamericas.com .

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

Dated: January 29, 2019.

Karen H. Abrams,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Proposed New Space Lease for the Geophysical Fluid Dynamics Laboratory in Princeton, NJ

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

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare an EA; request for comments.

SUMMARY: This notice announces its intention to prepare an EA in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, for a new space lease to be occupied by the NOAA/OAR Geophysical Fluid Dynamics Laboratory.

DATES: Comments are due by March 4, 2019.

ADDRESSES: Written comments on suggested alternatives and potential impacts should be sent to Stephen F. Mayle, Administrative Officer, NOAA/OAR/GFDL, 201 Forrestal Road, Princeton, NJ 08540. Comments may also be submitted via facsimile to 609-452-5395 or by email to Steve.Mayle@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The proposed action would involve a lease

for space for the offices, seminar rooms, meeting rooms, etc. and computing facilities used by the Geophysical Fluid Dynamics Laboratory (GFDL). The current facilities, located in the Princeton, New Jersey area, are part of NOAA’s Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR). Research conducted at this laboratory includes development and use of mathematical models and computer simulations to improve the understanding and prediction of the behavior of the atmosphere and the oceans. GFDL scientists focus on model-building research, weather and ocean prediction, and forecasting on the continuum of time and space scales. GFDL also collaborates with visiting scientists and students from academic and non-profit institutions with whom NOAA has partnered to further its mission goals.

The current physical space for GFDL consists of two buildings that together provide office space, teaching/seminar space, high performance computing space, a command/control center, and mechanical and electrical plants. The current GFDL facilities are approximately 68,675 square feet. Current space can house up to 215 staff, including full-time employees, visiting scientists and students, and contract employees.

The current facilities are in need of repairs and renovations in order to continue to be effectively and safely occupied by GFDL. The existing space is also insufficient to accommodate visiting scientists and students, for example approximately 40 such staff utilize nearby overflow space, and to effectively store and stage necessary equipment for current levels of effort. It also does not allow space to expand to continue to meet NOAA's mission in collaboration with our institutional partners. During 2018, NOAA contracted with an architectural and engineering firm to develop a space programming and planning study, or a Program of Requirements, that identifies the full scope of GFDL's space needs. The Program of Requirements is available upon request to Mr. Mayle.

The purpose of the public scoping process for this EA is to determine relevant issues that will influence the scope of the environmental analysis, including potential alternatives, and the extent to which those issues and impacts will be analyzed in the EA. Federal, state, and local agencies, along with other stakeholders that may be interested in or affected by NOAA's decision on this project are invited to participate in the scoping process and, if eligible, may request or be requested by NOAA to participate as a cooperating agency.

Dated: December 12, 2018.

David Holst,

Chief Financial Officer/Administrative 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-XG694-X

Taking and Importing Marine Mammals; Taking Marine Mammals Incidental to the U.S. Navy Training and Testing Activities in the Atlantic Fleet Training and Testing Study Area

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

ACTION: Notice; receipt of application and request for Letters of Authorization extension; request for comments and information.

SUMMARY: NMFS has received a request from the U.S. Navy (Navy) to amend NMFS' Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) regulations authorizing the take of marine mammals incidental to Navy training and testing activities conducted in the Atlantic Fleet Training and Testing (AFTT) Study Area from November 2018 to November 2023 to cover seven years of the Navy's activities, instead of five. Section 316 of the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019 (2019 NDAA), signed into law on August 13, 2018, amended the MMPA to extend the maximum period for MMPA incidental take regulations under section 101(a)(5)(A) from five to seven years for military readiness activities. The Navy's activities qualify as military readiness activities pursuant to the MMPA, as amended by the NDAA for Fiscal Year 2004. The Navy proposes no changes to their specified activities, mitigation measures, monitoring, or reporting and requests that NMFS amend the final rule issued on November 14, 2018, to authorize incidental take of marine mammals for the two additional years now allowed under the statute. NMFS invites the public to provide information, suggestions, and comments on the Navy's application.

DATES: Comments and information must be received no later than March 4, 2019.

ADDRESSES: Comments on the application should be addressed to Jolie Harrison, Chief, Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service. Physical comments should be sent to 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910 and electronic comments should be sent to ITP.Piniak@noaa.gov.

Instructions: NMFS is not responsible for information or comments sent by

any other method, to any other address or individual, or received after the end of the comment period. Information and comments received electronically, including all attachments, must not exceed a 25-megabyte file size.

Attachments to electronic comments will be accepted in Microsoft Word or Excel or Adobe PDF file formats only. All information and comments received are a part of the public record and will generally be posted online at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/permit/incidental-take-authorizations-under-marine-mammal-protection-act> without change. All personal identifying information (e.g., name, address) 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: Wendy Piniak, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, (301) 427-8401. An electronic copy of the Navy's application may be obtained online at: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/marine-mammal-protection/incidental-take-authorizations-military-readiness-activities>. In case of problems accessing these documents, please call the contact listed above.

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 (as delegated to NMFS) 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 incidental take authorization 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.