

Conservancy in Maine. In these letters these organizations expressed their support of MBI's application for an ITP. Of the two additional comments one commenter was opposed to the killing of any fish. This is not consistent with the ESA, which allows for the incidental take of listed species if certain criteria are met and a permit is issued by NMFS. Additionally, lethal take is not authorized for this permit. The other commenter seemed confused regarding the requirements of the ESA and the ITP process. NMFS and MBI held further discussions regarding information that would be incorporated in the Conservation Plan and a final application and Conservation Plan was submitted on July 6, 2020.

### Conservation Plan

Section 10 of the ESA specifies that no permit may be issued unless an applicant submits an adequate conservation plan. The conservation plan prepared by MBI describes measures designed to minimize and mitigate the impacts of any incidental take of ESA-listed shortnose sturgeon, Atlantic sturgeon and Atlantic salmon. To avoid and minimize take of ESA listed species MBI is required to implement the following minimization measures: (a) Conduct sampling between mid-September and mid-October to minimize any encounters with early life stage or juvenile fish. (b) MBI will request any recent acoustic detections of ESA listed species in the study area and take steps to avoid any congregations of listed species. (c) Only trained and qualified MBI crew leaders and either MBI or Maine Department of Marine Resources (DMR) agency technicians will be allowed to carry out the sampling activities. The MBI crew leader will review the ESA listed species minimization and avoidance procedures with the sampling crew at the beginning of each sampling day. In addition Maine DMR procedures (Bruchs et al. 2016) for electrofishing will be included in the training and instructions. (d) Sampling and the operation of the electrofishing gear will be done in a manner that minimizes the potential for injury to the listed species. The pulse frequency will be reduced to 30–60Hz when sampling in areas of prior interaction with ESA listed species to minimize the risk of injury. (e) Electric current and sampling activity will cease upon an encounter where a listed species is observed to be affected by the electric field. Affected sturgeon, if immobilized and/or in apparent distress, may be netted or otherwise handled in order to ascertain any injury and to revive if necessary, but the

individual will not be removed from the water. Otherwise, affected fish that leave the electric field under their own power and appear to be uninjured will not be pursued and netted. In such cases, the species identification and estimation of length will be made visually. (f) Sampling will not be conducted when ambient water temperature is >22 °C per Maine DMR specifications (Bruchs et al. 2016). Temperature will be routinely measured at the start of each electrofishing site, but will be more frequently monitored (every 2 hours) when temperatures are between 20–22 °C. (g) When there is any interaction with a listed species all sampling activities will cease and the electric current will be shut off for a period of 5 minutes and/or until the individual fish are released and determined to have departed the area. Notation will be made about the physical condition of the individual in terms of the reaction to the electric field and if it was able to leave the area under its own power. Photographs will be taken of each interaction to document occurrence and any evidence of injury.

At present, the project is funded by MBI research and development funds, but MBI continues to seek external funding. This project has been ongoing for 18 years and is one of the longest running biological monitoring projects in New England and the only sustained effort that focuses on large river fish assemblages.

### Permit 23861

NMFS authorizes the following non-lethal incidental takes:

- Four (adult/subadult) Gulf of Maine & New York Bight DPS Atlantic sturgeon;
- Four (adult/subadult) Shortnose sturgeon; and
- Five (adult/subadult) Gulf of Maine DPS Atlantic salmon.

### National Environmental Policy Act

Issuing an ESA section 10(a)(1)(B) permit constitutes a Federal action requiring NMFS to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA; 42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*) as implemented by 40 CFR parts 1500–1508 and NOAA Administrative Order 216–6, Environmental Review Procedures for Implementing the National Policy Act (1999). NMFS has determined that the activity proposed is categorically excluded from the requirement to prepare an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement. This action falls within the B3 category— Issuance of, and amendments to, “low effect” Incidental Take Permits and

their supporting “low effect” Habitat Conservation Plans under section 10(a)(1)(B) of the ESA. Additionally there are no extraordinary circumstances with the potential for significant environmental effects that would preclude the issuance of this permit type from being categorically excluded.

Dated: December 17, 2020.

**Angela Somma,**

*Chief, Endangered Species Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

#### Agency Information Collection Activities; Submission to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for Review and Approval; Comment Request; Weather Modification Activities Reports

**AGENCY:** National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

**ACTION:** Notice; request for comment.

**SUMMARY:** The Department of Commerce, in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA), invites the general public and other Federal agencies to comment on proposed, and continuing information collections, which helps us assess the impact of our information collection requirements and minimize the public's reporting burden. The purpose of this notice is to allow for 60 days of public comment preceding submission of the collection to OMB.

**DATES:** To ensure consideration, comments regarding this proposed information collection must be received on or before February 22, 2021.

**ADDRESSES:** Interested persons are invited to submit written comments to Adrienne Thomas, NOAA PRA Officer, at [Adrienne.thomas@noaa.gov](mailto:Adrienne.thomas@noaa.gov). Please reference OMB Control Number 0648–0025 in the subject line of your comments. Do not submit Confidential Business Information or otherwise sensitive or protected information.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Requests for additional information or specific questions related to collection activities should be directed to OAR Weather Program Office at [Weather.Modification@noaa.gov](mailto:Weather.Modification@noaa.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**

## I. Abstract

This is a request for extension of a currently approved information collection. The National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration's Office of Atmospheric Research (OAR)/Weather Program Office is conducting this information collection pursuant to Section 6(b) of Public Law 92-205. This law requires that all non-federal weather modification activities (*e.g.*, cloud seeding) in the United States (U.S.) and its territories be reported to the Secretary of Commerce through NOAA. This reporting is critical for gauging the scope of these activities, for determining the possibility of duplicative operations or of interference with another project, for providing a database for checking atmospheric changes against the reported activities, and for providing a single source of information on the safety and environmental factors used in weather modification activities in the U.S. Two forms are collected under this OMB Control Number: One prior to and one after the activity. The requirements are detailed in 15 CFR part 908. This data is used for scientific research, historical statistics, international reports and other purposes.

## II. Method of Collection

Respondents have a choice of either electronic or paper forms. Methods of submittal include email of electronic forms, mail and facsimile transmission of paper forms.

## III. Data

*OMB Control Number:* 0648-0025.

*Form Number(s):* NOAA Forms 17-4 and 17-4A.

*Type of Review:* Regular submission (extension of a current information collection).

*Affected Public:* Business or other for-profit organizations.

*Estimated Number of Respondents:* 50.

*Estimated Time per Response:* 60 minutes per initial report; 30 minutes per final report.

*Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours:* 75 hours.

*Estimated Total Annual Cost to Public:* \$0.

*Respondent's Obligation:* Mandatory.  
*Legal Authority:* Public Law 92-205, Weather Modification Reporting Act of 1972.

## IV. Request for Comments

We are soliciting public comments to permit the Department/Bureau to: (a) Evaluate whether the proposed information collection is necessary for the proper functions of the Department, including whether the information will have practical utility; (b) Evaluate the accuracy of our estimate of the time and cost burden for this proposed collection, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (c) Evaluate ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) Minimize the reporting burden on those who are to respond, including the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Comments that you submit in response to this notice are a matter of public record. We will include or summarize each comment in our request to OMB to approve this ICR. Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time.

While you may ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

**Sheleen Dumas,**

*Department PRA Clearance Officer, Office of the Chief Information Officer, Commerce Department.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

### Office of the Secretary

[Transmittal No. 20-86]

### Arms Sales Notification

**AGENCY:** Defense Security Cooperation Agency, Department of Defense (DoD).

**ACTION:** Arms sales notice.

**SUMMARY:** The Department of Defense is publishing the unclassified text of an arms sales notification.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Karma Job at [karma.d.job.civ@mail.mil](mailto:karma.d.job.civ@mail.mil) or (703) 697-8976.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** This 36(b)(1) arms sales notification is published to fulfill the requirements of section 155 of Public Law 104-164 dated July 21, 1996. The following is a copy of a letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Transmittal 20-86 with attached Policy Justification and Sensitivity of Technology.

Dated: December 17, 2020.

**Kayyonne T. Marston,**

*Alternate OSD Federal Register Liaison Officer, Department of Defense.*

**BILLING CODE 5001-06-P**