

OMB Control Number: 0648–0538.

Form Number(s): None.

Type of Request: Regular [Revision and extension of a current information collection.].

Number of Respondents: 736.

Average Hours per Response: 3 hours.

Total Annual Burden Hours: 2,208 hours.

Needs and Uses: This request is for a revision and extension of a currently approved information collection through the *Environmental Compliance Questionnaire for National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Federal Financial Assistance Applicants* (Questionnaire). This Questionnaire is used by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to collect information about proposed activities for the purpose of complying with the National Environmental Policy Act (“NEPA,” 42 U.S.C. 4321–4370) and other environmental compliance requirements associated with proposed activities. NEPA requires federal agencies to complete an environmental analysis for all major federal actions, including funding non-federal activities through federal financial assistance awards where federal participation in the funded activity is expected to be significant. The Questionnaire is used in conjunction with NOAA Notices of Funding Opportunity (NOFO).

The NOFO will indicate the specific questions to which an applicant must respond in one of three ways: (1) The applicable questions are inserted directly into the NOFO with reference to the OMB Approval Number (0648–0538) for this form; (2) the NOFO will specify which questions (e.g., 1, 2) an applicant must answer, with the entire OMB-approved Questionnaire attached to the NOFO; or (3) applicants to be recommended for funding will be required to answer relevant questions from the Questionnaire. The federal program officer will determine which questions are relevant to each specific applicant. Answers must be provided before the application can be submitted for final funding approval. This Questionnaire has been revised to (1) remove repetitive questions; (2) revise specific questions to use plain language; and (3) add 18 new questions that would be helpful to a wider range of NOAA programs.

Affected Public: Individuals or households; Business or other for-profit organizations; Not-for-profit institutions; State, Local, or Tribal government.

Frequency: Required when responding to a NOFO.

Respondent’s Obligation: Required to Obtain or Retain Benefits.

Legal Authority: National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4321–4370).

This information collection request may be viewed at www.reginfo.gov. Follow the instructions to view the Department of Commerce collections currently under review by OMB.

Written comments and recommendations for the proposed information collection should be submitted within 30 days of the publication of this notice on the following website www.reginfo.gov/public/do/PRAMain. Find this particular information collection by selecting “Currently under 30-day Review—Open for Public Comments” or by using the search function and entering either the title of the collection or the OMB Control Number 0648–0538.

Sheleen Dumas,

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

[FR Doc. 2021–20486 Filed 9–21–21; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–22–P

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; Submission of Conservation Efforts To Make Listings Unnecessary Under the Endangered Species Act

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

ACTION: Notice of Information Collection, 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 a request for extension of a currently approved information collection to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

DATES: To ensure consideration, comments regarding this proposed extension of an information collection must be received on or before November 22, 2021.

ADDRESSES: Interested persons are invited to submit written comments to Adrienne Thomas, NOAA PRA Officer, at Adrienne.thomas@noaa.gov. Please reference OMB Control Number 0648–0466 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 Lisa Manning, National Marine Fisheries Service at 301–427–8466 or Lisa.Manning@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Abstract

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), Office of Protected Resources, is sponsoring a request for extension of a currently approved information collection.

Under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), determinations whether to list species as endangered or threatened must be based on the best scientific and commercial data available, including consideration of those efforts, if any, being made by any state or foreign nation (or any of their political subdivisions) to protect the particular species. On March 28, 2003, NMFS and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (the “Services”) announced a final policy on the criteria the Services will use to evaluate certain conservation efforts by states, tribes, and other non-federal entities when making listing determinations under the ESA (68 FR 15100). The conservation efforts usually involve the development of a conservation plan or agreement, procedures for monitoring the effectiveness of the plan or agreement, and an annual report.

The development of conservation plans could prevent some species from becoming so imperiled that the only recourse is to add them to the list of threatened and endangered species under the Endangered Species Act. The purpose of this policy is to encourage such plans and to give applicants guidance about how NMFSs will evaluate such plans. This policy identifies criteria for evaluating the certainty of implementation and effectiveness of a conservation effort. NMFS developed this policy to ensure consistent and adequate evaluation of agreements and plans in making listing decisions and to help States and other entities develop agreements and plans that will be adequate to make listing species unnecessary.

II. Method of Collection

NMFS does not require, but does accept, conservation plans and reports electronically. NMFS has not developed a form to be used for submission of plans or reports. In the past, NMFS has made plans and annual reports from states available through the internet and plans to continue this practice.

III. Data

OMB Control Number: 0648–0466.

Form Number(s): None.

Type of Review: Regular submission (extension of a currently approved information collection).

Affected Public: Business or other for-profit organizations; State, local or tribal governments.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 1.

Estimated Time per Response: 2,500 hours to complete each agreement or plan that has the intention of making listing unnecessary; 320 hours to conduct monitoring for successful agreements; and 80 hours to prepare a report for successful agreements.

Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours: 3,300.

Estimated Total Annual Cost to Public: \$150.

Respondent's Obligation: Voluntary.

Legal Authority: ESA (16 U.S.C. 1533).

IV. Request for Comments

We are soliciting public comments to permit NMFS 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 information collection request. 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 COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648–XB358]

Takes of Marine Mammals Incidental to Specified Activities; Taking Marine Mammals Incidental to Elkhorn Slough Tidal Marsh Restoration Project, Phase III in Monterey County, California

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

ACTION: Notice; issuance of an incidental harassment authorization.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the regulations implementing the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) as amended, notification is hereby given that NMFS has issued an incidental harassment authorization (IHA) to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to incidentally harass, by Level B harassment only, marine mammals during restoration activity associated with the Elkhorn Slough Tidal Marsh Restoration Project, Phase III, in Monterey Bay, California.

DATES: This authorization is effective from September 16, 2021 through September 15, 2022.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Kim Corcoran, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, (301) 427–8401. Electronic copies of the original application and supporting documents (including NMFS FR notices of the prior authorizations), as well as a list of the references cited in this document, may be obtained online at: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/permit/incidental-take-authorizations-under-marine-mammal-protection-act>. In case of problems accessing these documents, please call the contact listed above.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The MMPA prohibits the “take” of marine mammals, with certain exceptions. 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 incidental take authorization may be 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) and will not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of the species or stock(s) for taking for subsistence uses (where relevant). Further, NMFS must prescribe the permissible methods of taking and other “means of effecting the least practicable adverse impact” on the affected species or stocks and their habitat, paying particular attention to rookeries, mating grounds, and areas of similar significance, and on the availability of such species or stocks for taking for certain subsistence uses (referred to in shorthand as “mitigation”); and requirements pertaining to the mitigation, monitoring and reporting of such takings are set forth.

The definitions of all applicable MMPA statutory terms cited above are included in the relevant sections below.

Summary of Request

On June 14, 2021, NMFS received a request from CDFW for an IHA to take marine mammals incidental to the Elkhorn Slough Restoration Project, Phase III, at the Seal Bend Restoration Area in Monterey County, CA. The application was deemed adequate and complete on July 27, 2021. CDFW's request is for take of a small number of Pacific harbor seals (*Phoca vitulina*) by Level B harassment only. Neither CDFW nor NMFS expects serious injury or mortality to result from this activity and, therefore, an IHA is appropriate.

NMFS previously issued an IHA to CDFW for Phase I (82 FR 16800; April 6, 2017) and Phase II (85 FR 14640; March 13, 2020) of the Elkhorn Slough Restoration Project. Restoration work under the 2020 IHA at the Minhoto-Hester and Seal Bend restoration areas was expected to be completed within 180 days within the 1-year timeframe of the IHA. However, on May 3, 2021 CDFW informed NMFS that the estimated 180 days of construction for both the Minhoto-Hester and Seal Bend Restoration Areas would not be enough to complete the project. This preliminary estimate did not adequately