

8. Questions to reviewers
9. Public comment
10. Closing comments and adjourn

The agenda order may change. The meeting will run as late as necessary to complete scheduled business.

Special Accommodations

This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Please direct requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids to Kitty M. Simonds, (808) 522-8220 (voice) or (808) 522-8226 (fax), at least 5 days prior to the meeting date.

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

Dated: January 19, 2024.

Rey Israel Marquez,

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

[FR Doc. 2024-01357 Filed 1-23-24; 8:45 am]

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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; Applications and Reports for Registration as a Tanner or Agent

AGENCY: National Oceanic & 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 the collection to OMB.

DATES: To ensure consideration, written or on-line comments must be submitted on or before March 25, 2024.

ADDRESSES: Interested persons are invited to submit written comments to Adrienne Thomas, NOAA PRA Officer, at NOAA.PRA@noaa.gov. Please reference OMB Control Number 0648-0179 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 Requests for additional information or copies of the information collection instrument and instructions should be directed to Jerod Cook, Enforcement Officer, PO Box 1310 Petersburg, Alaska 99833 (907) 772-2285; jerod.cook@noaa.gov or Robert Marvelle, Supervisory Enforcement Officer, PO Box 21767 Juneau, Alaska 99802, (907) 586-9329; robert.marvelle@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Abstract

This is a request for extension of an approved information collection. The Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*) mandates the protection and conservation of marine mammals and makes the taking, killing or serious injury of marine mammals, except under permit or exemption, a violation of the Act. An exemption is provided for Alaskan natives to take marine mammals if the taking is for subsistence or for creating and selling authentic native articles of handicraft and clothing. Possession of marine mammals and marine mammal parts by other than Alaskan natives is therefore prohibited (exception, 50 CFR 216.26: beach found non-Endangered Species Act (ESA) teeth or bones that have been registered with NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)). As native handicrafts are allowed by the MMPA to enter interstate commerce, an exemption is also needed to allow non-natives to handle the skins or other marine mammal produce, whether to tan the pinniped hide or to act as an agent for the native to sell his handicraft products. The information is necessary for law enforcement purposes to ensure that only Alaska Indians, Aleuts, or Eskimos are submitting marine mammal hides or parts for tanning.

The information required by 50 CFR 216.23 is of two types. Applications: Information is required to identify the applicant as a tanner/agent in order to preclude prosecution under the MMPA and to determine that he/she has an acceptable record keeping program to accurately account for those marine mammal products received. This information serves as a deterrent for those individuals who might use this registration program for entering prohibited marine mammal products into interstate commerce. Reports: Information is also needed annually to evaluate the agent/tanner's activities during the year, and his/her procedures for bookkeeping and yearly inventory to assure NMFS, the Marine Mammal

Commission, and the general public that prohibited marine mammal products were not being transshipped through registered agents.

The reporting requirements are: report in writing to the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NMFS, any changes in the facts stated in Registrant's applications for this Certificate of Registration within 30 days of such change; maintain current records of each transaction authorized stating the marine mammals or marine mammal parts or products involved, from whom received, any processing accomplished, to whom returned, and the date of each such transaction. These records shall be kept separate and apart from other records maintained in the ordinary course of business and shall be retrained for not less than three years; and annually, during the month of January, send certified copies of such records (annual report) to the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries.

II. Method of Collection

Paper documentation is submitted to meet the requirements found at 50 CFR 216.23(c).

III. Data

OMB Control Number: 0648-0179.

Form Number(s): None.

Type of Review: Regular submission (extension of an existing information collection).

Affected Public: Business or other for profit organizations.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 25.

Estimated Time per Response: 2 hours for an application and 2 hours for a report.

Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours: 50.

Estimated Total Annual Cost to Public: \$150.00.

Respondent's Obligation: Mandatory.

Legal Authority: Paper documentation is submitted to meet the requirements found at 50 CFR 216.23(c).

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 Under Secretary for Economic Affairs, Commerce Department.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648-XD671]

Implementation of Fish and Fish Product Import Provisions of the Marine Mammal Protection Act—Notification of Issuance of Comparability Findings

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

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: Under the authority of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), the NMFS Assistant Administrator for Fisheries (Assistant Administrator) has issued comparability findings for the Government of New Zealand's (GNZ) regulated fisheries: West Coast North Island multi-species set-net fishery, and West Coast North Island multi-species trawl fishery. NMFS bases the comparability findings on documentary evidence submitted by the GNZ and other relevant, readily available information.

DATES: These comparability findings are valid from February 21, 2024, through December 31, 2025, unless revoked or revised by the Assistant Administrator in a subsequent action.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Kellie Foster-Taylor, NMFS Office of International Affairs, Trade, and

Commerce at mmpa.loff@noaa.gov or by phone at 301-427-7721.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

The MMPA Import Provisions

The MMPA, 16 U.S.C. 1371 *et seq.*, states that the Secretary of the Treasury shall ban the importation of commercial fish or products from fish which have been caught with commercial fishing technology which results in the incidental kill or incidental serious injury of ocean mammals in excess of U.S. standards. For purposes of applying this import restriction, the Secretary of Commerce shall insist on reasonable proof from the government of any nation, from which fish or fish products will be exported to the United States, of the effects on ocean mammals of the commercial fishing technology in use for such fish or fish products exported from such nation to the United States.

In August 2016, NMFS published a final rule (81 FR 54390; August 15, 2016) implementing the fish and fish product import provisions in section 101(a)(2) of the MMPA (MMPA Import Provisions). This rule established conditions for evaluating a harvesting nation's regulatory programs to address incidental and intentional mortality and serious injury of marine mammals in fisheries operated by nations that export fish and fish products to the United States. Under the final rule, fish or fish products may not be imported into the United States from commercial fishing operations that result in the incidental mortality or serious injury of marine mammals in excess of U.S. standards (16 U.S.C. 1371(a)(2)).

The final rule established a 5-year exemption period, through December 31, 2021, before imports would be subject to any trade restrictions (see 50 CFR 216.24(h)(2)(ii)). The Department of Commerce and NMFS have revised the regulations implementing the Fish and Fish Product Import Provisions of the MMPA Import Provisions to extend the exemption period, most recently on November 17, 2023. Following careful consideration, the Department of Commerce and NMFS concluded that additional time is required to effectively complete the comparability finding evaluation process and issued a **Federal Register** notice (88 FR 80193; November 17, 2023) extending the exemption period to end on December 31, 2025 for foreign nations to receive a comparability finding for their commercial fishing operations to export fish and fish products to the United States.

In the 2016 final rule, NMFS stated that it may consider emergency actions

during the exemption period to ban imports of fish and fish products from a foreign fishery having or likely to have an immediate and significant adverse impact on a marine mammal stock. (81 FR 54390; August 15, 2016). In addition, pursuant to the MMPA Import Provisions rule, nothing prevents a nation from implementing a bycatch reduction regulatory program and seeking a comparability finding during the exemption period. The GNZ submitted its comparability finding application by the November 30, 2021 regulatory deadline, including information pertaining to the West Coast North Island multi-species set-net fishery and the West Coast North Island multi-species trawl fishery. In December 2022, after the Court of International Trade (CIT) enjoined the two fisheries, the GNZ submitted supplemental documentary evidence regarding its monitoring and reporting programs and estimates of Māui dolphin (*Cephalorhynchus hectori maui*) mortality and serious injury pertaining to the two enjoined fisheries for NMFS' consideration for comparability findings. NMFS is undertaking this action in response to the GNZ's request and prior comparability findings, its 2021 application for comparability findings and its submission of additional documentary evidence regarding its regulatory program to reduce mortality and serious injury of Māui dolphin in the West Coast North Island multi-species set-net fishery and the West Coast North Island multi-species trawl fishery.

Petition for Rulemaking and Request for a Comparability Finding

On May 21, 2020, Sea Shepherd New Zealand and Sea Shepherd Conservation Society (collectively, "Plaintiffs") initiated a lawsuit in the CIT challenging NMFS' denial of its petition. On June 24, 2020, the GNZ announced its final fisheries measures for reducing bycatch of Māui dolphins (effective October 1, 2020) and its final Threat Management Plan (TMP).

On July 15, 2020, the GNZ requested that NMFS perform a comparability assessment of the TMP and its regulatory program as it relates to Māui dolphins. On November 9, 2020, NMFS issued comparability findings for the West Coast North Island multi-species set-net and trawl fisheries because the GNZ had implemented a regulatory program governing the bycatch of Māui dolphin that is comparable in effectiveness to U.S. standards. Based on NMFS' decision, Plaintiffs subsequently filed a Motion for