

unusual mortality events through two projects, the Marine Mammal Health and Stranding Response Program (MMHSRP) and the Alaska Marine Mammal Tissue Archival Project (AMMTAP).

The purposes of this collection of information are: (1) to enable NOAA to allow the scientific community the opportunity to request tissue specimen samples from the NMMTB and, (2) to enable the Marine Mammal Health and Stranding Response Program (MMHSRP) of NOAA to assemble information on all specimens submitted to the National Institute of Standards and Technology's Biorepository (NIST Biorepository), which includes the NMMTB. This request is for extension of a current information collection, with minor revisions. Most changes to the Access Policy were grammatical and minor. No changes have been made to the National Marine Mammal Tissue Bank Tissue Request Form or the NMMTB Field Data Sheet. Revisions were also made to The Examiner's Guide to the National Marine Mammal Tissue Bank which included minor grammatical corrections as well as an update to the species list and inventory of animals and tissues.

II. Method of Collection

Respondents must complete a specimen banking information sheet for every sample submitted to the Bank. Methods of submitting reports include internet, mail and facsimile transmission of paper forms. Those requesting samples send the information, and their research findings, mainly via email.

III. Data

OMB Control Number: 0648–0468.
Form Number(s): None.

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

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

Estimated Number of Respondents: 100 specimen submission forms (from ~20 different organizations); 5 requests for tissue samples.

Estimated Time per Response: Request for tissue sample, 2 hours. Specimen submission form, 45 minutes.

Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours: 85.

Estimated Total Annual Cost to Public: \$152.00.

Respondent's Obligation: Mandatory.
Legal Authority: Under 16 U.S.C. 1421f section 407(d)(1) of the Marine

Mammal Protection Act, the NMFS must establish criteria for access to marine mammal tissues in the NMMTB and make those available for public comment and review.

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–XD629]

Taking and Importing Marine Mammals; Taking Marine Mammals Incidental to Geophysical Surveys Related to Oil and Gas Activities in the Gulf of Mexico

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

ACTION: Notice; issuance of revised Letter of Authorization.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), as amended, its implementing regulations, and NMFS' MMPA Regulations for Taking Marine Mammals Incidental to Geophysical Surveys Related to Oil and Gas Activities in the Gulf of Mexico, notification is hereby given that NMFS has issued a revised Letter of Authorization (LOA) to WesternGeco, in place of TGS, for the take of marine mammals incidental to geophysical survey activity in the Gulf of Mexico.

DATES: The LOA is effective through September 28, 2024.

ADDRESSES: The LOA, original LOA request, request for transferal, and supporting documentation are available online at: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/action/incidental-take-authorization-oil-and-gas-industry-geophysical-survey-activity-gulf-mexico>. In case of problems accessing these documents, please call the contact listed below (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Rachel Wachtendonk, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, (301) 427–8401.

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, a notice of a proposed authorization is provided to the public for review.

An 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.

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).

On January 19, 2021, we issued a final rule with regulations to govern the unintentional taking of marine mammals incidental to geophysical survey activities conducted by oil and gas industry operators, and those persons authorized to conduct activities on their behalf (collectively “industry operators”), in U.S. waters of the Gulf of Mexico (GOM) over the course of 5 years (86 FR 5322; January 19, 2021). The rule was based on our findings that the total taking from the specified activities over the 5-year period will have a negligible impact on the affected species or stock(s) of marine mammals and will not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of those species or stocks for subsistence uses. The rule became effective on April 19, 2021.

Our regulations at 50 CFR 217.180 *et seq.* allow for the issuance of LOAs to industry operators for the incidental take of marine mammals during geophysical survey activities and prescribe the permissible methods of taking and other means of effecting the least practicable adverse impact on marine mammal species or stocks and their habitat (often referred to as mitigation), as well as requirements pertaining to the monitoring and reporting of such taking. Under 50 CFR 217.186(e), issuance of an LOA shall be based on a determination that the level of taking will be consistent with the findings made for the total taking allowable under these regulations and a determination that the amount of take authorized under the LOA is of no more than small numbers.

Summary of Request

On September 27, 2023, NMFS issued an LOA to TGS (88 FR 68106, October 3, 2023) to take marine mammals incidental to a three-dimensional (3D) ocean bottom node (OBN) survey in the Green Canyon, Ewing Bank, and Atwater Valley protraction areas, including approximately 380 lease blocks. Approximate water depths of the survey area range from 150 to 2,000 meters (m). See section F of the LOA application for a map of the area. Additional description of the planned

survey, as well as analysis related to the issuance of that LOA, is available in TGS’ LOA application and the aforementioned **Federal Register** notice of issuance.

On December 20, 2023, TGS requested the transfer of the LOA to its partner in the planned survey effort (WesternGeco). WesternGeco confirmed to NMFS that it similarly requested transfer of the LOA. With the transfer of the LOA, WesternGeco agrees to comply with the associated terms, conditions, stipulations, and restrictions of the original LOA. No other changes were requested. The revised LOA remains effective through September 28, 2024.

The revised LOA sets forth only a change in the LOA holder’s name. There are no other changes to the LOA as described in the October 3, 2023, **Federal Register** notice of issuance (88 FR 68106): the specified activity; estimated take by incidental harassment; and small numbers analysis and determination; and the period of effectiveness remain unchanged and are herein incorporated by reference.

Authorization

NMFS is changing the name of the holder of the LOA from “TGS” to “WesternGeco”.

Dated: January 24, 2024.

Catherine Marzin,

Deputy Director, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.
[FR Doc. 2024–01743 Filed 1–29–24; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648–XD639]

Takes of Marine Mammals Incidental to Specified Activities; Taking Marine Mammals Incidental to Pacific Gas & Electric Sediment Remediation Project, San Francisco Bay

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 Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) to incidentally harass marine mammals during construction activities associated

with a sediment remediation project in San Francisco Bay.

DATES: The authorization is effective from May 1, 2024 to April 30, 2025.

ADDRESSES: Electronic copies of the application and supporting documents, as well as a list of the references cited in this document, may be obtained online at: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/action/incidental-take-authorization-pacific-gas-electric-sediment-remediation-project-san>. In case of problems accessing these documents, please call the contact listed below.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Kristy Jacobus, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, (301) 427–8401.

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 proposed or, if the taking is limited to harassment, a notice of a proposed IHA is 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 the 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 the 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 May 4, 2023, NMFS received a request from PG&E for an IHA to take marine mammals incidental to a Sediment Remediation Project in Remedial Response Areas A and B, Piers