

fishing communities, bycatch, and safety at sea (16 U.S.C. 1851(a)(1–10)). Under ATCA, the Secretary shall promulgate regulations as may be necessary and appropriate to carry out binding recommendations adopted by the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT).

Since the 1999 Federal FMP for Atlantic Tunas, Swordfish, and Sharks and amendment 1 to the Atlantic Billfish FMP (64 FR 29090, May 28, 1999), NMFS has implemented a wide range of management measures specific to fishing gear in order to comply with the Magnuson-Stevens Act and ATCA. These management measures were designed to, among other things, prevent or stop overfishing and to minimize bycatch to the extent practicable. Many of these management measures included restrictions on fishing gear to reduce impacts on bycatch species, increase post-release survivability, limit the use of some gears to reduce lost and derelict gear, and meet other objectives as necessary. While each of these management measures helped achieve fishery management and conservation goals, the combination of over two decades of gear-specific measures may have had

unanticipated consequences given the many changes in species distributions, fishing gears, fishing techniques, market conditions, and fishing interests that have occurred over the years. These unanticipated consequences could include limiting fishing opportunities, which in turn may limit the ability to achieve optimum yield from the fisheries. Additionally, these unanticipated consequences may reduce the ability of fishermen to adjust their fishing techniques to account for a changing environment and changing species distributions and/or to modify their gear to be more efficient or less likely to catch non-target species. As such, NMFS announces the availability of a scoping document and requests comments to consider whether certain gear-specific management measures are still meeting applicable goals. NMFS anticipates potential changes to gear regulations and requirements in fisheries targeting Atlantic HMS through a future rulemaking.

**Scoping Document**

In the scoping document, NMFS details a wide range of potential management options based on comments and suggestions from constituents, including members of the

HMS Advisory Panel. See **ADDRESSES** section for information to access the scoping document and the public hearing presentation. NMFS is considering options to facilitate targeting of swordfish deeper in the water column; authorize additional species for certain gears along with gears under additional permit types; and address gear regulation inconsistencies across HMS and non-HMS fisheries.

The management measures presented in the scoping document should not be considered an exhaustive list. The management options are intended to facilitate discussion of the merits of each range of topics under consideration.

**Request for Comments**

NMFS invites public comment on the options presented in the scoping document as well as additional ideas that could provide increased flexibility and still meet applicable fishery management and conservation goals. Three virtual scoping meetings will be held during the comment period (table 1). Any comments received on the scoping document will be used to assist in the development of options to be considered in a future rulemaking.

TABLE 1—DATES, TIMES, AND INFORMATION FOR VIRTUAL SCOPING MEETING CONFERENCE CALLS/WEBINARS

Meeting type	Date, time	Conference call/webinar information
Conference calls/Webinars .....	May 29, 2024, 5 p.m.–7 p.m. ET .. June 28, 2024, 10 a.m.–12:00 p.m. ET. July 17, 2024, 1 p.m.–3 p.m. ET.	<a href="https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/action/public-comment-requested-gear-considerations-atlantic-highly-migratory-species-fisheries">https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/action/public-comment-requested-gear-considerations-atlantic-highly-migratory-species-fisheries</a> .

The public is reminded that NMFS expects participants at virtual scoping meetings to conduct themselves appropriately. At the beginning of each meeting, a representative of NMFS will explain the ground rules (e.g., all comments are to be directed to the Agency; attendees will be called to give their comments in the order in which they registered to speak; each attendee will have an equal amount of time to speak; and attendees should not interrupt one another). A NMFS representative will attempt to structure the meeting so that all attending members of the public will be able to comment if they so choose, regardless of the controversial nature of the subject matter. If attendees do not respect the ground rules they will be asked to leave the scoping meeting. For the virtual scoping meetings, participants are strongly encouraged to log/dial in 15 minutes prior to the meeting. NMFS will show the presentations via webinar

and allow public comment during identified times on the agenda.

In addition to the scoping meetings, NMFS will discuss the topics in the scoping document at the May 2024 HMS Advisory Panel meeting. The HMS Advisory Panel meeting will be accessible via conference call and webinar. Conference call and webinar access information are available at: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/action/public-comment-requested-gear-considerations-atlantic-highly-migratory-species-fisheries>. NMFS has requested to present the scoping document to four Atlantic Regional Fishery Management Councils (the New England, Mid-Atlantic, South Atlantic, and Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Councils) that are meeting during the public comment period. Please see the Councils’ and Commissions’ meeting notices for times and locations.

Dated: April 24, 2024.  
**Everett Wayne Baxter,**  
*Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.*  
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**BILLING CODE 3510–22–P**

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

[RTID 0648–XD930]

**Pacific Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting**

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

**ACTION:** Notice of public meeting.

**SUMMARY:** Pacific Fishery Management Council (Pacific Council) staff will provide an online briefing on the

Executive Director's recommendations on Pacific Council operations and priorities. This online briefing is open to the public.

**DATES:** The online meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 21, 2024, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., Pacific Time.

**ADDRESSES:** This meeting will be held online. Specific meeting information, including directions on how to join the meeting and system requirements will be provided in the meeting announcement on the Pacific Council's website (see [www.pcouncil.org](http://www.pcouncil.org)). You may send an email to Mr. Kris Kleinschmidt ([kris.kleinschmidt@noaa.gov](mailto:kris.kleinschmidt@noaa.gov)) or contact him at (503) 820-2412 for technical assistance.

*Council address:* Pacific Fishery Management Council, 7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101, Portland, OR 97220-1384.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Kelly Ames, Deputy Director, Pacific Council; telephone: (503) 820-2417.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Pacific Council created the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole, composed of Pacific Council members, to make recommendations on Council operations in light of the Pacific Council's medium and long-term financial status. Based on the Committee's recommendations, the Pacific Council's Executive Director has proposed potential changes to Pacific Council operations in line with anticipated budget ceilings for the next three to five years. The Council will consider these recommendations at its June meeting and provide guidance on further development and implementation of any such changes. In this online briefing Pacific Council staff will present these recommendations for Pacific Council advisory bodies and the public to allow informed comment at the June Pacific Council meeting.

Although non-emergency issues not contained in the meeting agenda may be discussed, those issues may not be the subject of formal action during this meeting. Action will be restricted to those issues specifically listed in this document and any issues arising after publication of this document that require emergency action under section 305(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, provided the public has been notified of the intent to take final action to address the emergency.

### Special Accommodations

Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Mr. Kris Kleinschmidt ([kris.kleinschmidt@noaa.gov](mailto:kris.kleinschmidt@noaa.gov)); (503) 820-2412) at least 10 days prior to the meeting date.

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

Dated: April 29, 2024.

**Rey Israel Marquez,**

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

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648-XD927]

#### Marine Mammals; File No. 27514-01

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

**ACTION:** Notice; receipt of application for permit amendment.

**SUMMARY:** Notice is hereby given that Heather E. Liwanag, Ph.D., California Polytechnic State University, 1 Grand Avenue, San Luis Obispo, CA 93407-0401, has applied for an amendment to Scientific Research Permit No. 27514.

**DATES:** Written comments must be received on or before June 3, 2024.

**ADDRESSES:** The application and related documents are available for review by selecting "Records Open for Public Comment" from the "Features" box on the Applications and Permits for Protected Species home page, <https://apps.nmfs.noaa.gov>, and then selecting File No. 27514-01 from the list of available applications. These documents are also available upon written request via email to [NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov](mailto:NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov).

Written comments on this application should be submitted via email to [NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov](mailto:NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov). Please include File No. 27514-01 in the subject line of the email comment.

Those individuals requesting a public hearing should submit a written request via email to [NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov](mailto:NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov). The request should set forth the specific reasons why a hearing on this application would be appropriate.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Jennifer Skidmore or Sara Young, (301) 427-8401.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The subject amendment to Permit No. 27514 is requested under the authority of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*), the regulations governing the taking and importing of marine mammals (50 CFR

part 216), and the Fur Seal Act of 1966, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1151 *et seq.*).

Permit No. 27514, issued on March 21, 2024 (89 FR 27418, April 17, 2024), authorizes the permit holder to conduct research on northern elephant seals (*Mirounga angustirostris*) in California, including unintentional harassment of California sea lions (*Zalophus californianus*), harbor seals (*Phoca vitulina*), and northern fur seals (*Callorhinus ursinus*). The permit holder is requesting the permit be amended to increase the unintentional harassment for California sea lions from 50 to 150 animals and northern fur seals from 25 to 100.

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), an initial determination has been made that the activity proposed is categorically excluded from the requirement to prepare an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement.

Concurrent with the publication of this notice in the **Federal Register**, NMFS is forwarding copies of this application to the Marine Mammal Commission and its Committee of Scientific Advisors.

Dated: April 29, 2024.

**Julia M. Harrison,**

*Chief, Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648-XD898]

#### Takes of Marine Mammals Incidental to Specified Activities; Taking Marine Mammals Incidental to the Skagway Ore Terminal Redevelopment Project in Skagway, Alaska

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

**ACTION:** Notice; issuance of a modified 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 a modified incidental harassment authorization (IHA) to Municipality of Skagway (MOS) to incidentally harass marine mammals during construction associated with the Ore Terminal