

• Upon aggregation dispersal, ME DMR would work with participating vessels to return their gear to its required configuration within 30 days.

If approved, the applicant may request minor modifications and extensions to the EFP throughout the year. EFP modifications and extensions may be granted without further notice if they are deemed essential to facilitate completion of the proposed research and have minimal impacts that do not change the scope or impact of the initially approved EFP request. Any fishing activity conducted outside the scope of the exempted fishing activity would be prohibited.

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

Dated: August 19, 2026.

Shannon Bettridge,

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

[FR Doc. 2026-17126 Filed 8-20-26; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648-XF902]

Marine Mammals and Endangered Species

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

ACTION: Notice; issuance of permits.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that permits have been issued under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) and the Endangered Species Act (ESA), as applicable.

ADDRESSES: The permits and related documents are available for review upon written request via email to NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Sara Young (File Nos. 29313 and 29621) and Amy Hapeman (File No. 29749); at (301) 427-8401.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The requested permits have been issued under the MMPA 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), the ESA of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), and the regulations governing the taking, importing, and exporting of endangered and threatened species (50 CFR parts 222-226), as applicable. Notices were published in the **Federal Register** on the dates listed below that requests had been submitted. To locate the **Federal Register** notice that announced our receipt of the application and a complete description of the activities, go to <https://www.federalregister.gov> and search for the file number provided in table 1 below.

TABLE 1—ISSUED PERMITS

File No.	RTID	Applicant	Previous Federal Register notice	Issuance date
29313	0648-XF554 ..	Michelle Shero, Ph.D., Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, 266 Woods Hole Road, Woods Hole, MA 02543.	91 FR 13294, March 19, 2026.	July 1, 2026.
29621	0648-XF774 ..	NMFS Marine Mammal Laboratory, 7600 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle, WA 98118 (Responsible Party: Nancy Friday, Ph.D.).	91 FR 29118, May 19, 2026.	July 9, 2026.
29749	0648-XF823 ..	BBC Natural History Unit and Factual Productions Limited, 1 Television Centre, 101 Wood Lane, London, W12 7FA, United Kingdom (Responsible Party: Victoria Webb).	91 FR 32009, May 29, 2026.	July 10, 2026.

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

As required by the ESA, as applicable, issuance was based on a finding that such permits: (1) were applied for in good faith; (2) will not operate to the disadvantage of such endangered species; and (3) are consistent with the purposes and policies set forth in section 2 of the ESA.

Dated: August 19, 2026.

Larissa Plants,

Acting Deputy Director, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 2026-17150 Filed 8-20-26; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648-XF960]

Marine Mammals; File No. 26329

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 Brandon Southall, Ph.D., Southall Environmental Associates, Inc., 9099 Soquel Drive, Suite 8, Aptos, CA 95076, has applied for an amendment to scientific research Permit No. 26329.

DATES: Written comments must be received on or before September 21, 2026.

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 (APPS) home page, <https://apps.nmfs.noaa.gov>, and then selecting File No. 26329 mod #4 from the list of available applications. These documents are also available upon written request via email to NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov.

Written comments on this application should be submitted via email to NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov. Please include File No. 26329-01 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. The request should set forth the specific reasons why a hearing on this application would be appropriate.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Amy Hapeman or Sara Young, (301) 427-8401.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The subject amendment to Permit No. 26329 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), the Endangered Species Act of

1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), and the regulations governing the taking, importing, and exporting of endangered and threatened species (50 CFR parts 222–226), and the Fur Seal Act of 1966, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1151 *et seq.*).

Permit No. 26329, issued on October 21, 2022 (87 FR 68133, November 14, 2022), authorizes the permit holder to study behavioral responses of 17 cetacean species in California waters. Researchers seek to identify key characteristics of species-typical calling, diving, feeding, social, and movement behavior in cetaceans, and under what conditions and contexts these behaviors are affected by human noise disturbance. Researchers may approach cetaceans by vessel for observations, suction-cup tagging, collection of sloughed skin, acoustic playbacks, prey mapping, photo-identification, and unintentional harassment. Five pinniped species may be unintentionally harassed during fieldwork. The permit holder requests to amend the permit to consolidate and improve the management and reporting of fieldwork that currently occurs with collaborating scientists under several research permits as follows: (1) add suction-cup tagging and sloughed skin collection as procedures for six authorized odontocete species; (2) allow deployment of suction-cup tags by uncrewed aircraft system (UAS) in addition to attachment by pole; (3) authorize the use of a suction-cup tag unit that has a built-in echosounder; (3) authorize active acoustics for prey mapping for all authorized species; (4) authorize biopsy sampling for all cetacean species that could be tagged; (5) increase take numbers for multiple cetacean species for currently authorized methods in addition to new requested methods including: invasive (dab/barb or deep-implant) tagging and UAS surveys for counts, observations, photo-ID, photography/videography, and photogrammetry; and (6) update the personnel list and their roles. See the application's take table for details on take numbers and methods for each species. The permit would be valid until March 31, 2028.

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: August 19, 2026.

Larissa Plants,

Acting Deputy Director, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 2026–17153 Filed 8–20–26; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–22–P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648–XF954]

Marine Mammals; File No. 29892

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

ACTION: Notice; receipt of application.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that Edward Charles, Open Plant Studios, 27A Regent Street, Clifton, Bristol, BS8 4HG, United Kingdom, has applied in due form for a permit to conduct commercial or educational photography on marine mammals.

DATES: Written comments must be received on or before September 21, 2026.

ADDRESSES: The application and related documents are available for review upon written request via email to NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov.

Written comments on this application should be submitted via email to NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov. Please include File No. 29892 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. The request should set forth the specific reasons why a hearing on this application would be appropriate.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Erin Markin, Ph.D., or Amy Hapeman, (301) 427–8401.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The subject permit is requested under the authority of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*) and the regulations governing the taking and importing of marine mammals (50 CFR part 216).

The applicant requests a 5-month permit to film humpback whales (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) in Hawaii for a documentary featuring Dr. Sylvia Earle. Up to 210 humpback whales may be filmed and observed by a vessel and unmanned aircraft system. Up to 105 bottlenose (*Tursiops truncatus*) and 700 spinner (*Stenella longirostris*) dolphins

may be unintentionally harassed, observed, and opportunistically filmed during these activities.

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 the application to the Marine Mammal Commission and its Committee of Scientific Advisors.

Dated: August 19, 2026.

Larissa Plants,

Acting Deputy Director, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 2026–17107 Filed 8–20–26; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–22–P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648–XF962]

Western Pacific Fishery Management Council; Public Meetings

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

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: The Western Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) will hold its Joint Hawaii Archipelago Fishery Ecosystem Plan (FEP) Advisory Panel (AP) and Bottomfish Advisory Review Board (BARB), American Samoa FEP AP, Fishing Industry Advisory Committee (FIAC), Mariana Archipelago FEP Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) AP, and Social Science Planning Committee (SSPC) to discuss and make recommendations on fishery management issues in the Western Pacific Region.

DATES: The meetings will be held between August 28 through September 3, 2026. For specific times and agendas, see **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**.

ADDRESSES: The Council will hold its Joint Hawaii Archipelago FEP AP and BARB, American Samoa FEP AP, FIAC, Mariana Archipelago FEP CNMI AP, SSPC meetings in a hybrid format with in-person and remote participation (Webex) options available for the members and the public. In-person attendance for the Joint Hawaii Archipelago FEP AP and BARB, FIAC