

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

RIN 0648–XB161

Marine Mammals; File No. 14535

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

ACTION: Notice; issuance of permit amendment.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that a permit amendment has been issued to Colleen Reichmuth, Ph.D., Long Marine Laboratory, University of California at Santa Cruz, 100 Shaffer Road, Santa Cruz, CA 95060, for research on captive pinnipeds.

DATES: Written, telefaxed, or email comments must be received on or before September 19, 2013.

ADDRESSES: The permit amendment and related documents are available for review upon written request or by appointment in the following offices:

Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13705, Silver Spring, MD 20910; phone (301) 427–8401; fax (301) 713–0376; and

Southwest Region, NMFS, 501 West Ocean Blvd., Suite 4200, Long Beach, CA 90802–4213; phone (562) 980–4001; fax (562) 980–4018.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Amy Sloan or Jennifer Skidmore, 301–427–8401.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On April 9, 2013, notice was published in the *Federal Register* (78 FR 21112) that a request for an amendment to Permit No. 14535–01 to conduct research on captive pinnipeds had been submitted by the above-named applicant. The requested permit amendment has been issued 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).

Permit No. 14535–02 authorizes the addition of temporary threshold shift (TTS) studies to the currently approved research activities for captive pinnipeds held at Long Marine Laboratory in Santa Cruz, CA. This research may be conducted with up to two individuals from each of three species of ice seal: Spotted (*Phoca largha*), ringed (*Phoca hispida*), and bearded (*Erignathus barbatus*) seals trained for participation in ongoing behavioral hearing studies. This research will provide the first-ever

direct information about the noise levels that cause a temporary, recoverable reduction in hearing sensitivity following exposure events in ice seals. The research is accomplished using trained behaviors in which the animals voluntarily participate and can leave the testing area at any time.

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.

Dated: August 15, 2013.

P. Michael Payne,

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

[FR Doc. 2013–20225 Filed 8–19–13; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–22–P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

RIN 0648–XC766

Marine Mammals; File No. 17429

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

ACTION: Notice; receipt of application.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that Sea Life Park Hawaii, 41–202 Kalanianaʻole Highway Waimanalo, HI 96795 (Jerry Pupillo, Responsible Party), has applied in due form for a permit to maintain non-releasable Hawaiian monk seals (*Monachus schauinslandi*) in captivity for enhancement purposes.

DATES: Written, telefaxed, or email comments must be received on or before September 19, 2013.

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. 17429 from the list of available applications.

These documents are also available upon written request or by appointment in the following offices:

Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13705, Silver Spring, MD 20910; phone (301) 427–8401; fax (301) 713–0376; and

Pacific Islands Region, NMFS, 1601 Kapiolani Blvd., Room 1110, Honolulu, HI 96814–4700; phone (808) 944–2200; fax (808) 973–2941.

Written comments on this application should be submitted to the Chief, Permits and Conservation Division, at the address listed above. Comments may also be submitted by facsimile to (301) 713–0376, or by email to NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov. Please include File No. 17429 in the subject line of the email comment.

Those individuals requesting a public hearing should submit a written request to the Chief, Permits and Conservation Division at the address listed above. The request should set forth the specific reasons why a hearing on this application would be appropriate.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Amy Sloan or Jennifer Skidmore, (301) 427–8401.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The subject permit is requested under the authority of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (MMPA; 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 (ESA; 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), and the regulations governing the taking, importing, and exporting of endangered and threatened species (50 CFR 222–226).

Sea Life Park Hawaii proposes to continue to maintain and provide routine animal husbandry and veterinary care for one non-releasable adult Hawaiian monk seal and up to an additional three seals (four total, considering future non-releasable seals) at the monk seal exhibit at Sea Life Park Hawaii in Waimanalo, Hawaii. Sea Life Park would maintain in permanent captivity seals removed from the wild under separate permits for stranding response and enhancement, which are deemed non-releasable to the wild.

The animals will be made available for scientific studies by researchers whose research protocols are approved by the Sea Life Park Hawaii Curator and staff veterinarian and authorized under separate permits. A public conservation and education lecture will be conducted daily concerning the status of Hawaiian monk seals, and educational descriptive signs with current information are on display at the monk seal exhibit. The applicant requests a five-year permit.

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 15, 2013.

P. Michael Payne,

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

[FR Doc. 2013–20231 Filed 8–19–13; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648–XC563

Takes of Marine Mammals Incidental to Specified Activities; Taking Marine Mammals Incidental to Marine Seismic Survey in the Chukchi Sea, Alaska

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

ACTION: Notice; issuance of an incidental take authorization.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) regulations, notification is hereby given that NMFS has issued an Incidental Harassment Authorization (IHA) to TGS–NOPEC Geophysical Company ASA (TGS) to take, by harassment, small numbers of marine mammals incidental to a marine 2-dimensional (2D) seismic survey program in the Chukchi Sea, Alaska, during the 2013 Arctic open-water season.

DATES: Effective August 14, 2013, through October 31, 2013.

ADDRESSES: Inquiry for information on the incidental take authorization should be addressed to P. Michael Payne, Chief, Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910. A copy of the application containing a list of the references used in this document, NMFS' Environmental Assessment (EA), Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), and the IHA may be obtained by writing to the address specified above, telephoning the contact listed below (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**), or visiting the Internet at:

<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/permits/incidental.htm#applications>.

Documents cited in this notice may be viewed, by appointment, during regular business hours, at the aforementioned address.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Shane Guan, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, (301) 427–8401 or Brad Smith, NMFS, Alaska Region, (907) 271–3023.

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.

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.”

Section 101(a)(5)(D) of the MMPA established an expedited process by which citizens of the U.S. can apply for an authorization to incidentally take small numbers of marine mammals by harassment. Section 101(a)(5)(D) establishes a 45-day time limit for NMFS review of an application followed by a 30-day public notice and comment period on any proposed authorizations for the incidental harassment of marine mammals. Within 45 days of the close of the comment period, NMFS must either issue or deny the authorization.

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”].

Summary of Request

On December 3, 2012, NMFS received an application from TGS requesting an authorization for the harassment of small numbers of marine mammals incidental to conducting an open-water 2D seismic survey in the Chukchi Sea off Alaska. After addressing comments from NMFS, TGS modified its application and submitted a revised application on April 1, 2013, and a revised marine mammal monitoring and mitigation plan on April 15, 2013, with additional clarification on May 7, 2013. TGS' activities discussed here are based on its April 1, 2013, IHA application and April 15, 2013, marine mammal monitoring and mitigation measures.

Description of the Specified Activity

TGS proposes to conduct approximately 9,600 km of marine 2D seismic surveys along pre-determined lines in U.S. waters and international waters of the Chukchi Sea (Figure 1 of TGS' IHA application) during the 2013 open water season. The purpose of the seismic program is to gather geophysical data using a 3,280 in³ seismic source array and an 8,100-m long hydrophone solid streamer towed by the seismic vessel. Results of the 2D seismic program would be used to identify and map potential hydrocarbon-bearing formations and the geologic structures that surround them.

Approximately 35 days of seismic operations are expected to occur over a period of about 45–60 days in U.S. Chukchi Sea. In addition, up to 33 days of seismic operations may occur in international waters (depending on ice and weather conditions). Seismic operations are proposed to occur along pre-determined track lines at speeds of about four to five knots. Seismic operations would be conducted up to 24 hours per day as possible except as potentially needed for shut-down mitigation for marine mammals. The full 3,280 in³ airgun array would only be firing during seismic acquisition operations on and near the end and start of survey lines; during turns and transits between seismic lines, a single “mitigation” airgun (60 in³ or smaller) is proposed to be operated.

Two vessels would be used during the survey: (1) a seismic operations vessel that would tow the seismic source array hydrophone solid streamer, and (2) a