

Subpart S—Taking of Marine Mammals Incidental to Explosive Severance Activities Conducted During Offshore Structure Removal Operations on the Outer Continental Shelf in the U.S. Gulf of Mexico

SOURCE: 73 FR 34889, June 19, 2008, unless otherwise noted.

EFFECTIVE DATE NOTE: At 73 FR 34889, June 19, 2008, subpart S, consisting of §§216.211 through 216.219 were added, effective July 21, 2008 through July 19, 2013.

§216.211 Specified activity and specified geographical region.

(a) Regulations in this subpart apply only to the incidental taking of those marine mammal species specified in paragraph (b) of this section by U.S. citizens engaged in explosive severance activities conducted during offshore oil and gas structure removal activities in areas within state and Federal waters in the U.S. Gulf of Mexico adjacent to the coasts of Texas, Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama, and Florida. The incidental, but not intentional, taking of marine mammals by U.S. citizens holding a Letter of Authorization issued pursuant to §216.218 is permitted during the course of severing pilings, well conductors, and related supporting structures, and other activities related to the removal of the oil and gas structure.

(b) The incidental take of marine mammals under the activity identified in paragraph (a) of this section is limited to a total of 5 bottlenose dolphin, one Atlantic spotted dolphin, and one pantropical spotted dolphin by Level A harassment over the period of validity of these regulations; and Level B harassment of the following species annually: 227 bottlenose dolphins, 65 Atlantic spotted dolphins, 77 pantropical spotted dolphins, 27 Clymene dolphins, 12 rough-toothed dolphins, 14 striped dolphins, 15 melon-headed whales, 10 pilot whales, 5 spinner dolphins, 3 Risso's dolphins, and 2 sperm whales.

§216.212 Effective dates.

Regulations in this subpart are effective from July 21, 2008 until July 19, 2013.

§216.213 Permissible methods of taking.

The Holder of a Letter of Authorization issued pursuant to §216.218, may incidentally, but not intentionally, take marine mammals by harassment within the area described in §216.211(a), provided the activity is in compliance with all terms, conditions, and requirements of these regulations and the appropriate Letter of Authorization.

§216.214 Prohibitions.

No person in connection with the activities described in §216.211(a) shall:

(a) Take any marine mammal not specified in §216.211(b);

(b) Take any marine mammal specified in §216.211(b) in a manner or amount greater than described therein;

(c) Take any marine mammal specified in §216.211(b) if NMFS determines that the taking of marine mammals incidental to the activities described in §216.211(a) is having more than a negligible impact on the species or stocks of marine mammals;

(d) Violate, or fail to comply with, the terms, conditions, and requirements of these regulations or a Letter of Authorization issued pursuant to §§216.106 and 216.218;

(e) Take any marine mammal in violation of these regulations by using a charge with a weight greater than 500 lbs (227 kg);

(f) Take any marine mammal when conditions preclude conducting mitigation and monitoring requirements of these regulations or a Letter of Authorization.

§216.215 Definitions, terms, and criteria

(a) *Definitions.* (1) *Below-mud-line or BML* means that the explosives are detonated below the water-mud interface, either inside or outside a pipe, other structure or cable.

(2) *Above-mud-line or AML* means that the explosives are detonated in the water column above the water-mud interface, either inside or outside a pipe, other structure or cable.

(3) *Multiple charge detonation* means any explosive configuration where more than one charge is required in a single detonation event.