

**Summary of Request**

NMFS received a request for a letter of authorization on September 16, 1996, from Conoco, Inc. This letter requested a take by harassment of a small number of bottlenose and spotted dolphins incidental to the described activity. Issuance of this letter of authorization is based on a finding that the total takings will have a negligible impact on the bottlenose and spotted dolphin stocks of the Gulf of Mexico.

Dated: September 23, 1996.

Rennie S. Holt,

*Director, Office of Protected Resources,  
National Marine Fisheries Service.*

[FR Doc. 96-25162 Filed 10-1-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-F

**[I.D. 092696A]****Incidental Take of Marine Mammals;  
Bottlenose Dolphins and Spotted  
Dolphins**

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

**ACTION:** Notice of issuance of letter of authorization.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) as amended, and implementing regulations, notification is hereby given that a letter of authorization to take bottlenose and spotted dolphins incidental to oil and gas structure removal activities was issued on September 27, 1996, to the Walter Oil & Gas Corporation, 1021 Main Street, Suite 2200, Houston, TX.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** The letter of authorization is effective from September 27, 1996, through September 27, 1997.

**ADDRESSES:** The application and letter are available for review in the following offices: Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910 and the Southeast Region, NMFS, 9721 Executive Center Drive N, St. Petersburg, FL 33702.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Kenneth R. Hollingshead, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, (301) 713-2055 or Charles Oravetz, Southeast Region (813) 570-5312.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Section 101(a)(5)(A) of the MMPA (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*) directs NMFS to allow, on 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 regulations are issued. Under the MMPA, the term "taking" means to harass, hunt, capture, or kill or to attempt to harass, hunt, capture or kill marine mammals.

Permission may be granted for periods up to 5 years if NMFS finds, after notification and opportunity for public comment, that the taking will have a negligible impact on the species or stock(s) of marine mammals and will not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of the species or stock(s) for subsistence uses. In addition, NMFS must prescribe regulations that include permissible methods of taking and other means effecting the least practicable adverse impact on the species and its habitat, and on the availability of the species for subsistence uses, paying particular attention to rookeries, mating grounds and areas of similar significance. The regulations must include requirements pertaining to the monitoring and reporting of such taking. Regulations governing the taking of bottlenose and spotted dolphins incidental to oil and gas structure removal activities in the Gulf of Mexico were published on October 12, 1995 (60 FR 53139) and remain in effect until November 13, 2000.

**Summary of Request**

NMFS received a request for a letter of authorization on September 25, 1996, from the Walter Oil & Gas Company. This letter requested a take by harassment of a small number of bottlenose and spotted dolphins incidental to the described activity. Issuance of this letter of authorization is based on a finding that the total takings will have a negligible impact on the bottlenose and spotted dolphin stocks of the Gulf of Mexico.

Dated: September 27, 1996.

Patricia Montanio,

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

[FR Doc. 96-25206 Filed 10-1-96; 8:45 am]

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**[I.D. 092396A]****Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management  
Council; Public Meeting**

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

**ACTION:** Notice of public meeting.

**SUMMARY:** The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) will

convene a public meeting of the Socioeconomic Assessment Panel (SEP).

**DATES:** The meeting will be held on October 23, 1996, beginning at 8:00 a.m., and will conclude at 5:00 p.m. on October 24, 1996.

**ADDRESSES:** The meeting will be held at the Radisson Bay Harbor Inn, 7700 Courtney Campbell Causeway, Tampa, FL; 813-281-8900.

*Council address:* Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, 5401 West Kennedy Boulevard, Suite 331, Tampa, FL 33609.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Antonio B. Lamberte, Economist; telephone: 813-228-2815.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The purpose of the meeting will be to review available social and economic data on the Gulf of Mexico red snapper, vermilion, and amberjack fisheries and to determine the social and economic implications of the levels of acceptable biological catch recommended by the Council's Reef Fish Stock Assessment Panel. The SEP may recommend to the Council total allowable catch levels for the 1996-97 fishing year.

A copy of the agenda can be obtained by contacting the Council (see **ADDRESSES**).

**Special Accommodations**

This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Anne Alford at the Council (see **ADDRESSES**) by October 17, 1996.

Dated: September 26, 1996.

Gary C. Matlock,

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

[FR Doc. 96-25204 Filed 10-1-96; 8:45 am]

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**[I.D. 092596C]****Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management  
Council; Public Meeting**

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

**ACTION:** Notice of public meeting.

**SUMMARY:** The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) will convene a public meeting of the Stone Crab Advisory Panel (AP).

**DATES:** This meeting will be held on October 23, 1996, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

**ADDRESSES:** This meeting will be held at the Banana Bay Resort and Marina, 4590