

Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

**ACTION:** Notice of public meeting.

**SUMMARY:** The Western Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) will hold a meeting of its Ecosystem and Habitat Advisory Panel (E&H-AP).

**DATES:** The meeting will be held July 29, 1997, from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

**ADDRESSES:** The meeting will be held at The Executive Centre Hotel, Room 4003, 1088 Bishop Street, Honolulu, HI; telephone: (808) 539-3000.

*Council address:* Western Pacific Fishery Management Council, 1164 Bishop Street, Suite 1405, Honolulu, HI 96813.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Kitty M. Simonds, Executive Director; telephone: (808) 522-8220.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The E&H-AP meeting will discuss and may make recommendations to the Council on the following agenda items:

1. Draft Fishery Management Plan (FMP) amendments for Essential Fish Habitat (EFH);
2. Final region-wide coral reef assessment;
3. Summary of recent activities (humpback whale sanctuary, Guam land use, Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands Farallon de Medinilla Environmental Impact Statement survey); and
4. Other business as required.

**Special Accommodations**

This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Kitty M. Simonds, (808) 522-8220 (voice) or (808) 522-8226 (fax), at least 5 days prior to meeting date.

Dated: July 8, 1997.

**Bruce C. Morehead,**

*Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.*  
[FR Doc. 97-18465 Filed 7-14-97; 8:45 am]

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**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

[I.D. 062797E]

**Marine Mammals; Permit No. 837**

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

**ACTION:** Receipt of application for amendment and issuance of amendment.

**SUMMARY:** Notice is hereby given that the National Marine Mammal Laboratory, Alaska Fisheries Science Center, NMFS, 7600 Sand Point Way NE, BIN C15700, Seattle, WA 98119-0070, has requested an amendment to Permit No. 837, and an amendment has been issued authorizing the conduct of a portion of the proposed research.

**DATES:** Written comments must be received on or before August 14, 1997.

**ADDRESSES:** The amendment request and related documents are available for review upon written request or by appointment in the following office(s): Permits and Documentation Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13130, Silver Spring, MD 20910 (301/713-2289); and

Regional Administrator, Alaska Region, NMFS, P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802-1668 (907/586-7221).

Written comments or requests for a public hearing on this request should be submitted to the Chief, Permits and Documentation Division, F/PR1, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13130, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Those individuals requesting a hearing should set forth the specific reasons why a hearing on this particular amendment request would be appropriate.

Comments may also be submitted by facsimile at (301) 713-0376, provided the facsimile is confirmed by hard copy submitted by mail and postmarked no later than the closing date of the comment period. Please note that comments will not be accepted by e-mail or other electronic media.

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.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The subject amendment to permit no. 837, issued on June 4, 1993 (58 FR 33085) 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. 837 authorizes the permit holder to capture, restrain, shear-mark, sample and handle up to 30,000 Northern fur seals (*Callorhinus ursinus*) over a 5-year period, and to collect parts from dead animals. The Permit Holder

now requests the following: 1) biopsy sampling of up to 120 female seals (60 seals on St. Paul, 60 on St. George). A total of 1,200 fur seal pups and 1,200 non-pups may be harassed incidentally during the course of this activity; 2) tissue sampling (i.e., hair, skin, blubber, muscle and liver) of up to 120 already deceased juvenile male seals (60 on St. Paul, 60 on St. George); and 3) capture and recapture of up to 20 adult female seals on Bogoslof Island to study foraging behavior. Each seal will be instrumented with a satellite tag and/or time-depth recorder and VHF transmitter via 5-minute epoxy glue; flipper tagged, weighed, measured, and released. At recapture, the instruments will be removed and the animals will be weighed, measured, administered an enema and released. Some of these seals may be sedated with Valium. At each capture, the seal will be given an intramuscular injection of oxytocin and milk sampled. Up to 2,000 pups and 2,000 non-pups may be incidentally harassed during the course of this activity.

The biopsy portion of the research described in item 1, above, must be conducted during the current summer season, and activities are scheduled to begin on July 5, 1997. This work can only be done during the next two months before the animals are preparing to leave on migration, and a delay in this work will compromise the existing data series on co-dependent parameters also being collected this year. In light of the time constraints and the unique research opportunity that would otherwise be lost, pursuant to Section 104(c)(3)(A) of the Marine Mammal Protection Act and 50 CFR 216.33(e)(6) of the MMPA regulations, we issued an amendment to Permit No. 837 authorizing the conduct of the biopsy sampling.

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.

Dated: July 3, 1997.

**Art Jeffers,**

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

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