

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

[I.D. 032598A]

Release of Stranded Marine Mammals to the Wild: Background, Preparation and Release Criteria

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

ACTION: Notice of availability; request for comments.

SUMMARY: NMFS and the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), Interior, have prepared draft guidance on the release of rehabilitated marine mammals to the wild. NMFS and FWS are requesting comments on this document before it is finalized.

DATES: Written comments must be received on or before June 8, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Copies of the (Draft) *Release of Stranded Marine Mammals to the Wild: Background, Preparation and Release Criteria* may be obtained from, and written comments submitted to, the Marine Mammal Health and Stranding Response Coordinator, Marine Mammal Division, Office of Protected Resources, 1315 East West Highway, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910. A copy of the draft release guidelines is also available at www.nmfs.gov/tmcintyr/prot_res. Comments submitted via email or the internet will not be accepted.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Teri Rowles, phone 301-713-2322 or fax 301-713-0376.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Section 402 (a) of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) requires the Secretary of Commerce, in consultation with the Marine Mammal Commission, the Secretary of Interior, and other experts to develop objective criteria and guidance for determining at what point a rehabilitated marine mammal is releasable to the wild. This document provides a discussion of the current rules and regulations involving release of stranded animals, background information on rehabilitation and ethics of rehabilitation. The guidelines are divided into four sections: pinnipeds (seals, sea lions and walruses), cetaceans (whales and dolphins), sea otters, and sirenians (manatees). These are discussed separately so that the unique aspects of each can be addressed.

Within each section, four areas of consideration are presented: natural history, medicine, behavior, and release.

These areas of consideration identify specific criteria that should be addressed when considering an animal's release candidacy. Some of the criteria, if not met, dictate that an animal should not be released. However, many of the release criteria do not easily translate into yes-no release determinations. These issues must be evaluated together on a case-by-case basis, to determine if the animal's release satisfies the agencies' two fundamental criteria: the animal poses no threat to wild populations if released, and the animal is physically and behaviorally healthy and likely to survive.

Within each area of consideration, there are discussions of required treatment actions, strongly recommended actions, and suggested actions, which are based on current rules and regulations or on medical considerations. Data gap, suggested research and potential new evaluation techniques are also discussed. The agencies recognize that this field may be changing and plan to periodically update these guidelines as new information becomes available or new rules and regulations apply.

Dated: April 1, 1998.

Patricia A. Montanio,
Deputy Director, Protected Resources,
National Marine Fisheries.

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COMMITTEE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF TEXTILE AGREEMENTS**Establishment of a New Export Visa Arrangement for Certain Cotton, Wool, Man-Made Fiber, Silk Blend and Other Vegetable Fiber Textiles and Textile Products Produced or Manufactured in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**

April 2, 1998.

AGENCY: Committee for the Implementation of Textile Agreements (CITA).

ACTION: Issuing a directive to the Commissioner of Customs establishing export visa requirements.

EFFECTIVE DATE: May 1, 1998.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Roy Unger, International Trade Specialist, Office of Textiles and Apparel, U.S. Department of Commerce, (202) 482-4212.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Authority: Section 204 of the Agricultural Act of 1956, as amended (7 U.S.C. 1854);

Executive Order 11651 of March 3, 1972, as amended.

The Governments of the United States and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia agreed to establish a new Export Visa Arrangement for certain cotton, wool, man-made fiber, silk blend and other vegetable fiber textiles and textile products, produced or manufactured in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and exported from the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia on and after May 1, 1998. Products exported during the period May 1, 1998 through May 31, 1998 shall not be denied entry for lack of a visa. All products exported after May 31, 1998 must be accompanied by an appropriate export visa.

In the letter published below, the Chairman of CITA directs the Commissioner of Customs to prohibit entry of certain textile products, produced or manufactured in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and exported from the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia for which the Government of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has not issued an appropriate export visa.

A facsimile of export visa stamp is on file at the U.S. Department of Commerce in Room 3100.

A description of the textile and apparel categories in terms of HTS numbers is available in the CORRELATION: Textile and Apparel Categories with the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States (see **Federal Register** notice 62 FR 66057, published on December 17, 1997).

Interested persons are advised to take all necessary steps to ensure that textile products that are entered into the United States for consumption, or withdrawn from warehouse for consumption, will meet the visa requirements set forth in the letter published below to the Commissioner of Customs.

Troy H. Cribb,

Chairman, Committee for the Implementation of Textile Agreements.

Committee for the Implementation of Textile Agreements

April 2, 1998.

Commissioner of Customs,
Department of the Treasury, Washington, DC 20229.

Dear Commissioner: Pursuant to section 204 of the Agricultural Act of 1956, as amended (7 U.S.C. 1854); Executive Order 11651 of March 3, 1972, as amended; and the Bilateral Textile Agreement of November 7, 1997, between the Governments of the United States and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, you are directed to prohibit, effective on May 1, 1998, entry into