

Dated: March 16, 1999.
 Authority: 42 U.S.C. 1786.

Samuel Chambers, Jr.,
 Administrator.

[FR Doc. 99-7263 Filed 3-24-99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 030599B]

Incidental Take of Marine Mammals; Taking of Ringed Seals Incidental to On-Ice Seismic Activities

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

ACTION: Notice of issuance of a letter of authorization.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), as amended, and with implementing regulations, notification is hereby given that a letter of authorization to take ringed seals incidental to on-ice seismic operations in the Beaufort Sea off Alaska was issued on March 21, 1999, to BP Exploration (Alaska), Anchorage, AK. **DATES:** This letter of authorization is effective from March 21, 1999, through May 31, 1999.

ADDRESSES: The applications and letters are available for review in the following offices: Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910, and Western Alaska Field Office, NMFS, 701 C Street, Anchorage, AK 99513.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Kenneth R. Hollingshead, NMFS, (301) 713-2055 or Brad Smith, Western Alaska Field Office, NMFS, (907) 271-5006.

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 by NMFS 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 ringed and bearded seals incidental to on-ice seismic surveys were published on February 2, 1998 (63 FR 5277), and remain in effect until December 31, 2002.

Summary of Request

NMFS received a request for a letter of authorization on February 8, 1999, from BP Exploration (Alaska). This letter requested a take by harassment of a small number of ringed seals incidental to the described activity.

Issuance of these letters of authorization are based on findings that the total takings by this activity will have a negligible impact on the ringed and bearded seal stocks of the Western Beaufort Sea and that the applicants have met the requirements contained in the implementing regulations.

Dated: March 21, 1999.

Hilda Diaz-Soltero,

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

[FR Doc. 99-7351 Filed 3-24-99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 031799D]

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

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

ACTION: Notice of public meetings.

SUMMARY: The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's (Council) Statement of Organization Practices and Procedures (SOPPs) Committee and ad hoc Reauthorization Committee will meet in Charleston, SC.

DATES: The SOPPs Committee meeting will be held on April 19, 1999 from 1:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., and on April 20, 1999

from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon; the ad hoc Reauthorization Committee meeting will be held on April 20, 1999 from 1:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. and on April 21, 1999 from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon.

ADDRESSES: The meetings will be held at the Town and Country Inn, 2001 Savannah Highway, Charleston, SC 29407; telephone: 843-571-1000.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Susan Buchanan, Public Information Officer; telephone: (843) 571-4366; fax: (843) 769-4520; email: susan.buchanan@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The SOPPs Committee will revise the Council's SOPPs manual for submission to the Secretary of Commerce for review. The ad hoc Reauthorization Committee will develop Council recommendations for changes to the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

Special Accommodations

These meetings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to the Council office (see **ADDRESSES**) by April 12, 1999.

Dated: March 19, 1999.

Bruce C. Morehead,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 031999D]

Endangered Species; Permits

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

ACTION: Receipt of a request for modification 1 to permit 1094.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife at Olympia, WA (WDFW) has applied in due form for a permit modification that would authorize takes of anadromous fish species listed under the Endangered Species Act for research/enhancement purposes.

DATES: Written comments or a request for a public hearing on this request for a permit modification must be received on or before April 26, 1999.