

**ACTION:** Notice of public meeting.

**SUMMARY:** The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council will convene a public meeting of the Mackerel Stock Assessment Panel (MSAP).

**DATES:** This meeting will begin at 1:00 p.m. on Monday, April 3, 2000 and will conclude by 12:00 noon on Friday, April 7, 2000.

**ADDRESSES:** The meeting will be held at the National Marine Fisheries Service Southeast Fisheries Science Center, 75 Virginia Beach Drive, Miami, Florida.

*Council address:* Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, 3018 U.S. Highway 301 North, Suite 1000, Tampa, FL 33619.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Dr. Richard Leard, Senior Fishery Biologist, Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council; 813-228-2815.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The MSAP will convene to review a full stock assessment for Gulf group king mackerel. The MSAP will also review stock assessment updates for the Atlantic group king mackerel and Gulf and Atlantic migratory groups of Spanish mackerel. The MSAP will consider available information, including but not limited to, commercial and recreational catches, natural and fishing mortality estimates, recruitment, fishery-dependent and fishery-independent data, and data needs. These analyses will be used to determine the condition of the stocks and the levels of acceptable biological catch for the 1999-2000 fishing year. The MSAP will also review available stock assessment data for dolphin and wahoo. The MSAP may also review estimates/proxies for maximum sustainable yield management targets, and rebuilding schedules.

Although non-emergency issues not contained in this agenda may come before the MSAP for discussion, those issues may not be the subject of formal MSAP action during this meeting. MSAP action will be restricted to those issues specifically identified in this notice and any issues arising after publication of this notice that require emergency action under section 305 (c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, provided the public has been notified of the Council's intent to take final action to address the emergency. A copy of the MSAP agenda can be obtained by calling (813) 228-2815.

#### 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 (see **ADDRESSES**) at least 5 days prior to the meeting dates.

Dated: March 14, 2000.

**Bruce C. Morehead,**

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

[FR Doc. 00-6811 Filed 3-17-00; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3510-22-F**

#### DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

##### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 030100E]

##### Marine Mammals; File No. 763-1534-00

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

**ACTION:** Issuance of permit.

**SUMMARY:** Notice is hereby given that the National Zoological Park, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 20008-2598 [Principal Investigator: Dr. Daryl Boness], has been issued a permit to import/export grey seal specimen and other non-endangered marine mammal specimen for purposes of scientific research.

**ADDRESSES:** The permit 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 13705, Silver Spring, MD 20910 (301/713-2289); and

Regional Administrator, Northeast Region, NMFS, One Blackburn Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930, (978/281-9250).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Ruth Johnson, 301/713-2289.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** On December 30, 1999, notice was published in the **Federal Register** (64 FR 73523) that a request for a scientific research permit to collect samples from grey seals and import/export samples taken opportunistically from non-endangered marine mammals of the Orders Pinnipedia (except walrus) and Cetacea had been submitted by the above-named organization. The requested permit has been issued 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.*).

Dated: March 10, 2000.

**Ann D. Terbush,**

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

[FR Doc. 00-6810 Filed 3-17-00; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3510-22-F**

#### DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

##### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 013100B]

##### Marine Mammals; File No. 376-1520-00

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

**ACTION:** Issuance of permit.

**SUMMARY:** Notice is hereby given that Dr. James H.W. Hain, Holder/Principal Investigator, Associated Scientists of Woods Hole, Box 721, 3 Water Street, Woods Hole, Massachusetts 02543, has been issued a permit to take marine mammals for purposes of scientific research.

**ADDRESSES:** The permit 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 13705, Silver Spring, MD 20910 (301/713-2289);

Regional Administrator, Northeast Region, NMFS, One Blackburn Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930, (978/281-9250); and

Regional Administrator, Southeast Region, NMFS, 9721 Executive Center Drive North, St. Petersburg, FL 33702-2432 (813/570-5312).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Ruth Johnson, 301/713-2289.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** On June 23, 1999, Notice was published in the **Federal Register** (64 FR 33470) that a request for a scientific research permit to take various cetacean species, harbor and grey seals, and sea turtles during aerial/vessel surveys, collect stomach contents and baleen, and conduct passive acoustic activities had been submitted by the above-named individual. A modified version of the permit request has been issued 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), the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as

amended (ESA; 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), and the regulations governing the taking, importing, and exporting of endangered and threatened species (50 CFR parts 222–226). The take of right whales and sea turtles, and collection of stomach contents/baleen was not authorized.

Issuance of this permit, as required by the ESA, was based on a finding that such permit (1) was applied for in good faith, (2) will not operate to the disadvantage of the endangered species which is the subject of this permit, and (3) is consistent with the purposes and policies set forth in section 2 of the ESA.

Dated: March 10, 2000.

**Ann D. Terbush,**

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

[FR Doc. 00–6838 Filed 3–17–00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–22–F

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### Patent and Trademark Office

#### Electronic Filing System (EFS) Pilot

**ACTION:** Proposed collection; comment request.

**SUMMARY:** The Department of Commerce (DoC), as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, invites the general public and other Federal agencies to comment on the continuing and proposed information collection, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Public Law 104–13 (44 U.S.C. 3506(c)(2)(A)).

**DATES:** Written comments must be submitted on or before May 19, 2000.

**ADDRESSES:** Direct all written comments to Linda Engelmeier, Departmental Forms Clearance Officer, Department of Commerce, Room 5027, 14th and Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20230 or via the Internet (LEngelme@doc.gov).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Requests for additional information should be directed to the attention of Diane Lewis, EFS Project Staff, Search Information Resources Administration, Arlington, VA 22202, by telephone at (703) 305–9892, or by e-mail at EFS@uspto.gov.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### I. Abstract

The Patent and Trademark Office (PTO) has started a pilot program that enables applicants to expand upon the

use of the Electronic Filing System (EFS) to file new utility patent applications electronically via the Internet. The EFS pilot program is currently limited to nine participants, however, the PTO expects to increase participation in August 2000. Electronic filing under this pilot is currently limited to new utility patent applications. Once the PTO moves into production, the electronic filing capability will be expanded to include filings of additional information after the initial filing of the new utility patent application. The PTO plans to put EFS into full production no later than February 2001.

In order to file a new utility patent application through the EFS, the applicant uses two different components—the EFS Specification Authoring Template and the electronic Packaging and Validation Engine (ePAVE). The authoring template enables the applicant to create an electronically tagged patent application specification document that is one part of a new utility patent application. The ePAVE desktop software enables applicants to author information related to the submission of a new utility patent application, as well as securely bundle and transmit all new patent application parts and information to the PTO via the Internet. The EFS Specification Authoring Template facilitates the authoring of the narrative that discloses the technical description of the invention. The template does not produce a form document, but rather a multi-line electronic document with tagged elements that may or may not have drawings. The template creates the XML tags that are necessary for the electronic document to be filed using the Internet and ensures that all of the information needed to process the application is provided by the applicant.

The EFS Specification Authoring Template allows the applicant to create a structured, extensible Mark-up Language (XML) tagged specification document using a commercially available word processing package. This document may also contain one or more TIFF (tagged image file format) files containing the scanned image of the drawing figure(s), oaths or declarations, and small entity statements.

The ePAVE software transmits the documents created by the EFS Specification Authoring Template to the PTO via the Internet. The ePAVE software enables the applicant to create the rest of the information required for a new utility patent application submission. The applicant attaches the XML-tagged specification document file

and TIFF images (*e.g.* declaration, drawings) and creates an XML fee transmittal document that calculates the filing fees. The ePAVE software captures the applicant's signature, validates the submission, confirms with the applicant that the submission is correct, uploads it to the PTO, and sends an Acknowledgment Screen. The ePAVE software saves a copy of all of the electronic files associated with the electronic filing of a new utility patent application. The ePAVE software compresses the electronic files prior to transmission to the PTO, so filers do not need to compress their files when submitting applications via the Internet using EFS.

The PTO will not accept executable files (.exe) as part of an application filed electronically through the Internet. In order to use EFS to file the utility patent applications, applicants must have a digital certificate. Applicants can obtain an application for a digital certificate through the PTO Electronic Business Center website, <http://pto-ebc.uspto.gov>. Currently, applications in the biotechnology arts, design patent applications, provisional applications, and those involving color are not suitable for filing. Applicants do not have to use the EFS Specification Authoring Template to create specification documents, but if they plan on using EFS to file a new utility patent application, they must use the authoring template.

##### II. Method of Collection

Electronically through the ePAVE software via the Internet.

##### III. Data

*OMB Number:* None.

*Form Number:* None.

*Type of Review:* New collection.

*Affected Public:* Individuals or households; businesses or other for-profit organizations; not-for-profit institutions; farms; state, local or tribal governments; and the Federal Government.

*Estimated Number of Respondents:* The PTO estimates that 30,000 new utility patent applications will be filed electronically via the Internet per year once EFS moves into full production. At this time, participation in the pilot is limited to nine participants. In August, the PTO plans to steadily increase the participation in the pilot to a wider audience.

*Estimated Time Per Response:* It is estimated to take approximately 13.25 hours to read the instructions and the user guide, gather the necessary data, complete, and submit a new utility patent application using the EFS