

than 400 short tons (362.8 mt) carrying capacity. The affirmative finding was based on documentary evidence submitted by the Republic of Ecuador and obtained from the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC). This finding remains in effect through March 31, 2001.

DATES: Effective May 31, 2000 through March 31, 2001.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Regional Administrator, Southwest Region, NMFS, 501 West Ocean Boulevard, Suite 4200, Long Beach, California, 90802-4213, Phone 562-980-4000, Fax 562-980-4018.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The MMPA, 16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*, as amended by the International Dolphin Conservation Program Act (IDCPA) (Pub. L. 105-42), allows the entry into the United States of yellowfin tuna harvested by purse seine vessels in the ETP under certain conditions. If requested by the harvesting nation, the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA, will determine whether to make an affirmative finding based upon documentary evidence provided by the Republic of the harvesting nation, by the International Dolphin Conservation Program (IDCP), the IATTC, and/or the Department of State. A finding will remain valid for 1 year (April 1 through March 31) or for such other period as the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries may determine. The harvesting nation must submit an application directly to the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries for the first affirmative finding. Every 5 years, the Republic of the harvesting nation, must request an affirmative finding and submit the required documentary evidence directly to the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries. The Assistant Administrator may require the submission of additional supporting documentation or verification of statements made in connection with requests to allow importations. An affirmative finding applies to tuna and tuna products that were harvested in the ETP by purse seine vessels of the nation, and applies to any tuna harvested in the ETP purse seine fishery after March 3, 1999, the effective date of the IDCPA.

The affirmative finding process requires that the harvesting nation meet several conditions related to compliance with the IDCP. To issue an annual affirmative finding NMFS must receive the following information:

1. A statement requesting an affirmative finding;
2. Evidence of membership in the IATTC;

3. Evidence that a nation is meeting its obligations to the IATTC, including financial obligations;

4. Evidence that a nation is complying with the IDCP. For example, national laws and regulations implementing the Agreement on the IDCP and information that the nation is enforcing those laws and regulations;

5. Evidence of a tuna tracking and verification program comparable to the U.S. tracking and verification regulations at 50 CFR 216.94;

6. Evidence that the national fleet dolphin mortality limits (DMLs) were not exceeded in the previous calendar year;

7. Evidence that the national fleet per-stock per-year mortality limits, if they are allocated to countries, were not exceeded in the previous calendar year;

8. Authorization for the IATTC to release to the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, complete, accurate and timely information necessary to verify and inspect Tuna Tracking Forms; and

9. Authorization for the IATTC to release to the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries information whether a nation is meeting its obligations of membership to the IATTC and whether a nation is meeting its obligations under the IDCP including managing (not exceeding) its national fleet DMLs or its national fleet per-stock per-year mortality limits. A nation may opt to provide this information directly to NMFS on an annual basis or to authorize the IATTC to release the information to NMFS in years when NMFS will review and consider whether to issue an affirmative finding determination without an application from the harvesting nation.

An affirmative finding will be terminated, in consultation with the Secretary of State, if the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries determines that the requirements of 50 CFR 216.24(f)(9) are no longer being met or that a nation is consistently failing to take enforcement actions on violations which diminish the effectiveness of the IDCP. Every 5 years, the Republic of the harvesting nation, must request an affirmative finding and submit the required documentary evidence directly to the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries.

The Assistant Administrator for Fisheries reviewed the application and documentary evidence submitted by the Republic of Ecuador and determined that the requirements under the MMPA to receive an affirmative finding have been met for the purposes of issuing an affirmative finding for the period April 1—March 31, 2001. On May 31, 2000, after consultation with the Department of State, NMFS issued an affirmative

finding allowing yellowfin tuna and products derived from yellowfin tuna harvested in the ETP by Ecuadorian-flag purse seine vessels or vessels under Ecuadorian jurisdiction greater than 400 short tons (362.8 metric tons) carrying capacity after March 3, 1999, to be imported into the United States. In subsequent years 2001 through 2004, the Assistant Administrator will determine on an annual basis whether the Republic of Ecuador is meeting the requirements under section 101 (a)(2)(B) and (C) of the MMPA. NMFS will use documentary evidence provided by the IATTC and the Department of State or the harvesting nation, on an annual basis to determine whether the finding should be renewed. If necessary, documentary evidence may also be requested from the Republic of Ecuador to determine whether the affirmative finding criteria are being met. A new application is due by the Republic of Ecuador if the affirmative finding lapses or is revoked. If the affirmative finding for the Republic of Ecuador is renewed after NMFS's annual review in the years 2001 to 2004, the Republic of Ecuador must submit a new application in early 2005 for an affirmative finding to be effective for the period April 1, 2005, through March 31, 2006, and subsequent years.

Dated: May 31, 2000.

Penelope D. Dalton,

*Assistant Administrator for Fisheries,
National Marine Fisheries Service.*

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 053000F]

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC); Meetings

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

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council and its Squid, Mackerel, and Butterfish Committee, Dolphin/Wahoo Committee, Comprehensive Management Committee, Habitat Committee, Executive Committee, and Law Enforcement Committee will hold a public meeting.

DATES: The meetings will be held on Tuesday, June 20, 2000 to Thursday,

June 22, 2000. See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** for specific dates and times.

ADDRESSES: This meeting will be held at the Danford's Inn, 25 E. Broadway, Port Jefferson, NY; telephone: 1-800-332-6367.

Council address: Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, 300 S. New Street, Dover, DE 19904; telephone: 302-674-2331.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Daniel T. Furlong, Executive Director, Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council; telephone: 302-674-2331, ext. 19.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On Tuesday, June 20th, the Squid, Mackerel and Butterfish Committee will meet from 1:00-5:00 p.m. On Wednesday, June 21st, the Dolphin/Wahoo Committee will meet from 8:00-9:00 a.m. The Comprehensive Management Committee will meet from 9:00-12:00 p.m. The Habitat Committee will meet from 1:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m. The Executive Committee will meet from 3:00 p.m. until 5:00 p.m. On Thursday, June 22nd, the Law Enforcement Committee will meet from 8:00 a.m. until 9:00 a.m. Council will convene at 9:00 a.m. and will be in session until 1:00 p.m.

Agenda items for this meeting are: Discuss actions necessary to remedy disapproved portion of Amendment 8 (gear impacts on Essential Fish Habitat) to the Squid, Mackerel, and Butterfish Fishery Management Plan (FMP).

Consider additional areas to be identified as Essential Fish Habitat for *Illex*. Consider revising quota setting procedure for *Illex* (allow in-season quota adjustment). Consider extending moratorium on entry to *Illex* fishery.

Consider measures to protect *Loligo* egg masses (possible season/area closures).

Consider controlled access plan for Atlantic mackerel fishery. Review and comment on South Atlantic Fishery Management Council Dolphin/Wahoo FMP. Develop recommendation(s) regarding Dolphin/Wahoo for presentation to and action by MAFMC.

Discuss and prioritize cooperative research items associated with MAFMC's research set aside initiative. Discuss and provide comments on

"NMFS Budget Review Project. Discuss and identify Council's habitat research priorities. Discuss and clarify role of committee regarding meeting Council's habitat responsibilities. Review MAFMC's first half budget status/ performance. Discuss audit report findings for FY95, FY96, FY97, and FY98. Discuss recent Executive Order regarding establishment of marine

reserves. Comment on enforceability of Dolphin/Wahoo proposed management measures. Finalize and approve Fishery Award Program and related forms. Approve operational guidelines for the Law Enforcement Committee. The Council will also approve minutes from its May, 2000 meeting, review and comment on May meeting actions, and receive organizational reports from the NMFS Regional Administrator, NMFS Science Center Director, NOAA Office of General Counsel, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, Federal Enforcement units and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. It will also receive Committee reports from the following committees: New England Council, South Atlantic Council, Demersal, Squid, Mackerel, and Butterfish, Dolphin/Wahoo, Comprehensive Management, Habitat, Executive and Law Enforcement.

Although non-emergency issues not contained in this agenda may come before the MAFMC for discussion, these issues may not be the subject of formal Council action during this meeting. MAFMC action will be restricted to those issues specifically listed in this notice and any issues arising after publication of this notice that require emergency action under section 305(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, provided the public has been notified of the MAFMC's intent to take final actions to address such emergencies.

Special Accommodations

These meetings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Joanna Davis at the Council (see **ADDRESSES**) at least 5 days prior to the meeting date.

Dated: May 31, 2000.

Richard W. Surdi,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service. [FR Doc. 00-14200 Filed 6-5-00; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D.052400A]

Marine Mammals; File No. 555-1565

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

ACTION: Receipt of application.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that James T. Harvey (Principal Investigator), Moss Landing Marine Laboratories, P.O. Box 450, Moss Landing, CA 95039, has applied in due form for a permit to take Pacific harbor seals (*Phoca vitulina richardsi*) for purposes of scientific research.

DATES: Written or telefaxed comments must be received on or before July 6, 2000.

ADDRESSES: The application 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);

Southwest Region, NMFS, 501 West Ocean Blvd., Suite 4200, Long Beach, CA 90802 (562/980-4001); and

Northwest Region, NMFS, 7600 Sand Point Way NE, BIN C15700, Seattle, WA 98115 (206/526-6150).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Simona Roberts or Ruth Johnson, 301/713-2289.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The subject permit is requested under the authority of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (MMPA; 16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*), and the Regulations Governing the Taking and Importing of Marine Mammals (50 CFR part 216).

The applicant seeks authorization to capture, handle and tag 1,600 Pacific harbor seals per year of all age and sex classes near haul-out sites throughout California, Oregon and Washington. Captured seals would be subject to all or some of the following activities: blood and tissue sampling, flipper tagging, PIT tagging, branding, lavaging, and video camera attachment. Acoustic playback experiments and scat collection would also take place around the haul-out sites. In addition, the applicant seeks authorization to surgically implant radio tags in 15 captive, rehabilitated Pacific harbor seals and to conduct feeding studies on 12 captive, rehabilitated Pacific harbor seals.

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.

Written comments or requests for a public hearing on this application should be mailed to the Chief, Permits