Authority to take listed species is subject to conditions set forth in the permits. Permits and modifications are issued in accordance with and are subject to the ESA and NMFS regulations governing listed fish and wildlife permits (50 CFR parts 222–226).

Those individuals requesting a hearing on an application listed in this notice should set out the specific reasons why a hearing on that application would be appropriate (see **ADDRESSES**). The holding of such hearing is at the discretion of the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA. All statements and opinions contained in the permit action summaries are those of the applicant and do not necessarily reflect the views of NMFS.

Species Covered in This Notice

The following species are covered in this notice:

Sea turtles

Threatened and endangered Green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*)

Endangered Hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*)

Endangered Kemp's ridley turtle (*Lepidochelys kempii*)

Endangered Leatherback turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*)

Threatened Loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*)

Fish

Endangered Shortnose Sturgeon (*Acipenser brevirostrum*)

New Applications Received

Application 1324

The Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC) has applied for a two-year permit to conduct sea turtle bycatch reduction experiments associated with longline fishing techniques. The SEFSC proposes to conduct experiments to focus on the effectiveness of specific measures to reduce the bycatch of sea turtles in the Pelagic Longline fishery. The applicant proposes to take 415 loggerhead, 301 leatherback, 2 Kemp's ridley, 2 green and 2 hawksbill turtles over the life of the permit. Turtles taken by longline gear during this experiment will be handled, measured, flipper and PIT tagged, have a skin biopsy collected and be released. The applicant also requests authorization to attach 20 conventional satellite tags and 75 pop-up satellites to a total of 95 of the already taken loggerhead turtles. Any turtles brought aboard the vessel dead will be removed from marine environment for research purposes. The application is available for download and review from the Office of Protected Resources permits webpage: http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/prot—res/PR3/Permits/ESApermit.html.

Permits and Modified Permits Issued

Permit #1275

Notice was published on January 25, 2001 (66 FR 7742) that Mr. Joseph Hightower, of North Carolina Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit applied for a scientific research permit (1275). The applicant proposed to conduct a two year survey of the Neuse River to prepare a baseline study of the possible existence of shortnose sturgeon in the river. The research will use the NMFS sampling protocols for determining presence or absence of shortnose sturgeon in a selected river. The goals of the study are to determine whether shortnose sturgeon are present within the Neuse River system, and to determine if suitable shortnose sturgeon habitat is available within the river system. Permit 1275 was issued on May 24, 2001 and expires December 31, 2002.

Permit #1295

Notice was published on March 5, 2001 (66 FR 13305) that Dr. Michael P. Sissenwine, of Northeast Fisheries Science Center applied for a scientific research permit (1295). The goal of the five-year plan for sea turtles in the Northeast is to work cooperatively with other regions to support and direct research on sea turtles in order to identify and assess the status of sea turtle stocks, reduce the estimated mortality associated with fishing activities and other anthropogenic and natural sources and to recover ESA listed species. Permit 1295 was issued on May 24, 2001, and expires May 31, 2006.

Permit #1299

Notice was published on March 9, 2001 (66 FR 14134) that Dr. Raymond Carthy, of the Florida Cooperative Fish & Wildlife Research Unit applied for a scientific research permit (1299). The applicant requested a three year permit to take juvenile and adult turtles along the St. Joseph Peninsula, in St. Joseph Bay, Florida. The applicant proposes to examine the internesting movements and habitat usage of adult loggerhead turtles along the northwestern coast of Florida, while also examining species composition, population densities and habitat utilization in coastal bays in the same area. Permit 1299 was issued on May 24, 2001, and expires December 31, 2003.

Modification #2 to Permit #1198

The Florida Marine Research Institute currently possesses a five-year scientific research permit to take up to 700 loggerhead, 250 green, 5 leatherback, 25 hawksbill, and 100 Kemp's ridley sea turtles annually from Florida coastal waters. Turtles captured will include all life history stages from post-hatchling through adult. Of the 700 loggerheads authorized annually, 400 are hatchlings. This research will further the understanding of life histories, habitat requirements, migratory behaviors, and threats to these five species of sea turtles occurring in Florida waters. The permit holder currently has authorization to capture turtles in tended, straight-set, large-mesh tangle nets; tended, drifting large-mesh tangle nets; tended, encircling (strike) large-meshed nets; dip nets; and by hand-capture. Captured turtles are weighed, measured, photographed, and flipper and PIT tagged. Select turtles have blood and stomach samples (via gastric lavage) collected and receive radio, sonic, and/or satellite transmitters. Additionally, laparoscopy and tumor collection are authorized to be performed on selected turtles.

For modification #2, the applicant requests the Dr. Allen Foley be designated as permit holder in place of Mr. J. Alan Huff, who is no longer responsible for this permit activity. The applicant also requests authorization to use ten crittercams in lieu of ten previously authorized radio/sonic transmitters. Modification #2 to Permit 1198 was issued on May 18, 2001, and permit 1198 expires March 31, 2004.

Dated: May 25, 2001.

Phil Williams,

Acting Chief, Endangered Species Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 01–13969 Filed 6–1–01; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–22–S

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Department of the Army

Preparation of a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) on the Chemical and Biological Defense Program (CBDP)

AGENCY: U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command, Department of the Army, DoD.

ACTION: Notice of intent.

SUMMARY: The Department of the Army announces its intention to prepare a PEIS that will assesses the potential

environmental impacts associated with the execution of the DoD CBDP designed to protect our soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen from the evolving chemical and biological threats they may encounter on the battlefield. The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1994 mandated the coordination and integration of all DoD CBDP. The Army is the executive agent for the CBDP.

ADDRESSES: Written comments concerning the PEIS should be addressed to Dr. Robert J. Carton, Environmental Coordinator, U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command, ATTN: MCMR–RCQ–E, 504 Scott Street, Fort Detrick, MD 21702–5012.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Robert Carton at (301) 619–2004 or by fax at (301) 619–6694.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The mission of the DoD CBDP is to provide chemical and biological (CB) defense capabilities to allow the military forces of the United States to survive and successfully complete their operational missions in battlespace environments contaminated with CB warfare agents. If our military forces are not fully and adequately prepared to meet this threat, the consequences could be devastating. The CBDP to support this mission comprises research, development and acquisition activities. Each of the Military Services, the Joint Program Office for Biological Defense, and the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency conduct CBDP activities. Some of these CBDP activities necessarily involve the use of hazardous chemicals or infectious disease agents for research, development, and production purposes. The controls on and the potential environmental consequences of such use both for the proposed action and for any reasonable alternatives will be a primary focus of the CBDP PEIS.

The CBDP is divided into six commodity areas. Each commodity area is managed by one of the Military Services and has an activity focus as follows:

(1) Contamination Avoidance (Army): Pursuit of technological advances in CB standoff detection, remote/early warning detection, sensor miniaturization, and improved detection sensitivity.

(2) Individual Protection (Marine Corps) and Collective Protection (Navy): Pursuit of technological advances that provide an individual with improved vision and voice capabilities, increased protection levels, and reduced heat stress over current individual protection equipment. Also the pursuit of technological advances that improve generic CB protective filters and fans, and advances that reduce the weight, volume, cost, logistics, and manpower requirements associated with providing individual and collective protection.

(3) Decontamination (Air Force): Pursuit of technological advances in sorbents, coatings, and physical removal, which will reduce logistics burden, manpower requirements, and lost operational capability associated with decontamination operations.

(4) Medical Protection (Army): Chemical defense efforts include development of pretreatment therapeutic drugs, diagnostic equipment, and other life support equipment for protection against and management of chemical warfare agents. Biological defense efforts include development of vaccines, drugs, and diagnostic medical devices for protection against validated biological warfare agents to include bacteria, viruses, and toxins of biological origin.

(5) Modeling and Simulation (Navy): Efforts include meteorological models, transport and dispersion models, hazard and casualty assessment, computational fluid dynamics, hydrocodes, and constructive, live, and virtual simulation.

The activities take place at numerous military installations and contractor facilities throughout the United States. Details concerning the CBDP are contained in the ''Chemical and Biological Defense Program, Annual Report to Congress, March 2000.'' This report may be downloaded in electronic format from the DoD web site at http://www.defenselink.com.

Although numerous environmental documents, dating back to the Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement on the Biological Defense Research and Development Program (April 1989), have been prepared analyzing the potential environmental consequences of various elements of the CBDP, no one document analyzes the potential environmental impacts of the full range of these activities. In keeping with the purposes of the National Environmental Policy Act, DoD has decided to prepare such a document in the form of a PEIS on the CBDP. This document will create an overarching framework that will continue to ensure fully informed Government decision making within this program and provide a single, up-to-date informational resource for the public.

Specifically, the PEIS will: (1) Update and expand current programmatic documentation, providing information on and analysis of the changes that have occurred in the biological defense program over the last decade; (2) enlarge the scope of the current programmatic documentation to include the chemical defense program; (3) provide a current programmatic NEPA document that will facilitate future Government decision making by allowing future environmental analyses under the CBDP to be tiered from it; and (4) share with the public the features of this program that demonstrate DoD's commitment to protect the environment and to ensure public safety during the execution of this operationally mandated program.

Proposed Action and Alternatives

The proposed action consists of the execution of an integrated program designed to protect our soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen from the evolving chemical and biological threats they may encounter on the battlefield. The No-Action alternative, continuation of current CBDP operations as described in and covered by existing environmental analyses will be evaluated, as well as all other reasonable alternatives identified during the public scoping process.

Scoping Process

Public comments are solicited concerning the environmental issues related to the CBDP. Scoping activities will be designed to facilitate public involvement. The scoping process supporting this effort will include: establishment of the public CBDP PEIS web site at http://ChemBioEIS.detrick.army.mil; dissemination of public information packages; publications in local newspapers; and coordination with public interest groups. Public meetings may be held if subsequently determined appropriate. These efforts will allow the public to provide input regarding the scope of the study and reasonable alternatives. To permit sufficient time for the U.S. Army to fully consider public input on issues, written or e-mail comments should be mailed or transmitted to ensure receipt prior to the end of the scoping period that will be identified on the CBDP PEIS web site. E-mail comments may be submitted via the CBDP PEIS web site at http://ChemBioEIS.detrick.army.mil.

Dated: May 29, 2001.

Raymond J. Fatz,

Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army (Environment, Safety and Occupational Health), OASA (I&E).

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