

commenters expressed concern for how the plan will be implemented and enforced.

Response: NMFS is committed to the implementation of the Johnson's seagrass recovery plan and in establishing an implementation team to address research and management goals. NMFS agrees with the Johnson's Seagrass Recovery Team that the goals and objectives of this recovery plan can be achieved only if a long-term commitment is made to support the actions recommended here. Achieving these goals and objectives will require the cooperation of state and Federal government agencies as well as private individuals and organizations. Goals and objectives will be attained and funds expended contingent upon agency appropriations and priorities.

Comment 18: Numerous commenters expressed support of the plan and described it as informative, well-written, and comprehensive. One of these commenters stated that the plan "includes helpful research tasks, however, there is a lack of discussion regarding certain recovery tasks." The Florida Department of Community Affairs determined the plan to be consistent with the Florida Coastal Management Program.

Response: The Johnson's seagrass Recovery Team was dedicated to producing a comprehensive and effective plan that will promote the protection and sustainability of Johnson's seagrass and its habitat. The introductory narratives for the eight major recovery tasks were reviewed and revised by the team for the final plan. Further discussion or clarification was made to the narratives and the specific recovery tasks as needed.

Recovery Task Priority Changes

Priority 1 recovery tasks are actions that must be taken to prevent extinction or to identify those actions necessary to prevent extinction. An action that must be taken to prevent a significant decline in population numbers, habitat quality, or other significant negative impacts short of extinction is a priority 2 task. All other actions necessary to provide for full recovery of listed species are priority 3 tasks.

NMFS has modified the priorities assigned to certain recovery tasks in the Implementation Schedule to better reflect NMFS guidance on priority rankings (55 FR 24296, June 14, 1990). These changes resulted in downgrading from priority 1 to 2 the following recovery tasks: 1.01, 2.01, 2.02, 5.02, 5.10, 6.01, and 7.01. Recovery task 3.06 (with edits) was changed from priority 1 to priority 3. Recovery tasks

downgraded from priority 2 to 3 include: 3.01, 3.02, 3.03, 5.14, 7.02, and 8.05. Recovery task 5.09 was changed from priority 2 to priority 1. Recovery tasks 4.03 and 5.01 were changed from priority 3 to priority 2.

Additional notable edits to the recovery tasks include the following:

- (a) 1.02, 1.03, and 1.05 in the draft plan were changed to recovery tasks 1.01A, 1.01B, and 1.01C, respectively, in the final plan.
- (b) 1.04 and 1.06 were combined into task 1.02.
- (c) 3.02 was changed to task 5.01.
- (d) 3.08 was rewritten and changed to 3.06.
- (e) 5.01 was rewritten and changed to 5.02.
- (f) 5.05 was merged into 5.06.
- (g) 5.10 was rewritten and changed to 5.14.
- (h) 7.02, 7.04, and 7.06 were combined to 7.03.
- (i) 7.03 was separated into tasks 7.02 and 7.04.

Implementation of the Plan

NMFS is committed to the implementation of the Johnson's Seagrass Recovery Plan and to developing an implementation team to address research and management goals. A long-term management plan will be developed by an implementation team, and the approved Johnson's Seagrass Final Recovery Plan will be used to address and implement recovery strategies for *H. johnsonii*. The goals and objectives of the plan will be attained and funds expended contingent upon agency appropriations and priorities. The recovery plan and criteria may be revised in the future on the basis of new information. Public notice and an opportunity for public review and comment would be provided prior to final approval of a revised recovery plan.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1531–1543 *et seq.*

Dated: September 26, 2002.

William T. Hogarth,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 091002A]

Marine Mammals; File No. 1032-1679-00

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and

Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Issuance of permit.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that Robert A. Garrott, Ph.D., Ecology Department, Montana State University, 310 Lewis Hall, Bozeman, Montana 59717 (PI: Dr. Robert Garrott), has been issued a permit to take Antarctic pinnipeds 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, Conservation and Education Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13705, Silver Spring, MD 20910; phone (301)713-2289; fax (301)713-0376.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Ruth Johnson or Carrie Hubard (301)713-2289.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On July 12, 2002, notice was published in the **Federal Register** (67 FR 46179) that a request for a scientific research permit to take Antarctic pinnipeds, target species, Weddell seals (*Leptonychotes weddellii*), had been submitted by the above-named individual. 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.*), and the Regulations Governing the Taking and Importing of Marine Mammals (50 CFR part 216).

A Permit was issued to take Weddell seals by capture to tag, tissue and blood sample, instrument, and incidentally harass crabeater seal (*Lobodon carcinophagus*), leopard seal (*Hydrurga leptonyx*), Ross seal (*Ommatophoca rossii*), southern elephant seal (*Mirounga leonina*), and Antarctic fur seal (*Arctocephalus gazella*). Activities will occur in McMurdo Sound, Antarctica and the Ross Sea. The Holder is also authorized to import samples collected from live captures and hard parts collected from carcasses during the above-listed activities.

Dated: September 25, 2002.

Trevor Spradlin,

Acting Chief, Permits, Conservation and Education Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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