

Comment 45: In the SAR for Eastern Pacific northern fur seals, it is inconsistent with the organization of the assessment to describe the entanglement-related mortality in the "Other Mortality" section, when entanglement is primarily due to fisheries. Also, there is no estimate of entanglement-related mortality reported; however, a conservative estimate of mortality can be obtained by estimating that 50 percent of seals observed entangled, but not captured, die.

Response: Northern fur seals, like other marine mammals, may become entangled in derelict fishing gear and other marine debris. The section related to fishery mortality is designed to account for mortality and serious injury incidental to active fishing and is used in conservation programs under MMPA section 118 (such as classifying fisheries). In this regard, NMFS treats such data for northern fur seals in a manner similar to the same data for Hawaiian monk seals, where the debris (including derelict fishing gear) often originates thousands of miles from the Hawaiian Islands. The entanglements are recorded as human-caused mortality and serious injury and are used to evaluate the level of such mortality relative to the stock's PBR.

Comment 46: The first sentence in the "Habitat Concerns" section of the SAR for Eastern Pacific northern fur seals reads "Recent rapid development on the Pribilof Islands increases the potential for negatively affecting habitat used by northern fur seals." It is unclear when the "rapid development" occurred on the Pribilof Islands. The word "rapid" should be removed from the first sentence, and a follow-up analysis of the relationship between pup production and distance from development, as well as text describing the accumulation of marine debris, should be included.

Response: The text in the section "Habitat Concerns" is a recent addition to the SARs made in response to a public comment and will be reviewed and revised, as necessary, during the next revision of the SAR.

Comment 47: It is unclear why Steller sea lion (Western U.S. stock) subsistence harvest data from Lestenkof and Zavadil (2001), Lestenkof *et al.* (2003) and Zavadil *et al.* (2003) were not used in the "Subsistence/Native Harvest Information".

Response: The 2003 draft SARs were developed using the best scientific information available at the time. The reports cited were made available to NMFS after the SARs were initially developed. Information contained in

these reports will be reviewed during preparation of future draft SARs.

Comment 48: For the Western U.S. stock of Steller sea lions, table 2b in the "Other Mortality" section should be placed under the "Subsistence/Native Harvest Information" section.

Response: The table will be moved when the report is next revised.

Dated: August 31, 2004.

Donna Wieting,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 090104A]

Marine Mammals; File No. 782-1765-00

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

ACTION: Issuance of permit.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that Alaska Fisheries Science Center, National Marine Mammal Laboratory, NMFS, 7600 Sand Point Way, NE, Seattle, Washington 98115-0070 (Principal Investigator: John L. Bengtson, Ph.D.) has been issued a permit to conduct research on ice seals in Alaska.

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; and Alaska Region, NMFS, P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802-1668; phone (907)586-7221; fax (907)586-7249;

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ruth Johnson or Amy Sloan, (301)713-2289.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On July 15, 2004, notice was published in the **Federal Register** (69 FR 42424) that a request for a scientific research permit to conduct research on ringed seals (*Phoca hispida*), ribbon seals (*Phoca fasciata*), and bearded seals (*Erignathus barbatus*) 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.*), and the Regulations

Governing the Taking and Importing of Marine Mammals (50 CFR part 216).

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), a final determination has been made that the activity proposed is categorically excluded from the requirement to prepare an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement.

Dated: September 1, 2004.

Stephen L. Leathery,

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

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COMMITTEE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF TEXTILE AGREEMENTS

Determination Under the African Growth and Opportunity Act

September 1, 2004.

AGENCY: Committee for the Implementation of Textile Agreements (CITA).

ACTION: Directive to the Commissioner, Bureau of Customs and Border Protection.

SUMMARY: The Committee for the Implementation of Textile Agreements (CITA) has determined that certain textile and apparel goods from Tanzania shall be treated as "handloomed, handmade, or folklore articles" and qualify for preferential treatment under the African Growth and Opportunity Act. Imports of eligible products from Tanzania with an appropriate visa will qualify for duty-free treatment.

EFFECTIVE DATE: September 13, 2004.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Anna Flaaten, International Trade Specialist, Office of Textiles and Apparel, U.S. Department of Commerce, (202) 482-3400.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Authority: The African Growth and Opportunity Act (Title I of the Trade and Development Act of 2000, Pub. L. No. 106-200) (AGOA) provides preferential tariff treatment for imports of certain textile and apparel products of beneficiary sub-Saharan African countries, including handloomed, handmade, or folklore articles of a beneficiary country that are certified as such by the competent authority in the beneficiary country. In Executive Order 13191, the President authorized CITA to consult with beneficiary sub-Saharan African countries and to determine which, if any, particular textile and apparel goods shall be treated as being handloomed, handmade, or folklore articles. (66 FR 7272).