

moving were not considered harassed. Based on past observations and assuming a maximum level of incidental harassment of marine mammals at each site during periods of visitation, NMFS estimates that the maximum total possible numbers of individuals that

will be incidentally harassed during the effective dates of the proposed IHA would be 1610 California sea lions, 100 Pacific harbor seals, and 20 northern elephant seals may be taken by harassment as a result of this activity. NMFS has determined that the estimated number of takes of California

sea lions, Pacific harbor seals and northern elephant seals are small numbers relative to the approximate total population of each pinniped species (1.2, 0.3, and .03 percent of the minimum population, respectively).

Year	California Sea Lions		Pacific Harbor Seals		Northern Elephant Seals	
	Present around Site	Est. Harassed	Present around Site	Est. Harassed	Present around Site	Est. Harassed
2004	2239	1472	108	99	562	7
2005	1383	983	99	88	409	9
2006	1564	1045	57	50	623	14
2007	1899	1317	133	68	480	2

**Table 2.** Estimated number of each species harassed over the last four years of abalone research. Minimum population estimates for California sea lions, Pacific harbor seals, and Northern elephant seals are 138881, 31600, and 60547, respectively.

**Potential Effects of Activities on Marine Mammal Habitat**

NMFS anticipates that the action will result in no impacts to marine mammal habitat beyond rendering the areas immediately around each of the nine study sites less desirable as haul-out sites for a total of 8.5 hours per year. Three visits to each site are anticipated during the year-long validity of the IHA.

**ESA**

For the reasons already described in this **Federal Register** Notice, NMFS has determined that the described abalone research and the accompanying IHA will have no effect on species or critical habitat protected under the ESA (specifically, the Guadalupe fur seal). Therefore, consultation under Section 7 is not required.

**National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)**

NMFS prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) of the Issuance of an IHA to Take Marine Mammals, by Harassment, During Black Abalone Research at SNI, California, which analyzed the issuance of multiple IHAs over several years for these activities, and subsequently issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) on November 21, 2005. The proposed 2008 action is the same as was analyzed in the 2005 EA and the EA remains applicable. A copy of the EA and FONSI are available upon request (see **ADDRESSES**).

**Conclusions**

Based on Dr. VanBlaricom's application and monitoring reports for previous field seasons, as well as the analysis contained herein, NMFS has determined that the impact of the described abalone research at SNI will result, at most, in a temporary

modification in behavior by small numbers of California sea lions, Pacific harbor seals, and northern elephant seals, in the form of head alerts, movement away from the researchers and/or flushing from the beach. In addition, no take by injury or death is anticipated, and take by harassment will be at the lowest level practicable due to incorporation of the mitigation measures mentioned previously in this document. NMFS has further preliminarily determined that the anticipated takes will have a negligible impact on the affected species.

**Authorization**

NMFS has issued an IHA to Dr. Glenn R. VanBlaricom for the harassment of California sea lions, Pacific harbor seals, and northern elephant seals incidental to black abalone population trend research, provided the previously mentioned mitigation, monitoring, and reporting requirements are incorporated.

Dated: January 22, 2008.

**P. Michael Payne,**

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

[FR Doc. E8-1429 Filed 1-25-08; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3510-22-S**

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

**RIN 0648-XF22**

**Marine Mammals; File No. 775-1875**

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

**ACTION:** Notice; issuance of permit.

**SUMMARY:** Notice is hereby given that the Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC), National Marine Fisheries Service [Dr. Nancy Thompson, Responsible Party], 166 Water Street, Woods Hole, MA 02543, has been issued a permit to conduct research on, and import/export specimens collected from, marine mammals.

**ADDRESSES:** The permit and related documents are available for review upon written request or by appointment in the following offices:

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)427-2521;

Northeast Region, NMFS, One Blackburn Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930-2298; phone (978)281-9300; fax (978)281-9394; and

Southeast Region, NMFS, 263 13th Avenue South, Saint Petersburg, Florida 33701; phone (727)824-5312; fax (727)824-5309.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Brandy Belmas or Carrie Hubbard, (301)713-2289.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** On January 10, 2007, notice was published in the **Federal Register** (72 FR 1218) that a request for a scientific research permit to take seven species of baleen whales, twenty-five species/stocks of odontocetes, and four species of pinnipeds, including the following endangered species: sperm whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*), sei whale (*Balaenoptera borealis*), blue whale (*B. musculus*), fin whale (*B. physalus*), humpback whale (*Megaptera novaeangliae*), and right whale (*Eubalaena glacialis*), 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), 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).

This research permit authorizes aerial and vessel surveys to be conducted including close approach, photo-id, and incidental harassment of cetaceans. Level A activities include biopsy sampling and suction-cup tagging, which will be conducted on all age classes with the exception of neonates. Additionally, researchers are authorized to capture, biological sample, incidentally harass, and release four species of pinnipeds. Pinniped research would be conducted on all age classes including pups. The study area for this permit includes waters within or proximal to the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone from Maine to Florida. Finally, researchers are authorized to import and export cetacean and pinniped specimens (including soft and hard tissue, blood, extracted DNA, whole dead animals, etc.) to/from any country.

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), an environmental assessment was prepared analyzing the effects of the permitted activities. After a Finding of No Significant Impact, the determination was made that it was not necessary to prepare an environmental impact statement.

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 such endangered species; and (3) is consistent with the purposes and policies set forth in section 2 of the ESA.

Dated: January 22, 2008.

**P. Michael Payne,**

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

[FR Doc. E8–1431 Filed 1–25–08; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3510–22–S**

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

**RIN: 0648–XF30**

#### New England Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

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

**ACTION:** Notice; public meeting.

**SUMMARY:** The New England Fishery Management Council's (Council) Groundfish Committee will meet to consider actions affecting New England fisheries in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ).

**DATES:** The meeting will be held on Monday, February 11, 2008, at 9 am.

**ADDRESSES:** The meeting will be held at the Courtyard by Marriot, 1000 Market Street, Portsmouth NH 03801; telephone: (603) 436–2121.

*Council address:* New England Fishery Management Council, 50 Water Street, Mill 2, Newburyport, MA 01950.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Paul J. Howard, Executive Director, New England Fishery Management Council; telephone: (978)465–0492.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Groundfish Oversight Committee will meet to continue development of Amendment 16 to the Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan (FMP). Amendment 16 is being developed to continue the rebuilding of groundfish stocks and will be implemented May 1, 2009. The Committee will develop a recommendation for Annual Catch Limits (ACLs), review plan development team recommendations for effort controls, and may address sector management issues. The Committee may also develop additional recommendations for Amendment 16 that will be considered by the Council at a meeting on February 13 and 14.

Although non-emergency issues not contained in this agenda may come before this group for discussion, those issues may not be the subject of formal action during this meeting. 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.

## Special Accommodations

This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Paul J. Howard (see **ADDRESSES**) at least 5 days prior to the meeting date.

**Authority:** 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: January 23, 2008.

**Tracey L. Thompson,**

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

[FR Doc. E8–1423 Filed 1–25–08; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3510–22–S**

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

**RIN: 0648–XF31**

#### New England Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

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

**ACTION:** Notice of a public meeting.

**SUMMARY:** The New England Fishery Management Council (Council) will hold a three-day Council meeting on February 12–14, 2008, to consider actions affecting New England fisheries in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ).

**DATES:** The meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 12 beginning at 9 a.m., and Wednesday and Thursday, February 13–14, beginning at 8:30 a.m.

**ADDRESSES:** The meeting will be held at the Sheraton Harborside Hotel, 250 Market Street, Portsmouth, NH 03801; telephone: (603) 431–2300.

*Council address:* New England Fishery Management Council, 50 Water Street, Mill 2, Newburyport, MA 01950.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Paul J. Howard, Executive Director, New England Fishery Management Council; telephone: (978) 465–0492.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

**Tuesday, February 12, 2008**

Following introductions and any announcements the Council will receive a series of brief reports from the Council Chairman and Executive Director, the NOAA Fisheries Northeast Regional Administrator, Northeast Fisheries Science Center and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council liaisons, NOAA General Counsel, NOAA Enforcement and representatives of the U.S. Coast Guard and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission.