

Comments may also be submitted by facsimile at (301)713-0376, provided the facsimile is confirmed by hard copy submitted by mail and postmarked no later than the closing date of the comment period.

Comments may also be submitted by e-mail. The mailbox address for providing e-mail comments is [NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov](mailto:NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov). Include in the subject line of the e-mail comment the following document identifier: File No. 932-1905/PRT-009526.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Amy Sloan or Carrie Hubard, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, (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.*), the regulations governing the taking and importing of marine mammals (50 CFR parts 18 and 216), the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), the regulations governing the taking, importing, and exporting of endangered and threatened species (50 CFR parts 17 and 222-226), and the Fur Seal Act of 1966, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1151 *et seq.*).

The applicant requests authorization to (1) carry out activities pursuant to section 109(h), 112(c), and Title IV of the MMPA that involve threatened and endangered marine mammal species under NMFS jurisdiction; (2) harass marine mammals incidental to all MMHSRP activities in the U.S.; (3) conduct research activities on marine mammals in the U.S.; and (4) collect, receive, transfer, import, export, analyze, and curate marine mammal specimens.

All threatened and endangered marine mammal species under NMFS jurisdiction are considered target species for stranding/emergency response activities. All species under NMFS jurisdiction are target species for research activities. Specimens from all species of marine mammals under NMFS or USFWS jurisdiction may be received, transferred, imported, exported, analyzed, and archived.

Type and manner of take includes Level A harassment during emergency response and research activities including capture; sedation/anesthesia; biological sampling (e.g., blood, blubber, muscle, respiratory gases, swabs); and removing entangling gear/material. Level B harassment may occur from close approach, hazing away from hazardous or harmful situations, photo-

identification, and aerial and vessel surveys.

The number of threatened and endangered animals that may be rescued and/or sampled is dependent on the number of incidents that occur and the ability to respond. The number of marine mammals that may be involved in research annually is as follows: approximately 400 pinnipeds (all species); 200 small cetaceans (all species); and 100 large whales (all species). An unlimited number of marine mammal specimens may be received, collected, imported, or exported annually.

Non-target animals that may be incidentally harassed during any MMHSRP activity in the U.S. include any marine mammal under NMFS and USFWS jurisdictions. Geographic locations of the takes could include any area in the U.S. and U.S. waters. Specimen samples may be imported/exported world-wide. The applicant has requested a 5-year permit.

The NMFS MMHSRP has prepared a draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321. *et seq.*). The DEIS includes analysis of activities proposed in this permit application. The DEIS is available on the following web site: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/health/eis.htm>.

Concurrent with the publication of this notice in the **Federal Register**, NMFS is forwarding copies of this application to the Marine Mammal Commission and its Committee of Scientific Advisors.

Dated: March 7, 2008.

**P. Michael Payne,**

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

Dated: March 7, 2008.

**Timothy J. VanNorman,**

*Chief, Branch of Permits, Division of Management Authority, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.*

[FR Doc. E8-5307 Filed 3-14-08; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODES 3510-22-S, 4310-55-S**

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

**RIN: 0648-XG35**

### North Pacific Fishery Management Council; Public Meetings

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

Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

**ACTION:** Notice of public meetings.

**SUMMARY:** The North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) and its advisory committees will hold public meetings, April 1-7, 2008, in Anchorage, AK.

**DATES:** The meetings will be held on April 1, 2008 through April 7, 2008. See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** for specific dates and times.

**ADDRESSES:** The meetings will be held at the Hilton Hotel, 500 W 3rd Avenue, Anchorage, AK 99501.

*Council address:* North Pacific Fishery Management Council, 605 W. 4th Avenue, Suite 306, Anchorage, AK 99501-2252.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** David Witherell, Council staff, telephone: (907) 271-2809.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Council will begin its plenary session at 8 a.m. on Tuesday, April 1 continuing through Tuesday April 7, 2008. The Council's Advisory Panel (AP) will begin at 8 a.m., Monday, March 31 and continue through Friday April 4. The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) will begin at 8 a.m. on Monday, March 31 and continue through Wednesday March 2, 2008. The Enforcement Committee will meet Tuesday, April 2, from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. in the Iliamna Room. The Ecosystem Committee will meet Wednesday, April 2, from 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. in the Dillingham/Katmai Room. The Council will meet Tuesday, April 8, with Alaska Board of Fisheries, and may discuss any of the items listed in this notice, or other issues involving state/federal authorities for parallel fisheries or Board proposals with federal waters relevance. All meetings are open to the public, except executive sessions.

**Council Plenary Session:** The agenda for the Council's plenary session will include the following issues. The Council may take appropriate action on any of the issues identified.

#### 1. Reports

Executive Director's Report

NMFS Management Report (NMFS Enforcement/NOAA General Counsel)

Alaska Department of Fish & Game Report

U.S. Coast Guard Report

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Report

Protected Species Report (including Aleutian Island Pollock EFP report)

2. Steller Sea lion (SSL) Issues: Review final SSL Recovery Plan; SSL Mitigation Committee report on proposals and preliminary recommendations on measures.

3. BSAI Crab Issues: Report from Crab Committee; Refine problem statement and elements/options for analysis of 90/10 modifications; BSAI Crab Arbitrator Immunity discussion paper; Final action on BSAI Crab Arbitration Regulations; Final action on BSAI "C" Share active participation; Final action on St. George protection measures.

4. Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Issues: Initial review of GOA sideboards for BSAI Crab vessels.

5. License Limitation Program (LLP) Trawl Recency: Final action to eliminate latent trawl licenses/area endorsements.

6. Observer Program: Receive Observer Advisory Committee report; Final action on Observer Program regulation package.

7. Halibut Charter Management: Initial review of Charter Halibut 2C/3A Catch Sharing Plan analysis; Report on the Charter Halibut Logbook Program.

8. Bycatch Issues: Preliminary review of BSAI Salmon Bycatch Environmental Impact Statement; receive scoping report; refine problem statement/alternatives; Discussion paper on GOA Crab and Salmon Bycatch.

9. Groundfish Management: Review EFP application for Trawl Salmon Excluder; Review EFP application for CGOA Rockfish Electronic Monitoring (Phase II); Initial review of Vessel Monitoring System Exemption for dinglebar gear; Final action on GOA 'Other Species' ABC/OFL specifications; Initial review of 4E Seabird Avoidance measures (T).

10. AFA Issue: Receive action on Amendment 62/62 (single geographic location) and affirm or repeal. (T)

11. Scallop Management: Review Stock Assessment Fishery Evaluation report.

12. Ecosystem Based Management: Report from Ecosystem Committee; preliminary review of Arctic FMP. (Council only)

13. Staff Tasking: Review Committees and tasking.

14. Other Business

The SSC agenda will include the following issues:

1. Steller Sea lions
2. GOA Sideboards
3. Halibut Charter
4. Salmon Bycatch
5. Groundfish Management
6. Scallop SAFE
7. Ecosystem Management
8. Crab Model Review

The Advisory Panel will address most of the same agenda issues as the Council, except for 11 reports. The Agenda is subject to change, and the latest version will be posted at <http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/npfmc/>.

## Special Accommodations

These meetings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Gail Bendixen at (907) 271-2809 at least 7 working days prior to the meeting date.

Dated: March 11, 2008.

**Tracey L. Thompson,**

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

[FR Doc. E8-5207 Filed 3-14-08; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3510-22-S**

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### Patent and Trademark Office

#### Patent Examiner Employment Application (Formerly Patent Examiner Employment Application—Job Application Rating System (JARS))

**ACTION:** Proposed collection; comment request.

**SUMMARY:** The United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO), as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, invites the general public and other Federal agencies to take this opportunity to comment on the revision of a continuing information collection, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Public Law 104-13 (44 U.S.C. 3506(c)(2)(A)).

**DATES:** Written comments must be submitted on or before May 16, 2008.

**ADDRESSES:** You may submit comments by any of the following methods:

- *E-mail:* [Susan.Fawcett@uspto.gov](mailto:Susan.Fawcett@uspto.gov). Include "0651-0042 comment" in the subject line of the message.
- *Fax:* 571-273-0112; marked to the attention of Susan K. Fawcett.
- *Mail:* Susan K. Fawcett, Records Officer, Office of the Chief Information Officer, Customer Information Services Group, Public Information Services Division, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.
- *Federal Rulemaking Portal:* <http://www.regulations.gov>.

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Requests for additional information should be directed to the attention of Howard Staik, Chief of the Workforce Employment Division, Office of Human Resources, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO), P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450; by telephone at 571-272-2846; or by e-mail to [Howard.Staik@uspto.gov](mailto:Howard.Staik@uspto.gov).

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

## I. Abstract

The USA Staffing system provided by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is an automated on-line system that allows the USPTO to rapidly review applications for employment of entry-level patent examiners. The Office of Human Resources (OHR), armed with a recommendation from a Supervisory Patent Examiner (SPE), can use the system to rapidly make an offer of employment and take the necessary administrative action to support the hiring process. In FY 2007, USA Staffing enabled the Patent Corps to hire more than 1,216 entry-level patent examiners.

Since the inception of USA Staffing in January 2007, the hiring process has become more effective and compliant with the examining requirements established by OPM. In the current employment environment, information technology professionals and engineering graduates are in great demand. The USPTO is in direct competition with private industry for the same caliber of candidates with the requisite knowledge and skills to perform patent examination work. Consequently, it is imperative that every available technology be employed if the USPTO is to remain competitive, meet hiring goals, and fulfill the agency's Congressional commitment to reduce the pendency rate for the examination of patent applications. The information supplied by an applicant seeking a patent examiner position with the USPTO assists the Human Resources Specialists and hiring managers in determining whether an applicant possesses the basic qualification requirements for the patent examiner position.

USA Staffing provides the USPTO with a user-friendly on-line employment application process for applicants and enables the USPTO to process hiring actions in an efficient and timely manner. The on-line application creates an electronic real-time candidate inventory that allows the USPTO to review applications from potential applicants almost instantaneously. Given the immediate hiring need of the Patent Examining Corps, time consumed in the mail distribution system or paper review of applications delays the decision-making process by several weeks. The USA Staffing system results in increased speed and accuracy in the employment process, in addition to streamlining labor and reducing costs.

The use of the USA Staffing on-line application fully complies with 5 U.S.C. 2301, which requires adequate public notice to assure open competition by