

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE****National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

RIN 0648–XK07

**U.S. Climate Change Science Program Synthesis and Assessment Product Draft Report 4.2 “Thresholds of Change in Ecosystems”**

**AGENCY:** National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Department of Commerce.

**ACTION:** Notice of availability and request for public comments.

**SUMMARY:** The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration publishes this notice to announce a 45-day public comment period for the draft report titled, U.S. Climate Change Science Program Synthesis and Assessment Product 4.2 “Thresholds of Change in Ecosystems.”

This draft report is being released solely for the purpose of pre-dissemination peer review under applicable information quality guidelines. This document has not been formally disseminated by NOAA. It does not represent and should not be construed to represent any Agency policy or determination. After consideration of comments received on the draft report, a revised version along with the comments received will be published on the CCSP web site.

**DATES:** Comments must be received by October 17, 2008.

**ADDRESSES:** The draft Synthesis and Assessment Product: 4.2 is posted on the CCSP Web site at: <http://www.climatechange.gov/Library/sap/sap4-2/default.php>

Detailed instructions for making comments on this draft report are provided on the CCSP web site. Comments must be prepared in accordance to these instructions and must be submitted to:

[4.2-threshold@climatechange.gov](mailto:4.2-threshold@climatechange.gov)

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Dr. Fabien Laurier, Climate Change Science Program Office, 1717 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 250, Washington, DC 20006, Telephone: (202) 419–3481.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The CCSP was established by the President in 2002 to coordinate and integrate scientific research on global change and climate change sponsored by 13 participating departments and agencies of the U.S. Government. The CCSP is charged with preparing information resources that promote climate-related discussions and decisions, including scientific synthesis and assessment analyses that support evaluation of important policy issues.

Dated: August 25, 2008.

**William J. Brennan,**

*Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere, and Director, Climate Change Science Program.*

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**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE****National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

RIN 0648–XH04

**Incidental Takes of Marine Mammals During Specified Activities; Rat Population Eradication at Rat Island, AK**

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

**ACTION:** Notice; issuance of an incidental take authorization.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) regulations, NMFS has issued an Incidental Harassment Authorization (IHA) to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for the take of marine mammals, by Level B harassment only, incidental to the eradication of non-native rat populations at Rat Island, AK.

**DATES:** The IHA is effective from September 1, 2008 through December 31, 2008.

**ADDRESSES:** A copy of the IHA and the application are available by writing to Michael Payne, Chief, Permits, Conservation, and Education Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910–3225, or by telephoning the contact listed here. A copy of the application containing a list of references used in this document may be obtained by writing to the address specified above, telephoning the contact listed below (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**), or online at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/permits/incidental.htm>. Documents cited in this notice may be viewed, by appointment, during regular business hours, at the aforementioned address.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Howard Goldstein or Ken Hollingshead, NMFS, (301) 713–2289.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:****Background**

Sections 101(a)(5)(A) and (D) of the MMPA (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*) direct the Secretary of Commerce to allow,

upon request, the incidental, but not intentional, taking of marine mammals by U.S. citizens who engage in a specified activity (other than commercial fishing) within a specified geographical region if certain findings are made and either regulations are issued or, if the taking is limited to harassment, a notice of a proposed authorization is provided to the public for review.

Authorization shall be granted if NMFS finds that the taking will have a negligible impact on the species or stock(s) and will not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of the species or stock(s) for certain subsistence uses, and if the permissible methods of taking and requirements pertaining to the mitigation, monitoring and reporting of such takings are set forth. NMFS has defined “negligible impact” in 50 CFR 216.103 as “...an impact resulting from the specified activity that cannot be reasonably expected to, and is not reasonably likely to, adversely affect the species or stock through effects on annual rates of recruitment or survival.”

Section 101(a)(5)(D) of the MMPA established an expedited process by which citizens of the United States can apply for an authorization to incidentally take small numbers of marine mammals by harassment. Except with respect to certain activities not pertinent here, the MMPA defines “harassment” as:

any act of pursuit, torment, or annoyance which (i) has the potential to injure a marine mammal or marine mammal stock in the wild [Level A harassment]; or (ii) has the potential to disturb a marine mammal or marine mammal stock in the wild by causing disruption of behavioral patterns, including, but not limited to, migration, breathing, nursing, breeding, feeding, or sheltering [Level B harassment].

Section 101(a)(5)(D) establishes a 45-day time limit for NMFS review of an application followed by a 30-day public notice and comment period on any proposed authorizations for the incidental harassment of marine mammals. Within 45 days of the close of the comment period, NMFS must either issue or deny issuance of the authorization.

**Summary of Request**

On February 29, 2008, NMFS received a letter from the USFWS, requesting an IHA. The proposed 2008 IHA was published, and comments solicited on June 18, 2008 (73 FR 34705). The final IHA would authorize the take, by harassment only, of small numbers of Steller sea lions (*Eumetopias jubatus*), and Pacific harbor seals (*Phoca vitulina richardsi*), incidental to non-native rat