

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

RIN 0648–XZ66

Marine Mammals; File No. 781–1824

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

ACTION: Notice; issuance of permit amendment.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that a major amendment to Permit No. 781–1824–01 has been issued to the Northwest Fisheries Science Center (NWFSC, Dr. M. Bradley Hanson, Principal Investigator), 2725 Montlake Blvd. East, Seattle, Washington 98112–2097.

ADDRESSES: The permit amendment and related documents are available for review upon written request or by appointment in the following offices: Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13705, Silver Spring, MD 20910; phone (301) 427–8401; fax (301) 713–0376; and Northwest Region, NMFS, 7600 Sand Point Way NE., BIN C15700, Bldg. 1, Seattle, WA 98115–0700; phone (206) 526–6150; fax (206) 526–6426.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Laura Morse or Amy Sloan, (301) 427–8401.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On November 9, 2010, notice was published in the *Federal Register* (75 FR 68757) that a request for an amendment to Permit No. 781–1824–01 to conduct research on cetacean species in the eastern North Pacific off the coast of Washington, Oregon, and California for scientific research had been submitted by the above-named applicant. The requested permit amendment 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).

The permit amendment authorizes an increase in the number of Southern Resident killer whales (SRKW, *Orcinus orca*) suction cup tagged (from 10 to 20 animals annually) and allows satellite tagging of six SRKW with dart tags annually.

An environmental assessment (EA) analyzing the effects of the permitted activities on the human environment was prepared in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*). Based on the analyses in the EA, NMFS determined that issuance of the permit would not significantly impact the quality of the human environment and that preparation of an environmental impact statement was not required. That determination is documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), signed on November 22, 2011.

As required by the ESA, issuance of this permit 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: December 8, 2011.

P. Michael Payne,

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

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

RIN 0648–XT57

Takes of Marine Mammals Incidental to Specified Activities; Marine Geophysical Survey in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, February to March 2012

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

ACTION: Notice; proposed Incidental Harassment Authorization; request for comments.

SUMMARY: NMFS has received an application from the Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory of Columbia University (L–DEO) for an Incidental Harassment Authorization (IHA) to take marine mammals, by harassment, incidental to conducting a marine geophysical (seismic) survey in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), a commonwealth in a political union with the U.S., February to March, 2012. Pursuant to the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), NMFS is requesting comments on its proposal to issue an IHA to L–DEO to incidentally harass, by Level B

harassment only, 22 species of marine mammals during the specified activity.

DATES: Comments and information must be received no later than January 13, 2012.

ADDRESSES: Comments on the application should be addressed to P. Michael Payne, Chief, Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910. The mailbox address for providing email comments is ITP.Goldstein@noaa.gov. NMFS is not responsible for email comments sent to addresses other than the one provided here. Comments sent via email, including all attachments, must not exceed a 10-megabyte file size.

All comments received are a part of the public record and will generally be posted to <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/permits/incidental.htm#applications> without change. All Personal Identifying Information (for example, name, address, *etc.*) voluntarily submitted by the commenter may be publicly accessible. Do not submit confidential business information or otherwise sensitive or protected information.

A copy of the application containing a list of the references used in this document may be obtained by writing to the above address, telephoning the contact listed here (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**) or visiting the Internet at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/permits/incidental.htm#applications>.

The National Science Foundation (NSF), which is providing funding to L–DEO to conduct the survey, has prepared a draft “Environmental Assessment Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act, 42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.* and Executive Order 12114 Marine Seismic Survey in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, 2012” (EA). NSF’s EA incorporates an “Environmental Assessment of a Marine Geophysical Survey by the R/V *Marcus G. Langseth* in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, February–March 2012,” prepared by LGL Ltd., Environmental Research Associates (LGL), on behalf of NSF and L–DEO, which is also available at the same Internet address. 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 Jolie Harrison, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, (301) 427–8401.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: