

activity is not expected to impact rates of recruitment or survival.

As mentioned previously, NMFS estimates that 22 species of marine mammals under its jurisdiction could be potentially affected by Level B harassment over the course of the IHA. For each species, these numbers are small (each, less than one percent, except for dwarf sperm whales [1.3%] whales) relative to the regional population size. The population estimates for the marine mammal species that may be taken by Level B harassment were provided in Table 2 of this document.

NMFS's practice has been to apply the 160 dB re 1 μ Pa (rms) received level threshold for underwater impulse sound levels to determine whether take by Level B harassment occurs. Southall *et al.* (2007) provide a severity scale for ranking observed behavioral responses of both free-ranging marine mammals and laboratory subjects to various types of anthropogenic sound (see Table 4 in Southall *et al.* [2007]).

NMFS has preliminarily determined, provided that the aforementioned mitigation and monitoring measures are implemented, that the impact of conducting a marine seismic survey in the CNMI, February to March, 2012, may result, at worst, in a temporary modification in behavior and/or low-level physiological effects (Level B harassment) of small numbers of certain species of marine mammals. See Table 3 (above) for the requested authorized take numbers of cetaceans.

While behavioral modifications, including temporarily vacating the area during the operation of the airgun(s), may be made by these species to avoid the resultant acoustic disturbance, the availability of alternate areas within these areas and the short and sporadic duration of the research activities, have led NMFS to preliminarily determine that this action will have a negligible impact on the species in the specified geographic region.

Based on the analysis contained herein of the likely effects of the specified activity on marine mammals and their habitat, and taking into consideration the implementation of the mitigation and monitoring measures, NMFS preliminarily finds that L-DEO's planned research activities will result in the incidental take of small numbers of marine mammals, by Level B harassment only, and that the total taking from the marine seismic survey will have a negligible impact on the affected species or stocks of marine mammals; and that impacts to affected species or stocks of marine mammals

have been mitigated to the lowest level practicable.

Impact on Availability of Affected Species or Stock for Taking for Subsistence Uses

Section 101(a)(5)(D) also requires NMFS to determine that the authorization will not have an unmitigable adverse effect on the availability of marine mammal species or stocks for subsistence use. There are no relevant subsistence uses of marine mammals in the study area (offshore waters of the CNMI) that implicate MMPA section 101(a)(5)(D).

Endangered Species Act

Of the species of marine mammals that may occur in the proposed survey area, several are listed as endangered under the ESA, including the North Pacific right, humpback, sei, fin, blue, and sperm whales. Under section 7 of the ESA, NSF has initiated formal consultation with the NMFS, Office of Protected Resources, Endangered Species Act Interagency Cooperation Division, on this proposed seismic survey. NMFS's Office of Protected Resources, Permits and Conservation Division, has initiated formal consultation under section 7 of the ESA with NMFS's Office of Protected Resources, Endangered Species Act Interagency Cooperation Division, to obtain a Biological Opinion evaluating the effects of issuing the IHA on threatened and endangered marine mammals and, if appropriate, authorizing incidental take. NMFS will conclude formal section 7 consultation prior to making a determination on whether or not to issue the IHA. If the IHA is issued, NSF and L-DEO, in addition to the mitigation and monitoring requirements included in the IHA, will be required to comply with the Terms and Conditions of the Incidental Take Statement corresponding to NMFS's Biological Opinion issued to both NSF and NMFS's Office of Protected Resources.

National Environmental Policy Act

With L-DEO's complete application, NSF provided NMFS 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," which 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 on behalf of

NSF and L-DEO. The EA analyzes the direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts of the proposed specified activities on marine mammals including those listed as threatened or endangered under the ESA. Prior to making a final decision on the IHA application, NMFS will either prepare an independent EA, or, after review and evaluation of the NSF EA for consistency with the regulations published by the Council of Environmental Quality (CEQ) and NOAA Administrative Order 216-6, Environmental Review Procedures for Implementing the National Environmental Policy Act, adopt the NSF EA and make a decision of whether or not to issue a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

Proposed Authorization

NMFS proposes to issue an IHA to L-DEO for conducting a marine seismic survey in the CNMI, provided the previously mentioned mitigation, monitoring, and reporting requirements are incorporated. The duration of the IHA would not exceed one year from the date of its issuance.

Information Solicited

NMFS requests interested persons to submit comments and information concerning this proposed project and NMFS's preliminary determination of issuing an IHA (see **ADDRESSES**). 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: December 8, 2011.

James H. Lecky,

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

[FR Doc. 2011-32100 Filed 12-13-11; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XA868

International Affairs; U.S. Fish Quotas in the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization Regulatory Area

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

ACTION: Notification of U.S. fish quotas.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces that fish quotas are available for harvest in the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries

Organization (NAFO) Regulatory Area. This action is necessary to make fishing privileges available on an equitable basis.

DATES: Effective January 1, 2012, through December 31, 2012. Expressions of interest regarding U.S. fish quota allocations for all species except Division 3L shrimp and Division 3M redfish will be accepted throughout 2012. Expressions of interest regarding the U.S. 3L shrimp and 3M redfish quota allocations and the Division 3LNO yellowtail flounder to be transferred by Canada will be accepted through December 29, 2011.

ADDRESSES: Expressions of interest regarding U.S. quota allocations should be made in writing to Patrick E. Moran in the NMFS Office of International Affairs, at 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910 (phone: (301)

427-8370, fax: (301) 713-2313, email: Pat.Moran@noaa.gov).

Information relating to NAFO fish quotas, NAFO Conservation and Enforcement Measures, and the High Seas Fishing Compliance Act (HSFCA) Permit is available from Douglas Christel, at the NMFS Northeast Regional Office at 55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930 (phone: (978) 281-9141, fax: (978) 281-9135, email: douglas.christel@noaa.gov) and from NAFO on the World Wide Web at <http://www.nafo.int>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Patrick E. Moran, (301) 427-8370.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

NAFO has established and maintains conservation measures in its Regulatory Area that include one effort limitation fishery as well as fisheries with total

allowable catches (TACs) and member nation quota allocations. The principal species managed are cod, flounder, redfish, American plaice, halibut, hake, capelin, shrimp, skates and squid. At the 2011 NAFO Annual Meeting, the United States received fish quota allocations for three NAFO stocks to be fished during 2012. Please note that the Division 3M shrimp effort allocation available in recent years remains unavailable for 2012 due to conservation concerns. Fishing opportunities for this stock will be re-opened when the NAFO Scientific Council advice estimates that the stock is showing signs of recovery.

The species, location, and allocation (in metric tons) of 2012 U.S. fishing opportunities, as found in Annexes I.A, I.B, and I.C of the 2011 NAFO Conservation and Enforcement Measures, are as follows:

1. Redfish	NAFO Division 3M	69 mt
2. Squid (<i>Illex</i>)	NAFO Subareas 3 & 4	453 mt
3. Shrimp	NAFO Division 3L	133 mt

Additionally, the United States may be transferred up to 1,000 mt of 3LNO yellowtail flounder from Canada's quota allocation if requested before January 1 of 2012, or any succeeding year through 2017. If such a request is made, an additional 500 mt of 3LNO yellowtail flounder could be made available on the condition that the United States transfers its 3L shrimp allocation to Canada or through some other arrangement. Participants in this fishery will be restricted to an overall bycatch harvest limit for American plaice equal to 15% of the total yellowtail fishery.

Fishing opportunities may also be authorized for U.S. fishermen in the "Others" category for: Division 3NO white hake (295 mt); Division 3LNO skates (314 mt); Division 3M cod (37 mt), 3LN redfish (36 mt) and Division 3O redfish (100 mt). Procedures for obtaining NMFS authorization are specified below.

U.S. Fishing Vessel Applicants

Expressions of interest to fish for any or all of the 2012 U.S. fish quota allocations, including the up to 1,500 mt of yellowtail flounder to be transferred by Canada under the circumstances described above, and "Others" category allocations in NAFO will be considered from U.S. vessels in possession of, or eligible for, a valid HSFCA permit, which is available from the NMFS Northeast Regional Office (see **ADDRESSES**). All expressions of interest should be directed in writing to Patrick

E. Moran (see **ADDRESSES**). Letters of interest from U.S. vessel owners should include the name, registration, and home port of the applicant vessel as required by NAFO in advance of fishing operations. Any available information on intended target species and dates of fishing operations should be included. In addition, expressions of interest should be accompanied by a detailed description of anticipated benefits to the United States. Such benefits might include, but are not limited to, the use of U.S. processing facilities/personnel; the use of U.S. fishing personnel; other specific positive effects on U.S. employment; evidence that fishing by the applicant vessel actually would take place; and documentation of the physical characteristics and economics of the fishery for future use by the U.S. fishing industry. To ensure equitable access by U.S. vessel owners, NMFS may promulgate regulations designed to choose one or more U.S. applicants from among expressions of interest.

Note that vessels issued valid HSFCA permits under 50 CFR part 300 are exempt from multispecies permit, mesh size, effort-control, and possession limit restrictions, specified in §§ 648.4, 648.80, 648.82 and 648.86, respectively, while transiting the U.S. exclusive economic zone (EEZ) with multispecies on board the vessel, or landing multispecies in U.S. ports that were caught while fishing in the NAFO Regulatory Area, provided:

1. The vessel operator has a letter of authorization issued by the Regional Administrator on board the vessel;

2. For the duration of the trip, the vessel fishes, except for transiting purposes, exclusively in the NAFO Regulatory Area and does not harvest fish in, or possess fish harvested in, or from, the U.S. EEZ;

3. When transiting the U.S. EEZ, all gear is properly stowed in accordance with one of the applicable methods specified in § 648.23(b); and

4. The vessel operator complies with the HSFCA permit and all NAFO conservation and enforcement measures while fishing in the NAFO Regulatory Area.

NAFO Conservation and Management Measures

Relevant NAFO Conservation and Enforcement Measures include, but are not limited to, maintenance of a fishing logbook with NAFO-designated entries; adherence to NAFO hail system requirements; presence of an on-board observer; deployment of a functioning, autonomous vessel monitoring system; and adherence to all relevant minimum size, gear, bycatch, and other requirements. Further details regarding these requirements are available from the NMFS Northeast Regional Office, and can also be found in the current NAFO Conservation and Enforcement Measures on the Internet (see **ADDRESSES**).

Transfer and Chartering of U.S. Quota Allocations

In the event that no adequate expressions of interest in harvesting the U.S. portion of the 2012 NAFO Division 3M redfish quota allocation are made on behalf of U.S. vessels, expressions of interest will be considered from U.S. fishing interests intending to make use of vessels of other NAFO Parties through a transfer of quota allocated to the United States. Under NAFO rules in effect for 2012, the United States may transfer fishing possibilities with the consent of the receiving Contracting Party and with prior notification to the NAFO Executive Secretary. Expressions of interest from U.S. fishing interests intending to make use of vessels from another NAFO Contracting Party through a transfer of quota allocated to the United States should include a letter of consent from the vessel's flag state. In addition, expressions of interest for transfers should be accompanied by a detailed description of anticipated benefits to the United States. Such benefits might include, but are not limited to, the use of U.S. processing facilities/personnel; the use of U.S. fishing personnel; other specific positive effects on U.S. employment; evidence that fishing by the recipient NAFO Contracting Party actually would take place; and any available documentation of the physical characteristics and economics of the fishery for future use by the U.S. fishing industry.

In the event that no adequate expressions of interest in harvesting the U.S. portion of the 2012 NAFO Division 3L shrimp quota allocation are made on behalf of U.S. vessels, expressions of interest will be considered from U.S. fishing interests intending to make use of vessels of other NAFO Parties under chartering arrangements to fish the 2012 U.S. quota allocation for 3L shrimp. Under NAFO rules in effect through 2012, a vessel registered to another NAFO Contracting Party may be chartered to fish the U.S. shrimp quota provided that written consent for the charter is obtained from the vessel's flag state and the U.S. allocation is transferred to that flag state. NAFO Parties must be notified of such a chartering operation through a mail notification process.

A NAFO Contracting Party wishing to enter into a chartering arrangement with the United States must be in full current compliance with the requirements outlined in the NAFO Convention and Conservation and Enforcement Measures including, but not limited to, submission of the following reports to

the NAFO Executive Secretary: Provisional monthly catches within 30 days following the calendar month in which the catches were made; provisional daily catches of shrimp taken from Division 3L; observer reports within 30 days following the completion of a fishing trip; and an annual statement of actions taken in order to comply with the NAFO Convention; and notification to NMFS of the termination of the charter fishing activities. Furthermore, the United States may also consider a Contracting Party's previous compliance with NAFO bycatch, reporting and other provisions, as outlined in the NAFO Conservation and Enforcement Measures, before entering into a chartering arrangement.

Expressions of interest from U.S. fishing interests intending to make use of vessels from another NAFO Contracting Party under chartering arrangements should include information required by NAFO regarding the proposed chartering operation, including: The name, registration and flag of the intended vessel; a copy of the charter; the fishing opportunities granted; a letter of consent from the vessel's flag state; the date from which the vessel is authorized to commence fishing on these opportunities; and the duration of the charter (not to exceed six months). More details on NAFO requirements for chartering operations are available from NMFS (see **ADDRESSES**). In addition, expressions of interest for chartering operations should be accompanied by a detailed description of anticipated benefits to the United States. Such benefits might include, but are not limited to, the use of U.S. processing facilities/personnel; the use of U.S. fishing personnel; other specific positive effects on U.S. employment; evidence that fishing by the chartered vessel actually would take place; and documentation of the physical characteristics and economics of the fishery for future use by the U.S. fishing industry.

In the event that multiple expressions of interest are made by U.S. fishing interests proposing the transfer of Division 3M redfish quota allocated to the United States, or chartering operations to fish Division 3L shrimp quota allocated to the United States, the information submitted regarding benefits to the United States will be used in making a selection. In the event that applications by U.S. fishing interests proposing transfer or the use of chartering operations are considered, all applicants will be made aware of the allocation decision as soon as possible. Once the allocation has been awarded,

NMFS will immediately take appropriate steps to notify NAFO to take appropriate action.

After reviewing all requests for allocations submitted, NMFS may decide not to grant any allocations if it is determined that no requests meet the criteria described in this notice. All individuals/companies submitting expressions of interest to NMFS will be contacted if an allocation has been awarded.

Chartering Operations for Division 3LNO Yellowtail Flounder Transferred From Canada

In the event that no adequate expressions of interest in harvesting NAFO Division 3LNO yellowtail flounder transferred from Canada during 2012 are made on behalf of U.S. vessels, expressions of interest will be considered from U.S. processors and other fishing interests intending to make use of a Canadian vessel under a chartering arrangement. Under the bilateral arrangement with Canada, the United States may enter into a chartering (or other) arrangement with a Canadian vessel to harvest the transferred yellowtail flounder. Prior notification to the NAFO Executive Secretary is necessary in this case. Expressions of interest from U.S. processors and other fishing interests intending to make use of a Canadian vessel under chartering arrangements should provide the following information: The name and registration number of the intended vessel; a copy of the charter; a detailed fishing plan, and a written letter of consent from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Canada. In addition, expressions of interest using a Canadian vessel under charter should be accompanied by a detailed description of anticipated benefits to the United States. Such benefits might include, but are not limited to, the use of U.S. processing facilities/personnel; the use of U.S. fishing personnel; marketing of the product in the United States; other specific positive effects on U.S. employment; evidence that fishing by the Canadian vessel will actually take place; and any available documentation of the physical characteristics and economics of the fishery for future use by the U.S. fishing industry.

Any Canadian vessel wishing to enter into a chartering arrangement with the United States must be in full current compliance with the requirements outlined in the NAFO Convention and Conservation and Enforcement Measures including, but not limited to, submission of the following reports to the NAFO Executive Secretary:

Provisional monthly catches within 30 days following the calendar month in which the catches were made; observer reports within 30 days following the completion of a fishing trip; and an annual statement of actions taken in order to comply with the NAFO Convention; and notification to NMFS of the termination of the charter fishing activities. Furthermore, the United States may also consider the vessel's previous compliance with NAFO bycatch, reporting and other provisions, as outlined in the NAFO Conservation and Enforcement Measures, before entering into a chartering arrangement. More details on NAFO requirements are available from NMFS (see **ADDRESSES**).

In the event that multiple expressions of interest are made by U.S. fishing interests to fish for NAFO Division 3LNO yellowtail in 2012, the information submitted regarding benefits to the United States will be used in making a selection. After reviewing all requests for allocations submitted, NMFS may decide not to grant any allocations if it is determined that no requests meet the criteria described in this notice. Once a decision

has been made regarding the disposition of the fishing opportunity, NMFS will immediately take appropriate steps to notify all applicants and will contact Canada and NAFO to take appropriate action. Please note that if any 3LNO yellowtail flounder is transferred from Canada and subsequently awarded to a U.S. vessel or a specified chartering operation during 2012, it may not be transferred without the express, written consent of NMFS.

Dated: December 9, 2011.

Rebecca Lent,

*Director, Office of International Affairs,
National Marine Fisheries Service.*

[FR Doc. 2011-32099 Filed 12-13-11; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Office of the Secretary

[Transmittal Nos. 11-43]

36(b)(1) Arms Sales Notification

AGENCY: Defense Security Cooperation Agency, Department of Defense.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Defense is publishing the unclassified text of a section 36(b)(1) arms sales notification. This is published to fulfill the requirements of section 155 of Public Law 104-164 dated July 21, 1996.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ms. B. English, DSCA/DBO/CFM, (703) 601-3740.

The following is a copy of a letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Transmittals 11-43 with attached transmittal and policy justification.

Dated: December 9, 2011.

Aaron Siegel,

*Alternate OSD Federal Register Liaison
Officer, Department of Defense.*

BILLING CODE 5001-06-P