

into the sea due to the noise and appearance of helicopter during approaches and departures. It is expected that all or a portion of the marine mammals hauled out on the island will depart the rock and slowly move into the water upon initial helicopter approaches. The movement to the water would be gradual due to the required controlled helicopter approaches (see "Mitigation" for more details), the small size of the aircraft, the use of noise-attenuating blade tip caps on the rotors, and behavioral habituation on the part of the animals as helicopter trips continue throughout the day. During the sessions of helicopter activity, if present on Northwest Seal Rock, some animals may be temporarily displaced from the island and either raft in the water or relocate to other haul-outs.

Sea lions have shown habituation to helicopter flights within a day at the project site and most animals are expected to return soon after helicopter activities cease for that day. By clustering helicopter arrival/departures within a short time period, we expect animals present to show less response to subsequent landings. NMFS anticipates no impact on the population size or breeding stock of Steller sea lions, California sea lions, Pacific harbor seals, or northern fur seals.

In summary, NMFS anticipates that impacts to hauled-out pinnipeds during the Society's proposed helicopter operations and restoration/maintenance activities would be behavioral harassment of limited duration (*i.e.*, less than three days a month) and limited intensity (*i.e.*, temporary flushing at most). NMFS does not expect stampeding, and therefore injury or mortality to occur (see "Mitigation" for more details). 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 proposed monitoring and mitigation measures, NMFS finds that the total marine mammal take from the Society's proposed survey activities will have a negligible impact on the affected marine mammal species or stocks.

#### Small Numbers

As mentioned previously, NMFS estimates that the Society's proposed activities could potentially affect, by Level B harassment only, four species of marine mammal under our jurisdiction. For each species, these estimates are small numbers (each, less than or equal to one percent) relative to the population size. These incidental harassment take numbers represent

approximately 0.32 percent of the U.S. stock of California sea lion, 0.42 percent of the eastern U.S. stock of Steller sea lion, 0.11 percent of the California stock of Pacific harbor seals, and 0.05 percent of the San Miguel Island stock of northern fur seal.

Based on the analysis contained in this notice 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 finds that the Society's proposed activities would be limited to small numbers of marine mammals relative to the populations of the affected species or stocks.

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

There are no relevant subsistence uses of marine mammals implicated by this action. Therefore, NMFS has determined that the total taking of affected species or stocks would not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of such species or stocks for taking for subsistence purposes.

#### Endangered Species Act (ESA)

NMFS does not expect that the Society's proposed helicopter operations and restoration/maintenance activities would affect any species listed under the ESA. Therefore, NMFS has determined that a section 7 consultation under the ESA is not required.

#### National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

To meet our NEPA requirements for the issuance of an Authorization to the Society, NMFS has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) in 2010 that was specific to conducting aircraft operations and restoration and maintenance work on the St. George Reef Light Station. The EA, titled "Issuance of an Incidental Harassment Authorization to Take Marine Mammals by Harassment Incidental to Conducting Aircraft Operations, Lighthouse Restoration and Maintenance Activities on St. George Reef Lighthouse Station in Del Norte County, California," evaluated the impacts on the human environment of our authorization of incidental Level B harassment resulting from the specified activity in the specified geographic region. At that time, NMFS concluded that issuance of an annual Authorization would not significantly affect the quality of the human environment and issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the 2010 EA regarding the Society's activities. In conjunction with the Society's 2015

application, NMFS has again reviewed the 2010 EA and determined that there are no new direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts to the human and natural environment associated with the Authorization requiring evaluation in a supplemental EA and NMFS, therefore, reaffirms the 2010 FONSI. An electronic copy of the EA and the FONSI for this activity is available upon request (see ADDRESSES).

#### Authorization

NMFS has issued an Incidental Harassment Authorization to the St. George Reef Lighthouse Preservation Society for conducting helicopter operations and restoration activities on the St. George Light Station in the northeast Pacific Ocean, February 19, 2016, through February 18, 2017, provided they incorporate the previously mentioned mitigation, monitoring, and reporting requirements.

Dated: February 19, 2016.

**Perry F. Gayaldo,**

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

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

#### National Sea Grant Advisory Board

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

**ACTION:** Notice of solicitation for nominations for the National Sea Grant Advisory Board (NSGAB) and notice of public meeting.

**SUMMARY:** This notice also sets forth the schedule and proposed agenda of a forthcoming meeting of the NSGAB. NSGAB members will discuss and provide advice on the National Sea Grant College Program (NSGCP) in the areas of program evaluation, strategic planning, education and extension, science and technology programs, and other matters as described in the agenda found on the NSGCP Web site at <http://seagrants.noaa.gov/WhoWeAre/Leadership/NationalSeaGrantAdvisoryBoard/UpcomingAdvisoryBoardMeetings.aspx>.

**DATES:** The announced meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 7, 2016 from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. EDT and Tuesday, March 8, 2016, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. EDT.

**ADDRESSES:** The meeting will be held at the Washington Plaza Hotel, 10 Thomas

Circle, Northwest, Washington, DC 20005.

*Status:* The meeting will be open to public participation with a 15-minute public comment period on Tuesday, March 8, 2016 at 8:45 a.m. EDT. (Check agenda using link in the Summary section to confirm time.)

The NSGAB expects that public statements presented at its meetings will not be repetitive of previously submitted verbal or written statements. In general, each individual or group making a verbal presentation will be limited to a total time of three (3) minutes. Written comments should be received by Mrs. Jennifer Hinden by Friday, February 24, 2016 to provide sufficient time for NSGAB review. Written comments received after the deadline will be distributed to the NSGAB, but may not be reviewed prior to the meeting date. Seats will be available on a first-come, first-serve basis.

*Contact Information:* For any questions concerning the meeting, please contact Mrs. Jennifer Hinden, National Sea Grant College Program, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 11717, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910, 301-734-1088, [Jennifer.Hinden@noaa.gov](mailto:Jennifer.Hinden@noaa.gov).

*Special Accommodations:* These meetings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Mrs. Jennifer Hinden by Friday, February 19, 2016.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The NSGAB, which consists of a balanced representation from academia, industry, state government and citizens groups, was established in 1976 by Section 209 of the Sea Grant Improvement Act (Public Law 94-461, 33 U.S.C. 1128).

The NSGAB advises the Secretary of Commerce and the Director of the NSGCP with respect to operations under the Act, and such other matters as the Secretary refers to them for review and advice.

Dated: February 10, 2016.

**Jason Donaldson,**

*Chief Financial Officer, Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XE340

#### Takes of Marine Mammals Incidental to Specified Activities; Taking Marine Mammals Incidental to a Dock Replacement Project

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

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

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the regulations implementing the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) as amended, notification is hereby given that we have issued an incidental harassment authorization (IHA) to UniSea, Inc. (UniSea) to incidentally harass, by Level B harassment only, small numbers of marine mammals during construction activities associated with a dock replacement project in Iliuliuk Harbor, Unalaska, AK.

**DATES:** This authorization is effective from March 1, 2016, through February 28, 2017.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Jordan Carduner, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, (301) 427-8401.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### Availability

An electronic copy of UniSea's application and supporting documents, as well as a list of the references cited in this document, may be obtained by visiting the Internet at: [www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/permits/incidental/](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/permits/incidental/). In case of problems accessing these documents, please call the contact listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**.

##### 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 by U.S. citizens who engage in a specified activity (other than commercial fishing) within a specified area, the incidental, but not intentional, taking of small numbers of marine mammals, providing that certain findings are made and the necessary prescriptions are established.

The incidental taking of small numbers of marine mammals may be allowed only if NMFS (through authority delegated by the Secretary) finds that the total taking by the specified activity during the specified

time period will (i) have a negligible impact on the species or stock(s) and (ii) not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of the species or stock(s) for subsistence uses (where relevant). Further, the permissible methods of taking and requirements pertaining to the mitigation, monitoring and reporting of such taking must be set forth.

The allowance of such incidental taking under section 101(a)(5)(A), by harassment, serious injury, death, or a combination thereof, requires that regulations be established. Subsequently, a Letter of Authorization may be issued pursuant to the prescriptions established in such regulations, providing that the level of taking will be consistent with the findings made for the total taking allowable under the specific regulations. Under section 101(a)(5)(D), NMFS may authorize such incidental taking by harassment only, for periods of not more than one year, pursuant to requirements and conditions contained within an IHA. The establishment of these prescriptions requires notice and opportunity for public comment.

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." Except with respect to certain activities not pertinent here, section 3(18) of 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]."

##### Summary of Request

On June 10, 2015, we received a request from UniSea for authorization to take marine mammals incidental to pile driving and pile removal associated with construction of a commercial fishing dock in Iliuliuk Harbor, a small harbor in the Aleutian Islands. UniSea submitted revised versions of the request on September 28, 2015, and December 2, 2015. The latter of these was deemed adequate and complete. UniSea proposed to replace the existing dock with an 80 foot by 400 foot open cell sheet pile dock, between March 1, 2016 and February 28, 2017.