

Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Mr. Kris Kleinschmidt at (503) 820-2425 at least 10 business days prior to the meeting date.

Dated: May 10, 2017.

Tracey L. Thompson,

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

[FR Doc. 2017-09830 Filed 5-15-17; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XF381

Marine Mammals; File No. 20605

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

ACTION: Notice; receipt of application.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that Robin Baird, Ph.D., Cascadia Research Collective, 218½ West Fourth Avenue, Olympia, WA 98501, has applied in due form for a permit to conduct research on marine mammals.

DATES: Written, telefaxed, or email comments must be received on or before June 15, 2017.

ADDRESSES: The application and related documents are available for review by selecting "Records Open for Public Comment" from the "Features" box on the Applications and Permits for Protected Species (APPS) home page, <https://apps.nmfs.noaa.gov>, and then selecting File No. 20605 from the list of available applications.

These documents are also available upon written request or by appointment in the 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.

Written comments on this application should be submitted to the Chief, Permits and Conservation Division, at the address listed above. Comments may also be submitted by facsimile to (301) 713-0376, or by email to NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov. Please include the File No. in the subject line of the email comment.

Those individuals requesting a public hearing should submit a written request to the Chief, Permits and Conservation Division at the address listed above. The request should set forth the specific reasons why a hearing on this application would be appropriate.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Shasta McClenahan or Carrie Hubbard, (301) 427-8401.

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 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 222-226).

The applicant requests a 5-year permit to take marine mammals in the Atlantic and Pacific oceans to study population structure, size, range, movement rates and patterns, habitat use, social organization, diving behavior, diet, disease monitoring, behavior, and reactions to anthropogenic activity. Up to 53 species of cetaceans may be targeted for research including the following endangered, proposed endangered, or threatened species/stocks: blue (*Balaenoptera musculus*), Bryde's (*B. edeni*), bowhead (*Balaena mysticetus*), fin (*B. physalus*), Cook Inlet beluga (*Delphinapterus leucas*), Hawaiian insular false killer (*Pseudorca crassidens*), humpback (*Megaptera novaeangliae*), North Atlantic right (*Eubalaena glacialis*), North Pacific right (*E. japonica*), sei (*B. borealis*), Southern Resident killer (*Orcinus orca*), sperm (*Physeter macrocephalus*), and Western North Pacific gray (*Eschrichtius robustus*) whales. Researchers would conduct manned and unmanned aerial surveys for counts, observations, photography, photogrammetry, and video of cetaceans. Vessel surveys would be conducted for counts, passive acoustic recording, biological sampling, collection of prey remains, observation, photo-identification, photogrammetry, video, and suction-cup and dart tagging. Eight pinniped species including endangered Hawaiian monk seals (*Neomonachus schauinslandi*) and Steller sea lions (*Eumetopias jubatus*) may be harassed incidental to the research. Please see the take tables for numbers of animals requested by species.

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), an initial determination has been made that the activity proposed is categorically excluded from the requirement to prepare an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement.

Concurrent with the publication of this notice in the **Federal Register**,

NMFS is forwarding copies of the application to the Marine Mammal Commission and its Committee of Scientific Advisors.

Dated: May 11, 2017.

Julia Harrison,

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

[FR Doc. 2017-09898 Filed 5-15-17; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XF390

New England Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

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

ACTION: Notice; public meeting.

SUMMARY: The New England Fishery Management Council (Council) is scheduling a public meeting of its Scallop Advisory Panel to consider actions affecting New England fisheries in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ). Recommendations from this group will be brought to the full Council for formal consideration and action, if appropriate.

DATES: This meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 31, 2017 at 9:30 a.m.

ADDRESSES:

Meeting address: The meeting will be held at the Courtyard by Marriott Boston Logan Airport, 225 William McClennan Highway, Boston, MA 02128; phone: (617) 569-5250.

Council address: New England Fishery Management Council, 50 Water Street, Mill 2, Newburyport, MA 01950.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Thomas A. Nies, Executive Director, New England Fishery Management Council; telephone: (978) 465-0492.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Agenda

The Scallop Advisory Panel will review the general workload for 2017 based on Council priorities and a draft action plan for Scallop Framework 29 (FW29) and potentially identify recommendations for prioritizing work items in upcoming actions. They will also review progress on potential management measures that may be included in FW29, including: (1) Flatfish accountability measures; (2) Modifications to the management of the Northern Gulf of Maine area; (3)

Measures to modify scallop access areas consistent with potential changes to habitat and groundfish mortality closed areas. The Panel will also discuss the establishment of a control date that may limit the ability of Limited Access General Category (LAGC) permit holders to move between permit categories. They will provide research recommendations for the 2018/2019 Scallop Research Set-Aside (RSA) federal funding announcement. Other business may be discussed as necessary.

Although non-emergency issues not contained in this agenda may come before this group for discussion, those issues may not be the subject of formal action during this meeting. Action will be restricted to those issues specifically listed in this notice and any issues arising after publication of this notice that require emergency action under section 305(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, provided the public has been notified of the Council's intent to take final action to address the emergency.

Special Accommodations

This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Thomas A. Nies, Executive Director, at (978) 465-0492, at least 5 days prior to the meeting date. Consistent with 16 U.S.C. 1852, a copy of the recording is available upon request.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: May 10, 2017.

Tracey L. Thompson,

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

[FR Doc. 2017-09831 Filed 5-15-17; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XF366

Takes of Marine Mammals Incidental to Specified Activities; Taking Marine Mammals Incidental to Seabird and Pinniped Research Activities in Central California, 2017-2018

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

ACTION: Proposed Incidental Harassment Authorization; request for comments

SUMMARY: NMFS has received an application from Point Blue Conservation Science (Point Blue) for an

Incidental Harassment Authorization (IHA) to take marine mammals, by harassment, incidental to seabird and pinniped research activities in central California. Pursuant to the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), NMFS is requesting comments on its proposal to issue an IHA to Point Blue to incidentally take marine mammals during the specified activities.

DATES: Comments and information must be received no later than June 15, 2017.

ADDRESSES: Comments on the applications should be addressed to Jolie Harrison, Chief, Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service. Physical comments should be sent to 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910 and electronic comments should be sent to ITP.pauline@noaa.gov.

Instructions: NMFS is not responsible for comments sent by any other method, to any other address or individual, or received after the end of the comment period. Comments received electronically, including all attachments, must not exceed a 25-megabyte file size. Attachments to electronic comments will be accepted in Microsoft Word or Excel or Adobe PDF file formats only. All comments received are a part of the public record and will generally be posted to the Internet at www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/permits/incidental/research.htm without change. All personal identifying information (e.g., name, address) voluntarily submitted by the commenter may be publicly accessible. Do not submit confidential business information or otherwise sensitive or protected information.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Robert Pauline, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, (301) 427-8401. Electronic copies of the applications 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/research.htm. In case of problems accessing these documents, please call the contact listed above.

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 small numbers 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.

An authorization for incidental takings will be granted if NMFS finds that the taking will have a negligible impact on the species or stock(s), will not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of the species or stock(s) for subsistence uses (where relevant), 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.

The MMPA states that the term "take" means to harass, hunt, capture, kill or attempt to harass, hunt, capture, or kill any marine mammal.

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).

Summary of Request

NMFS received a request from Point Blue for an IHA to take marine mammals incidental to seabird and marine mammal monitoring at three locations in central California. Point Blue's request was for harassment only and NMFS concurs that mortality is not expected to result from this activity. Therefore, an IHA is appropriate.

On March 7, 2017, NMFS received an application from Point Blue requesting the taking by harassment of marine mammals incidental to conducting seabird and marine mammal research activities on Southeast Farallon Island (SEFI), Año Nuevo Island (ANI), and Point Reyes National Seashore (PRNS). Point Blue, along with partners Oikonos Ecosystem Knowledge and PRNS, plan to conduct the proposed activities for one year. These partners are conducting this research under cooperative agreements with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in consultation with the Gulf of the Farallones National