

Regarding the quantification of expected takes from acoustic and explosive sources (by Level A harassment and Level B harassment, as well as mortality resulting from exposure to explosives), the number of takes are based directly on the level of activities (days, hours, counts, etc., of different activities and events) in a given year. In the 2018 HSTT final rule, take estimates across the five-years were based on the Navy conducting three years of a representative level of activity and two years of maximum level of activity. Consistent with the pattern set forth in the 2017 application, the 2018 HSTT Final Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS/OEIS, www.hstteis.com/), and the 2018 HSTT final rule, the Navy proposes to add one additional representative year and one additional maximum year to determine the predicted take numbers in this rule. Specifically, as in the 2018 HSTT final rule, the Navy proposes to use the maximum annual level to calculate annual takes (which would remain identical to what was determined in the 2018 HSTT final rule), and the sum of all years (four representative and three maximum) to calculate the seven-year totals for this rule.

The existing 2018 HSTT regulations authorize three serious injuries or mortalities from vessel strike in the HSTT Study Area over five years. Based on a revised vessel strike analysis encompassing seven years of activities, the Navy requests no change in the number of requested large whale mortalities due to vessel strike. The large whale stocks that are proposed to be taken by vessel strike are the same as those included in the 2018 HSTT final rule.

As noted above, the proposed extension of the rule would include mitigation, monitoring, and reporting measures that are identical to those included in the 2018 HSTT final rule. Mitigation would include procedural mitigation measures and mitigation areas. Procedural mitigation includes, but is not limited to, the use of trained Lookouts (protected species observers) to monitor for marine mammals in mitigation zones, requirements for Lookouts to immediately provide notification of sightings to the appropriate watch station, requirements for implementation of powerdown and shutdown mitigation measures (based on activity defined zones), pre- and post-monitoring requirements for explosive events, and measures to reduce the likelihood of ship strikes. Chapter 5 of the 2018 HSTT FEIS/OEIS and the *Mitigation Measures* section of

the 2018 HSTT final rule include detailed descriptions of mitigation measures for each specified activity in the HSTT Study Area. The Navy will also implement mitigation measures within certain areas (Mitigation Areas) and/or at times to avoid or minimize potential impacts on marine mammals in areas and/or times where they are known to engage in biologically important behaviors (*i.e.*, for foraging, migration, reproduction), where the disruption of those behaviors would be more likely to result in population-level impact. The *Mitigation Measures* section in the 2018 HSTT final rule includes detailed descriptions of geographic mitigation measures in the HSTT Study Area. Maps and tables of the mitigation areas can be found in Chapter 5 of the 2018 HSTT FEIS/OEIS.

The Navy proposes to continue forward the implementation of the robust Integrated Comprehensive Monitoring Program and Strategic Planning Process outlined in the current regulations. The Navy's monitoring strategy, currently required by the 2018 HSTT regulations, is well-designed to work across Navy ranges to help better understand the impacts of the Navy's activities on marine mammals and their habitat by focusing on learning more about marine mammal occurrence in different areas and exposure to Navy stressors, marine mammal responses to different sound sources, and the consequences of those exposures and responses on marine mammal populations. Similarly, the proposed extension of regulations would include identical adaptive management provisions and reporting requirements as the existing regulations. Please refer to Chapter 13 of the Navy's application for full details on the monitoring and reporting proposed by the Navy.

Information Sought

Interested persons may submit information, suggestions, and comments concerning the Navy's request (see **ADDRESSES**). NMFS will consider all information, suggestions, and comments related to the request during the development of proposed regulations governing the incidental taking of marine mammals by the Navy, if appropriate.

Dated: April 30, 2019.

Donna S. Wieting,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Evaluation of State Coastal Management Programs

AGENCY: Office for Coastal Management (OCM), National Ocean Service (NOS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce (DOC).

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Office for Coastal Management will hold a public meeting to solicit comments on the performance evaluation of the Rhode Island Coastal Management Program.

DATES: *Rhode Island Coastal Management Program Evaluation:* The public meeting will be held on June 18, 2019, and written comments must be received on or before June 28, 2019.

For specific dates, times, and locations of the public meetings, see **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments on the coastal program NOAA intends to evaluate by any of the following methods:

Public Meeting and Oral Comments: A public meeting will be held in Wakefield, Rhode Island. For the specific location, see **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**.

Written Comments: Please direct written comments to Carrie Hall, Evaluator, Planning and Performance Measurement Program, Office for Coastal Management, NOS/NOAA, 1305 East-West Highway, 11th Floor, N/OCM1, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910, or email comments Carrie.Hall@noaa.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Carrie Hall, Evaluator, Planning and Performance Measurement Program, Office for Coastal Management, NOS/NOAA, 1305 East-West Highway, 11th Floor, N/OCM1, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910, by phone at (240) 533-0730 or email comments Carrie.Hall@noaa.gov. Copies of the previous evaluation findings and 2016-2020 Assessment and Strategy may be viewed and downloaded on the internet at <http://coast.noaa.gov/czm/evaluations>. A copy of the evaluation notification letter and most recent progress report may be obtained upon request by contacting the person identified under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**. **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Section 312 of the Coastal Zone Management

Act (CZMA) requires NOAA to conduct periodic evaluations of federally approved state and territorial coastal programs. The process includes one or more public meetings, consideration of written public comments, and consultations with interested Federal, state, and local agencies and members of the public. During the evaluation, NOAA will consider the extent to which the state has met the national objectives, adhered to the management program approved by the Secretary of Commerce, and adhered to the terms of financial assistance under the CZMA. When the evaluation is completed, NOAA's Office for Coastal Management will place a notice in the **Federal Register** announcing the availability of the Final Evaluation Findings.

You may participate or submit oral comments at the public meeting scheduled as follows:

Date: June 18, 2019

Time: 6:00 p.m., local time

Location: Department of

Administration, Conference Room A, One Capitol Hill, Providence, Rhode Island 02908

Written public comments must be received on or before June 28, 2019.

Federal Domestic Assistance Catalog 11.419.

Coastal Zone Management Program Administration

Dated: April 30, 2019.

Keelin Kuipers,

Acting Director, Office for Coastal Management, National Ocean Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

[FR Doc. 2019-09390 Filed 5-7-19; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XH020

Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act; General Provisions for Domestic Fisheries; Issuance of Exempted Fishing Permits

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

ACTION: Notice; issuance of permit.

SUMMARY: NMFS West Coast Region is announcing exempted fishing permits (EFP) issued to target highly migratory

species (HMS) in Federal waters off the U.S. West Coast for 2019. NMFS renewed 21 standard deep-set buoy gear (standard DSBG) EFPs for 2019 and issued a new pelagic longline EFP valid for 24 months from the effective date. Ten linked deep-set buoy gear (linked DSBG) EFPs issued in 2018 remain valid for the 2019 calendar year. The permits are issued as exemptions from specific prohibitions under the Fishery Management Plan for U.S. West Coast Fisheries for Highly Migratory Species (HMS FMP). The general purpose of the EFPs is to allow novel fishing practices and gear types that are not otherwise authorized under a fishery management plan. Specifically, NMFS will collect data on the effects and efficacy of using these gears to fish for swordfish and other HMS off the West Coast.

DATES: See the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section for details on the dates that permits were issued and will expire.

ADDRESSES: Copies of supporting documents are available via the Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>, docket NOAA-NMFS-2019-0048, or by contacting the Highly Migratory Species Branch of NMFS West Coast Region at WCR.HMS@noaa.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Chris Fanning, NMFS West Coast Region, 562-980-4198, or Chris.Fanning@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

On July 2, 2014, the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) solicited EFP proposals to test alternative fishing gear as a substitute in the large mesh drift net (DGN) fishery, or test new approaches or methods of fishing DGN gear (http://www.pccouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/G3a_Att1_HMS_EFP_Notice_Ltr_July2014_SEPT2014BB.pdf). Applications for EFPs were submitted on February 9, 2015, for the Council's consideration during the March 2015 Council meeting. The Council recommended that NMFS approve EFP applications to use standard and linked DSBG and an application to use deep-set and shallow-set longline gear in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) off the West Coast of the United States. NMFS published notice of receipt of these applications, as well as the Council's recommendations, in the **Federal Register** on the respective dates: May 22, 2015 (80 FR 29662), October 17, 2016 (81 FR 71845), August 28, 2017 (81

FR 40751), November 16, 2017 (82 FR 53480), and June 6, 2018 (82 FR 53481).

Standard and linked DSBG are not currently authorized gear types under the HMS FMP. Standard DSBG fishing trials occurred for the past eight years under research activity (2011 to 2015) and EFPs (2015 to 2018) in the U.S. West Coast EEZ off California. Linked DSBG research fishing trials included a total of 40 fishing days from 2015 through 2017. Data collected from these fishing activities have demonstrated that about 95 percent of fish species caught with standard DSBG and 90 percent of those caught with linked DSBG are marketable.

Longline fishing is currently prohibited within the U.S. West Coast EEZ; therefore, an EFP was needed to authorize the activity to take place in Federal waters. The longline EFP will provide data for fishery managers about the performance of the gear and the mitigation measures intended to minimize adverse environmental impacts in these waters.

Standard and Linked DSBG EFPs

NMFS considered all applicable Federal laws when issuing the standard and linked DSBG EFPs, including section 7(a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), and determined that the proposed action is not likely to adversely affect any endangered or threatened species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat. Additionally, NMFS completed the appropriate analyses under the National Environmental Policy Act, in accordance with NOAA Administrative Order 216-6, prior to issuing the standard and linked DSBG EFPs. In 2018, NMFS issued 27 standard DSBG EFPs valid through December 31, 2018, and ten linked DSBG EFPs valid through December 31, 2019 (Table 1). Based on standard DSBG fishing activity in 2018 and other factors (*e.g.*, gear purchase, participation in other unrelated fisheries that precluded fishing DSBG, appeal for renewal, etc.), NMFS renewed 21 standard DSBG EFPs through 2019 (Table 2). As a result of Federal review and a growing understanding of risks with the gear, NMFS issued terms and conditions for the EFPs that include more mitigation measures than those proposed in the original applications. See the **ADDRESSES** section for more information on these supporting documents.