

**DATES:** Comments must be received on or before March 27, 2020.

**ADDRESSES:** You may submit written comments by any of the following methods:

- *Email:* [nmfs.gar.efp@noaa.gov](mailto:nmfs.gar.efp@noaa.gov).

Include in the subject line “DA19–109 Nordic Fisheries Transplanting EFP.”

- *Mail:* Michael Pentony, Regional Administrator, NMFS, Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office, 55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930. Mark the outside of the envelope “DA19–109 Nordic Fisheries Transplanting EFP.”

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Shannah Jaburek, Fishery Management Specialist, 978–282–8456.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Nordic Fisheries submitted an initial Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) application on November 21, 2019, in collaboration with Empire Fisheries, Quinn Fisheries, Fulcher Trawling, and the Coonamessett Farm Foundation (CFF). The application was considered complete on January 23, 2020. The applicant’s overarching research objective is to determine the operational and economic feasibility of using bottom trawls to transfer scallops short distances underwater and transplant them from areas of high scallop densities to lower density areas. This is in response to a large cohort of scallops in the Nantucket Lightship South Rotational Area that is currently in deeper water and has shown significantly slower growth compared to similar cohorts in less-dense, shallower areas. The applicant wants to determine if, by moving scallops to areas of lower scallop density, those scallops grow larger due to less competition over food resources. The applicant would research the optimal bottom trawl gear specifications (e.g., sweep length, mesh size, need for chafing gear, etc.) for transporting scallops, as well as determine the optimal quantity of scallops to transfer and associated operational costs.

To enable this research, Nordic Fisheries is requesting exemptions for five commercial fishing vessels from: The Atlantic sea scallop crew size restrictions at § 648.60(c); observer program requirements at § 648.11(g); restrictions on the use of trawl nets at § 648.51(f); maximum sweep, minimum mesh size, chafing gear, and other gear obstructions at § 648.51(a)(1), (2)(ii), (3)(i), and (3)(ii), respectively; Georges Bank regulated mesh area minimum mesh size and gear restrictions at § 648.80(a)(4)(i); Nantucket Lightship South Rotational Areas at § 648.60(e); and access area program requirements at § 648.59(a)(1)–(3), (b)(2), (b)(4). The EFP

would also grant vessels a temporary exemption from possession limits and minimum size requirements specified in part 648, subsections B and D through O, and § 697.20 for sampling purposes. The applicants need these exemptions to deploy bottom trawl gear in areas where the gear is not allowed. Participating vessels need crew size waivers to accommodate researchers and possession waivers for sampling purposes. The project would be exempt from the sea scallop observer program requirements because activities conducted on the trip are not consistent with normal fishing operations. Researchers from CFF would accompany each trip taken under the EFP.

This project would conduct up to five trips using five different vessels. The length of each trip would be approximately 3 days-at-sea (DAS), for an estimated 15 DAS. Transplanting would occur from April–June 2020. The applicant intends to catch and transplant 10,000,000 scallops.

All tows to harvest scallops for transplanting would be conducted with one trawl for a duration of approximately 10 minutes using an average tow speed of 2.5 knots for an estimated 150 tows. Each codend and extension would be calibrated volumetrically using colored ropes woven in the meshes on top to estimate catch. In addition to the colored ropes, some vessels will use net sensors to indicate net fullness. Meshes on the trawl codend would range between 4 and 5.5 inches (10.2 and 14 cm) and net liners would be no smaller than 1.9 inches (50 mm). The trawl sweep length would vary but would not exceed 150 feet (45.7 m). The scallops would be harvested from the large cohort of slow growing scallops in the deep water portion of the Nantucket Lightship South Rotational Area and transplanted to an area that Atlantic Sea Scallop Framework Adjustment 32 (85 FR 9705; February 20, 2020) is proposing to close to support projects of this nature.

The first tow of each trip would be brought on deck to check the trawl volume calibration, measure and take biological samples of the scallops, and count and measure the bycatch. All remaining tows for the trip would be brought directly to the transplant site. Once there, the nets would be brought to the surface to estimate volume and then the scallops would be released into the water through the codend. With the exception of samples retained for further processing for scientific purposes, no catch would be retained for longer than needed to conduct sampling, and no catch would be landed

for sale. All catch estimates for the project are listed in the table below. Bycatch estimates are derived from dredge work in the area, but based on interviews with scallop trawl captains, the bycatch rates are anticipated to be close to zero due to high densities of scallops and short tow duration. All fishing activity would be limited to catching and transplanting scallops.

**TABLE 1—ESTIMATED CATCH, BY SPECIES, FOR CFF EFP REQUEST**

Common name	Estimated weight (lb)	Estimated weight (kg)
Sea Scallop .....	12,000	5,443
Yellowtail Flounder	20	9
Winter Flounder ....	20	9
Windowpane		
Flounder .....	60	27
Monkfish .....	100	45
Other Fish .....	120	54
Barndoor Skates ...	20	9
Northeast Skate		
Complex .....	500	227

The applicants would work with other research groups funded through the Scallop Research Set-Aside Program and use data collected from both the harvest and transplant sites during routine surveys in May–July 2020 and 2021 to compare growth and abundance.

If approved, the applicant may request minor modifications and extensions to the EFP throughout the year. EFP modifications and extensions may be granted without further notice if they are deemed essential to facilitate completion of the proposed research and have minimal impacts that do not change the scope or impact of the initially approved EFP request. Any fishing activity conducted outside the scope of the exempted fishing activity would be prohibited.

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

Dated: March 9, 2020.

**Karyl K. Brewster-Geisz,**  
*Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.*

[FR Doc. 2020–05048 Filed 3–11–20; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3510–22–P**

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

**Supersession of Vertical Datum for Surveying and Mapping Activities for the Island of Tutuila, American Samoa**

**AGENCY:** The Office of the National Geodetic Survey (NGS), National Ocean Service (NOS), National Oceanic and

Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce (DOC).

**ACTION:** Notice of vertical datum supersession within American Samoa.

**SUMMARY:** This Notice announces a decision by the National Geodetic Survey (NGS) to supersede the American Samoa Vertical Datum of 2002 (ASVD 02) and revert back to Local Tidal (LT) as the official civilian vertical datum for surveying and mapping activities for the island of Tutuila, American Samoa. As a member of the Federal Geographic Data Committee, NOAA is responsible for defining, maintaining and providing access to the National Spatial Reference System. Within NOAA, the National Geodetic Survey has the responsibility to accomplish this task. Due to geophysical activity, the ASVD 02 vertical datum is destroyed. To provide for vertical control, it is necessary to revert to heights based on a LT datum. To the extent it is legally allowable and feasible, all surveys performed or financed by the Federal agencies using or producing vertical height information will undertake an orderly transition to LT tied to the tide gauge at Pago Pago. Exceptions are for those with specific military related applications, which will use their own datum.

**DATES:** Effective date of this supersession is upon publication of this notice.

**ADDRESSES:** National Geodetic Survey, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD, 20910.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Dr. Daniel Roman, Chief Geodesist, National Geodetic Survey, by email at [dan.roman@noaa.gov](mailto:dan.roman@noaa.gov), phone at (240) 533-9673 or mail at NOAA/NOS/NGS 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD, 20910.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The National Geodetic Survey (NGS), National Ocean Service (NOS), has determined that the bench marks providing geodetic control for ASVD 02 shifted as a result of movements from earthquakes. Additionally, the Primary Bench Mark (PBM) associated with ASVD 02 at the Pago Pago tide gauge (177 0000 S) was determined to be unstable and was later destroyed in 2015. Consequently, neither the leveled bench marks nor the datum point associated with ASVD 02 is suitable for geodetic control. The North American Pacific Vertical Datum of 2022 (NAPGD2022) will replace ASVD 02 in the next few years. Rather than develop an interim product between now and then, Local Tidal (LT) will be used until NAPGD2022 is implemented. This will

necessitate, until 2022, the incorporation of the tide gauge at Pago Pago Harbor into surveys requiring vertical control.

The basis for all LT heights is Mean Sea Level (MSL). The current National Tidal Datum Epoch (NTDE) is for the period 1983–2001. The Pago Pago tide gauge record was also disturbed by the earthquakes, and a provisional station datum was established from observations from 2011–2016. The Pago Pago tide station, therefore, is not formally a part of the current NTDE, because it is not based on the specified 18.6 year tidal cycle. A Station Datum (SD) has been determined by the NOS Center for Operational Oceanographic Products and Services (CO-OPS), and published for the National Water Levels Observation Network (NWLON) bench mark number 177 0000 W (4.345 meters above the SD and 2.955 meters above MSL for the 2011–2016 observation period), located in Pago Pago. This bench mark should be occupied to complete geodetic surveys on the island of Tutuila in American Samoa. If occupation of the primary tidal bench mark is not practicable, other tidal bench marks for Pago Pago may be occupied for geodetic control, but they must be listed on the CO-OPS bench mark sheet at the time of the survey (<https://tidesandcurrents.noaa.gov/benchmarks.html?id=1770000>). Note that no other islands of American Samoa are part of ASVD 02, and they remain on their own respective LT datum.

Information for individual geodetic control monuments is available in digital form from the NGS website: <https://geodesy.noaa.gov/datasheets/index.shtml>. Information on Pago Pago tidal bench marks is available at <https://tidesandcurrents.noaa.gov/benchmarks.html?id=1770000>.

(Authority: Coast and Geodetic Survey Act of 1947, 33 U.S.C. 883a *et seq.*)

**William B. Kearse,**

*Acting Director, National Geodetic Survey, National Ocean Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.*

[FR Doc. 2020-05047 Filed 3-11-20; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3510-JE-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648-XR104]

#### Marine Mammals; File No. 22382

**AGENCY:** National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and

Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

**ACTION:** Notice; receipt of application.

**SUMMARY:** Notice is hereby given that SeaWorld, LLC. (Responsible Party: Christopher Dold, DVM), 9205 Southpark Center Loop, Suite 400, Orlando, Florida, 32819, has applied in due form for a permit to import one stranded, non-releasable adult female Pacific white-sided dolphin (*Lagenorhynchus obliquidens*) for public display.

**DATES:** Written, telefaxed, or email comments must be received on or before April 13, 2020.

**ADDRESSES:** The permit application is available for review online at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/action/seaworld-permit-application-import-pacific-white-sided-dolphin> or 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.

You may submit comments, identified by NOAA-NMFS-2020-0024, by any of the following methods:

- **Electronic Submission:** Submit electronic public comments via the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov). To submit comments via the e-Rulemaking Portal, enter NOAA-NMFS-2020-0024 in the keyword search. Locate the document you wish to comment on from the resulting list and click on the "Comment Now" icon on the right of that line.

- **Mail:** Comments on the application should be addressed to: Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13705, Silver Spring, MD 20910; ATTN: Jolie Harrison, Chief, Permits and Conservation Division.

- **Fax:** (301) 713-0376; ATTN: Jolie Harrison, Chief, Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources.

**Instructions:** Comments must be submitted by one of the above methods. All comments received are a part of the public record and will generally be posted for public viewing on [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) without change. All personal identifying information (e.g., name, address, etc.) submitted voluntarily by the sender will be publicly accessible. Do not submit confidential business information, or otherwise sensitive or protected information. NMFS will accept anonymous comments (enter "N/A" in