

is to evaluate potential direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of changes in research that were not analyzed in the 2016 NEFSC Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA), or new research activities along the U.S. East Coast, from North Carolina to Nova Scotia, Canada. Where necessary, updates to certain information on species, stock status or other components of the affected environment that may result in different conclusions from the 2016 PEA are presented in this analysis.

**DATES:** Comments and information must be received no later than October 19, 2020.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments on the Draft SPEA should be addressed to Victor A. Nordahl Jr., Environmental Compliance Specialist, 166 Water St. Woods Hole, MA 02543.

The mailbox address for providing email comments is: [nmfs.nefsc.spea@noaa.gov](mailto:nmfs.nefsc.spea@noaa.gov). NMFS is not responsible for email comments sent to addresses other than the one provided here. Comments sent via email, including all attachments, must not exceed a 10-megabyte file size.

A copy of the Draft SPEA may be obtained by writing to the address specified above, telephoning the contact listed below (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**), or visiting the internet at: [www.fisheries.noaa.gov/action/draft-supplemental-programmatic-environmental-assessment-nefsc-research-now-available](http://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/action/draft-supplemental-programmatic-environmental-assessment-nefsc-research-now-available). Documents cited in this notice may also be viewed, by appointment, during regular business hours at the aforementioned address.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Victor A. Nordahl Jr., email: [vic.nordahl@noaa.gov](mailto:vic.nordahl@noaa.gov), phone: (508-495-2350).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The NEFSC is the research arm of NMFS in the Northeast Region. The purpose of NEFSC fisheries research is to produce scientific information necessary for the management and conservation of living marine resources along the U.S. East Coast Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) Federal waters from North Carolina to Nova Scotia, Canada. NEFSC's research is needed to promote both the long-term sustainability of the resource and the recovery of certain species, while generating social and economic opportunities and benefits from their use. Primary research activities include: seasonal bottom trawl surveys to support assessments of ground fish; a summer bottom trawl survey to support the assessment of Northern Shrimp; seasonal mid-water pelagic surveys to

support the assessment of semi-pelagic fish species; summer dredge and optical surveys to support the assessment of Deep-sea scallops; summer hydraulic dredge surveys to support assessment of surf clams and ocean quahogs; bottom longline surveys for ground fish in the Gulf of Maine; bottom and pelagic Apex Predator long line surveys; opportunistic trawl comparison studies; ecosystem based plankton surveys; inshore Penobscot Bay trawl and acoustic surveys; and Fisheries Observer Training trips (all gears) in the EEZ.

NMFS has prepared the Draft SPEA under NEPA to evaluate two alternatives for conducting and funding fisheries and ecosystem research activities as the primary Federal action. Additionally in the Draft SPEA, NMFS evaluates a related action—also called a “connected action” under 40 CFR 1508.25 of the Council on Environmental Quality’s regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of NEPA (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*)—which is the proposed promulgation of regulations and authorization of the take of marine mammals incidental to the fisheries research under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA). Additionally, because the proposed research activities occur in areas inhabited by species of marine mammals, birds, sea turtles and fish listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) as threatened or endangered, this Draft SPEA evaluates activities that could result in unintentional takes of ESA-listed marine species.

The following (2) alternatives are currently evaluated in the Draft SPEA.

- Alternative 1—Continue current fisheries and ecosystem research (Status Quo/no action) as described in the 2016 NEFSC PEA.

- Alternative 2—Conduct current research with some modifications as well as new research activities that are planned for the future (*i.e.*, 2021–2026). New future research proposed under Alternative 2 was not previously analyzed in the 2016 PEA.

The alternatives include a program of fisheries and ecosystem research projects conducted or funded by the NEFSC as the primary Federal action. Because this primary action is connected to a secondary Federal action, to consider authorizing incidental take of marine mammals under the MMPA, NMFS must identify as part of this evaluation the means of effecting the least practicable adverse impact on the species or stock and its habitat. (Section 101(a)(5)(A) of the MMPA; 16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*) NMFS must therefore identify and evaluate a reasonable range of mitigation measures

to minimize impacts to protected species that occur in NEFSC research areas. These mitigation measures are considered as part of the identified alternatives in order to evaluate their effectiveness to minimize potential adverse environmental impacts. The two action alternatives also include mitigation measures intended to minimize potentially adverse interaction with other protected species that occur within the action area. Protected species include all marine mammals, which are covered under the MMPA, all species listed under the ESA, and bird species protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

Potential direct and indirect effects on the environment are evaluated under each alternative in the Draft SPEA. The environmental effects on the following resources are considered: Physical environment, special resource areas, fish, marine mammals, birds, sea turtles, invertebrates, and the social and economic environment. Cumulative effects of external actions and the contribution of fisheries research activities to the overall cumulative impact on the aforementioned resources is also evaluated in the Draft SPEA for the geographic regions in which NEFSC surveys are conducted.

NMFS requests comments on the Draft SPEA for Fisheries Research Conducted and Funded by the National Marine Fisheries Service, Northeast Fisheries Science Center. Please include, with your comments, any supporting data or literature citations that may be informative in substantiating your comment.

Dated: September 9, 2020.

**Garth Edwin Smelser,**

*Chief Operations, Management and Information Division, National Marine Fisheries Service.*

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**BILLING CODE 3510-22-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648-XA489]

### Marine Mammals; File No. 23447

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

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

**SUMMARY:** Notice is hereby given that the Alliance of Marine Mammal Parks and Aquariums, 218 N. Lee Street, Suite 200, Alexandria, Virginia 22314

(Responsible Party: Kathleen Dezio), has applied in due form for a permit to receive, import, and export marine mammal parts for scientific research.

**DATES:** Written, telefaxed, or email comments must be received on or before October 19, 2020.

**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. 23447 from the list of available applications. These documents are also available upon written request via email to [NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov](mailto:NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov).

Written comments on this application should be submitted via email to [NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov](mailto:NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov). Please include File No. 23447 in the subject line of the email comment.

Those individuals requesting a public hearing should submit a written request via email to [NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov](mailto:NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov). The request should set forth the specific reasons why a hearing on this application would be appropriate.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Jennifer Skidmore or Courtney Smith, (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.*), the regulations governing the taking, importing, and exporting of endangered and threatened species (50 CFR parts 222–226), and the Fur Seal Act of 1966, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1151 *et seq.*).

The applicant proposes to receive, import, and export marine mammal parts (unlimited samples from up to 700 individual cetaceans and 400 individual pinnipeds [excluding walrus]) to study and enhance the health and biology of both wild marine mammals and those in public display, research, and stranding facilities. Research topics include diseases of marine mammals, pathology, health diagnostics, endocrinology, effects of environmental contaminants, immunology, toxicology, stock structure, distribution, age determination, reproduction, sperm preservation, artificial insemination, feeding habits and nutrition. Specimens and parts will come from the following U. S. or foreign sources: Animals in captivity (samples taken during routine

husbandry procedures or under separate authorization); animals in foreign countries stranded alive or dead or that died during rehabilitation; animals killed during legal subsistence harvests; animals killed incidental to legal commercial fishing operations; or samples from other authorized persons or collections. It is expected that the majority of samples would be exchanged between designated Alliance of Marine Mammal Parks and Aquariums members (from captive animals) and their collaborators. The proposed action will not result in additional takes of individual animals. The applicant has requested a 5-year permit.

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: September 14, 2020.

**Julia Marie Harrison,**

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

[FR Doc. 2020-20563 Filed 9-17-20; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3510-22-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Telecommunications and Information Administration

#### Recruitment of First Responder Network Authority Board Members

**AGENCY:** National Telecommunications and Information Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) issues this Notice on behalf of the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet Authority) to initiate the annual process to seek expressions of interest from individuals who would like to serve on the FirstNet Authority Board (Board). The terms of four of the 12 non-permanent members to the FirstNet Authority Board will expire in January 2021.

**DATES:** To be considered for a January 2021 appointment, expressions of interest must be electronically

transmitted on or before October 19, 2020.

**ADDRESSES:** Applicants should submit expressions of interest as described below to: Michael Dame, Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Public Safety Communications, National Telecommunications and Information Administration, by email to [FirstNetBoardApplicant@ntia.doc.gov](mailto:FirstNetBoardApplicant@ntia.doc.gov).

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Michael Dame, Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Public Safety Communications, National Telecommunications and Information Administration; telephone: (202) 482-1181; email: [mdame@ntia.gov](mailto:mdame@ntia.gov). Please direct media inquiries to NTIA’s Office of Public Affairs, (202) 482-7002.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### I. Background and Authority

The Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 (Act) created the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet Authority) as an independent authority within NTIA. The Act charged FirstNet Authority with ensuring the building, deployment, and operation of a nationwide, interoperable public safety broadband network, based on a single, national network architecture.<sup>1</sup> The FirstNet Authority holds the single nationwide public safety license granted for wireless public safety broadband deployment. The FirstNet Authority Board is responsible for providing overall policy direction and oversight of the FirstNet Authority to ensure that the nationwide network continuously meets the needs of public safety.

##### II. Structure

The FirstNet Authority Board is composed of 15 voting members. The Act names the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, the Attorney General of the United States, and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget as permanent members of the FirstNet Authority Board. The Secretary of Commerce (Secretary) appoints the 12 non-permanent members of the FirstNet Authority Board.<sup>2</sup>

The Act requires each Board member to have experience or expertise in at least one of the following substantive areas: public safety, network, technical, and/or financial.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, the composition of the FirstNet Authority Board must satisfy the other requirements specified in the Act, including that: (i) At least three Board

<sup>1</sup> 47 U.S.C. 1422(b).

<sup>2</sup> 47 U.S.C. 1424(b).

<sup>3</sup> 47 U.S.C. 1424(b)(2)(B).