

reaching its final conclusions and taking action in this proceeding.

*Federal Rules That Duplicate, Overlap, or Conflict With the Proposed Rules*

37. None.

**List of Subjects in 47 CFR Part 64**

Individuals with disabilities,  
Telecommunications, Telephones.

Federal Communications Commission.

**Marlene Dortch,**

*Secretary, Office of the Secretary.*

**Proposed Rules**

For the reasons discussed in the preamble, the Federal Communications Commission proposes to amend Title 47 of the Code of Federal Regulations as follows:

**PART 64—MISCELLANEOUS RULES RELATING TO COMMON CARRIERS**

■ 1. The authority citation for part 64 continues to read as follows:

**Authority:** 47 U.S.C. 151, 152, 154, 201, 202, 217, 218, 220, 222, 225, 226, 227, 227b, 228, 251(a), 251(e), 254(k), 262, 276, 403(b)(2)(B), (c), 616, 620, 1401–1473, unless otherwise noted; Pub. L. 115–141, Div. P, sec. 503, 132 Stat. 348, 1091.

■ 2. Amend § 64.604 by adding paragraph (a)(4) to read as follows:

**§ 64.604 Mandatory minimum standards.**

\* \* \* \* \*

(a) \* \* \*

(4) *Additional operational standards for captioned telephone service and IP CTS.* Providers of captioned telephone service and IP CTS shall meet or exceed service quality standards for caption delay and accuracy.

(i) *Caption delay.* Caption delay is the difference in time (in seconds) between when a word can be heard in the audio and when that word appears in the stream of captions on the caption user's primary display. Average caption delay shall be no greater than [X.X] seconds.

(ii) *Caption accuracy.* The accuracy of a captioned telephone conversation shall be measured as the Word Error Rate, with a lower Word Error Rate indicating a higher degree of accuracy. The Word Error Rate for a captioned telephone conversation is:

(A) The number of word substitutions, omissions, and insertions in the captions divided by;

(B) The total number of words in the voice communications being captioned. Accuracy shall be assessed for a caption as delivered to the caption user's device within the minimum TRS standard for caption delay. A substitution error occurs when a spoken word is replaced with another word, an omission error

involves the omission of a spoken word, and an insertion error consists of the addition of a word that has not been spoken. The average Word Error Rate shall be no more than [XX.X%].

(iii) *Testing methodologies and procedures for caption delay and accuracy.* (A) Sample size should be calculated to provide reliable and statistically significant information.

(B) Test calls should mimic the proper use of the service.

(C) Test calls should follow the structure of a natural telephone conversation.

(D) Test calls should not be detectable as "test calls" by CAs.

(E) Testing should be designed to evaluate service performance over a range of telephone audio conditions, accents, and dialects that are likely to be encountered by CTS and IP CTS users.

\* \* \* \* \*

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**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

**50 CFR Parts 223 and 226**

[Docket No. 201228-0357 and 201228-0358]

RIN 0648-BC56, 0648-BJ65

**Endangered and Threatened Species; Designation of Critical Habitat for the Arctic Subspecies of the Ringed Seal and Designation of Critical Habitat for the Beringia Distinct Population Segment of the Bearded Seal; Public Hearings**

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

**ACTION:** Notification of public hearings.

**SUMMARY:** We, NMFS, will hold three public hearings on both our January 8, 2021, revised proposed rule to designate critical habitat for the threatened Arctic subspecies of the ringed seal (*Pusa hispida hispida*) and our proposed rule to designate critical habitat for the threatened Beringia distinct population segment (DPS) of the Pacific bearded seal subspecies (*Erignathus barbatus nauticus*) under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

**DATES:** Public hearing conference calls will be held, convening at 4 p.m. and concluding no later than 7 p.m. Alaska Standard Time (AKST), on each of the following dates: February 23, 2021 (Yukon-Kuskokwim and southwest

Alaska); February 24, 2021 (Northwest Arctic Borough and northern Bering Sea); and February 25, 2021 (North Slope Borough). NMFS may close the hearings 15 minutes after the conclusion of public testimony and after responding to any clarifying questions from hearing participants about the proposed critical habitat designations. For each hearing, we encourage participation by members of the public wishing to provide oral comments specific to the regions indicated parenthetically. However, all hearings are open to all interested parties and at each hearing we will accept testimony regarding any area or aspect of the proposed critical habitat designations. Written comments must be received by March 9, 2021.

**ADDRESSES:** The public hearings will be held by conference calls rather than at physical locations. Conference call information for all three hearings is the same: Telephone: (800) 201-3962, Conference Code: 651174.

You may submit written data, information, or comments regarding the revised proposed rule to designate critical habitat for the Arctic ringed seal, identified by Docket ID NOAA-NMFS-2013-0114, and the proposed rule to designate critical habitat for the Beringia DPS of the bearded seal, identified by Docket ID NOAA-NMFS-2020-0029, by either of the following methods:

- *Electronic Submission:* Submit all electronic comments via the Federal eRulemaking Portal. Go to [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov), search for the relevant Docket ID indicated above, click the "Comment Now!" or "Comment" icon, complete the required fields, and enter or attach your comments.

- *Mail:* Submit written comments to Jon Kurland, Assistant Regional Administrator for Protected Resources, Alaska Region NMFS, Attn: James Bruschi, P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99082-1668.

*Instructions:* NMFS may not consider comments sent by any other method, to any other address or individual, or received after the end of the comment period. 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), confidential business information, or otherwise sensitive information submitted voluntarily by the sender will be publicly accessible. NMFS will accept anonymous comments (enter "N/A" in the required fields if you wish to remain anonymous).

The proposed rules and supporting documents are available in the dockets for the proposed rules at [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov), and on the NMFS website at [www.fisheries.noaa.gov/action/designation-critical-habitat-arctic-subspecies-ringed-seal](http://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/action/designation-critical-habitat-arctic-subspecies-ringed-seal) and [www.fisheries.noaa.gov/action/designation-critical-habitat-beringia-distinct-population-segment-bearded-seal](http://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/action/designation-critical-habitat-beringia-distinct-population-segment-bearded-seal).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Tammy Olson, NMFS Alaska Region, (907) 271-2373; or Jon Kurland, NMFS Alaska Region, (907) 586-7638.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

**Background**

On January 8, 2021, NMFS published a revised proposed rule to designate critical habitat for the threatened Arctic ringed seal (86 FR 1452) and a proposed rule to designate critical habitat for the threatened Beringia DPS of the bearded seal (86 FR 1433) under the ESA. Each proposed designation comprises an area of marine habitat in the northern Bering, Chukchi, and Beaufort seas. A particular area north of the Beaufort Sea shelf is proposed for exclusion from the proposed designation for the Arctic ringed seal based on national security impacts. The proposed rules opened a public comment period for each of the proposed designations through March 9,

2021, and announced that public hearings would be held in Alaska.

**Public Hearings**

We will hold three public hearing conference calls to accept oral comments on both our revised proposed rule to designate critical habitat for the Arctic ringed seal and our proposed rule to designate critical habitat for the Beringia DPS of the bearded seal on the dates and at the times listed above (see **ADDRESSES** and **DATES**). Please see the Public Comments Solicited section of the January 8, 2021, proposed rules regarding the types of information and data we particularly seek.

During each public hearing, NMFS will provide a brief opening presentation on the proposed critical habitat designations before accepting public testimony for the record. The hearings will be recorded for the purpose of preparing transcripts of oral comments received. Attendees will be asked to identify themselves before joining the hearing. Once connected to the call, telephone lines will be automatically muted. During the public testimony portion of the hearing, to indicate that you would like to offer a comment, press 5\*. When it is your turn to offer your comment, the moderator will unmute your individual line. Commenters will be asked to indicate their full name and the identity of any organization on whose behalf they may

be speaking. In the event that attendance at the public hearings is large, the time allotted for each commenter may be limited.

Anyone wishing to make an oral statement at the public hearing is encouraged to also submit a written copy of their statement to us during the comment period by either of the methods identified above (see **ADDRESSES** and **DATES**). There are no limits on the length of written comments submitted to us. Written statements and supporting data and information submitted during the comment period will be considered with the same weight as oral statements provided during the public hearings.

These public hearings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. People needing reasonable accommodations to participate in these hearings should submit a request as soon as possible, and no later than 10 business days before the accommodation is needed, by contacting Tammy Olson (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**).

**Authority:** 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*

Dated: January 26, 2021.

**Angela Somma,**

*Chief, Endangered Species Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.*

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