

for endangered or threatened species. No incidental take of ESA-listed marine mammal species is expected to result from this activity, and none are authorized. Therefore, NMFS determined that consultation under section 7 of the ESA was not required for this action.

National Environmental Policy Act

To comply with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA; 42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*) and NOAA Administrative Order (NAO) 216-6A, NMFS must review our proposed action (*i.e.*, the issuance of an incidental harassment authorization) with respect to potential impacts on the human environment.

This action is consistent with categories of activities identified in Categorical Exclusion B4 (IHAs with no anticipated serious injury or mortality) of the Companion Manual for NOAA Administrative Order 216-6A, which do not individually or cumulatively have the potential for significant impacts on the quality of the human environment and for which we have not identified any extraordinary circumstances that would preclude this categorical exclusion. Accordingly, NMFS has determined that the issuance of the IHA qualifies to be categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

Authorization

As a result of these determinations, NMFS has issued a renewal IHA to the Navy for the taking of marine mammals incidental to modification and expansion of Portsmouth Naval Shipyard Dry Dock 1 from the date of issuance through February 27, 2022, provided the previously described mitigation, monitoring, and reporting requirements are incorporated. The IHA can be found at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/marine-mammal-protection/incidental-take-authorizations-construction-activities>.

Dated: March 12, 2021.

Donna S. Wieting,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648-XA945]

North Pacific Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

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

ACTION: Notice of webconference.

SUMMARY: The North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) Enforcement Committee will meet March 31, 2021.

DATES: The meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 31, 2021 from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., Alaska time.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be a webconference. Join online through the link at <https://meetings.npfmc.org/Meeting/Details/1965>.

Council address: North Pacific Fishery Management Council, 1007 W 3rd Ave., Anchorage, Alaska 99501-2252; telephone (907) 271-2809. Instructions for attending the meeting are given under **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**, below.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jon McCracken, Council staff; phone; (907) 271-2809 and email: jon.mccracken@noaa.gov. For technical support please contact administrative Council staff, email: npfmc.admin@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Agenda

Wednesday, March 31, 2021

The Enforcement Committee will review Council agenda item D3 RQE funding mechanism discussion paper. The paper examines a mechanism for the RQE to fund the purchase of halibut quota share be selling halibut stamps to charter operators. The agenda is subject to change, and the latest version will be posted at <https://meetings.npfmc.org/Meeting/Details/1965> prior to the meeting, along with meeting materials.

Connection Information

You can attend the meeting online using a computer, tablet, or smart phone; or by phone only. Connection information will be posted online at: <https://meetings.npfmc.org/Meeting/Details/1965>.

Public Comment

Public comment letters will be accepted and should be submitted electronically to <https://>

meetings.npfmc.org/Meeting/Details/1965.

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

Dated: March 12, 2021.

Tracey L. Thompson,

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

[FR Doc. 2021-05538 Filed 3-16-21; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648-XA885]

Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act Provisions; General Provisions for Domestic Fisheries; Application for Exempted Fishing Permits

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

ACTION: Notice; request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Assistant Regional Administrator for Sustainable Fisheries, Greater Atlantic Region, NMFS, has made a preliminary determination that an Exempted Fishing Permit renewal application from the Atlantic Offshore Lobstermen's Association contains all of the required information and warrants further consideration. Regulations under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act and the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act require publication of this notice to provide interested parties the opportunity to comment on applications for proposed Exempted Fishing Permits.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before April 1, 2021.

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

- *Email:* NMFS.GAR.EFP@noaa.gov. Include in the subject line "Comments on AOLA Larval Lobster EFP." If you cannot submit a comment through this method, please contact Allison Murphy at (978) 281-9122, or email at allison.murphy@noaa.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Allison Murphy, Fishery Policy Analyst, 978-281-9122, allison.murphy@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Atlantic Offshore Lobstermen's Association (AOLA) submitted a complete application requesting Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) on

February 12, 2021, to conduct fishing activities that the regulations would otherwise restrict. The EFP would authorize one vessel to conduct larval sampling in Lobster Conservation Management Area 3. A map of this area is available at: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/map/lobster-management-areas>.

The study would provide information on the spatial and temporal distribution and abundance of early and late stage American lobster larvae and their likely zooplankton prey to investigate factors affecting recruitment in the Gulf of Maine and Georges Bank stock area.

Funding for this research has been awarded under a National Sea Grant Lobster Initiative grant (NA20OAR4170505). For this project, AOLA is requesting exemptions from the following Federal lobster regulations:

1. Lobster gear prohibitions in 50 CFR 697.7(c)(1)(xxii) to allow for the use of multiple gear types capable of catching lobsters;
2. Lobster possession restrictions in § 697.17(a) to allow the harvest of lobster above the non-trap limit; and
3. Lobster possession restrictions in § 697.20(a) to allow for the collection of larval lobsters below the minimum size.

If the EFP is approved, this study would hire one federally-permitted lobster vessel to conduct a single day of lobster larval sampling on 14 multi-day (5–10 day) commercial fishing trips, spanning from the first week in June through the last week in September. When sampling, the vessel crew would conduct three replicate neuston tows for lobster larvae and record physical parameters. Samples from the nets will be preserved in ethanol, bottled, landed, and mailed to the principal investigator. Legal lobsters from the commercial portion of the trip will be landed and sold.

If approved, AOLA may request minor modifications and extensions to the EFP throughout the study period. 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 12, 2021.

Jennifer M. Wallace,
Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.
[FR Doc. 2021-05510 Filed 3-16-21; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648-XA903]

Takes of Marine Mammals Incidental to Specified Activities; Taking Marine Mammals Incidental to the Parallel Thimble Shoal Tunnel Project in Virginia Beach, Virginia

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

ACTION: Notice; issuance of Renewal incidental harassment authorization (IHA).

SUMMARY: In accordance with the regulations implementing the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), as amended, notification is hereby given that NMFS has issued a Renewal incidental harassment authorization (IHA) to the Chesapeake Tunnel Joint Venture (CTJV) to incidentally harass marine mammals incidental to the Parallel Thimble Shoal Tunnel Project (PTST) in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

DATES: This Renewal IHA is valid from March 10, 2021, through March 9, 2022.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ben Laws, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, (301) 427-8401. Electronic copies of the original application, Renewal request, and supporting documents (including NMFS **Federal Register** notices of the original proposed and final authorizations, and the previous IHA), as well as a list of the references cited in this document, may be obtained online at:

www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/marine-mammal-protection/incidental-take-authorizations-construction-activities. In case of problems accessing these documents, please call the contact listed above.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) prohibits the “take” of marine mammals, with certain exceptions. Sections 101(a)(5)(A) and (D) of the MMPA (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*) direct the Secretary of Commerce (as delegated to NMFS) 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, an incidental harassment authorization is issued.

Authorization for incidental takings shall be granted if NMFS finds that the taking will have a negligible impact on the species or stock(s) and will not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of the species or stock(s) for taking for subsistence uses (where relevant). Further, NMFS must prescribe the permissible methods of taking and other “means of effecting the least practicable adverse impact” on the affected species or stocks and their habitat, paying particular attention to rookeries, mating grounds, and areas of similar significance, and on the availability of such species or stocks for taking for certain subsistence uses (referred to here as “mitigation measures”). Monitoring and reporting of such takings are also required. The meaning of key terms such as “take,” “harassment,” and “negligible impact” can be found in section 3 of the MMPA (16 U.S.C. 1362) and the agency’s regulations at 50 CFR 216.103.

NMFS’ regulations implementing the MMPA at 50 CFR 216.107(e) indicate that IHAs may be renewed for additional periods of time not to exceed one year for each reauthorization. In the notice of proposed IHA for the initial authorization, NMFS described the circumstances under which we would consider issuing a Renewal for this activity, and requested public comment on a potential Renewal under those circumstances. Specifically, on a case-by-case basis, NMFS may issue a one-time, one-year Renewal IHA following notice to the public providing an additional 15 days for public comments when (1) up to another year of identical, or nearly identical, activities as described in the Description of the Specified Activities and Anticipated Impacts section of this notice is planned or (2) the activities as described in the Description of the Specified Activities and Anticipated Impacts section of this notice would not be completed by the time the initial IHA expires and a Renewal would allow for completion of the activities beyond that described in the **DATES** section of the notice of issuance of the initial IHA, provided all of the following conditions are met:

1. A request for renewal is received no later than 60 days prior to the needed Renewal IHA effective date (recognizing that the Renewal IHA expiration date