

The Steller sea lion was listed as threatened under the ESA by an emergency interim rule on April 5, 1990 (55 FR 12645). NMFS published a final rule to list the Steller sea lion as a threatened species under the ESA on November 26, 1990 (55 FR 49204). NMFS designated critical habitat for the Steller sea lion on August 27, 1993 (58 FR 45269). On May 5, 1997, based on demographic and genetic dissimilarities, NMFS reclassified the Steller sea lion into two DPSs: a WDPS, listed as endangered, and an eastern DPS (EDPS), listed as threatened (62 FR 24345). The WDPS, comprised of animals originating from breeding sites west of 144° W longitude, was listed as endangered (62 FR 24345, May 5, 1997) due to persistent decline and lack of recovery, while the EDPS remained listed as threatened. On November 4, 2013, NMFS delisted the EDPS Steller sea lion (78 FR 66140). NMFS completed the last 5-year review of this species on February 20, 2020 and the document is available on the NMFS website at: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/western-distinct-population-segment-steller-sea-lion-5-year-review-summary-and>. Background information on these Steller sea lion DPSs is available on the NMFS website at: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/species/steller-sea-lion/overview>.

#### Determining if a Species Is Threatened or Endangered

Section 4(a)(1) of the ESA requires that we determine whether a species is endangered or threatened based on one or more of the five following factors: (1) the present or threatened destruction, modification, or curtailment of its habitat or range; (2) overutilization for commercial, recreational, scientific, or educational purposes; (3) disease or predation; (4) the inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms; or (5) other natural or manmade factors affecting its continued existence. Section 4(b) also requires that our determination be made on the basis of the best scientific and commercial data available after conducting a review of the status of the species and after taking into account those efforts, if any, being made by any State or foreign nation to protect such species.

#### Application of the DPS Policy

On February 7, 1996, NMFS adopted the Policy Regarding the Recognition of Distinct Vertebrate Population Segments (DPS Policy) to clarify the interpretation of the phrase “distinct population segment of any species of vertebrate fish

or wildlife” for the purposes of listing, delisting, and reclassifying species under the ESA (61 FR 4722). The WDPS of Steller sea lion was listed as a DPS of a vertebrate taxon. In the application of the DPS Policy, we are responsible for determining whether species, subspecies, or DPSs of marine and anadromous species are threatened or endangered under the ESA. A DPS is defined in the DPS Policy (61 FR 4722, February 7, 1996). For a population to be listed under the ESA as a DPS, three elements are considered: (1) the discreteness of the population segment in relation to the remainder of the species to which it belongs; (2) the significance of the population segment to the species to which it belongs; and (3) the population segment’s conservation status in relation to the Act’s standards for listing (*i.e.*, is the population segment, when treated as if it were a species, endangered or threatened?). DPSs of vertebrate species, as well as subspecies of all listed species, may be proposed for separate reclassification or for removal from the List. As required by the DPS policy, we will apply the DPS policy during the 5-year review.

#### Public Solicitation of New Relevant Information

To ensure that the 5-year review is complete and based on the best scientific and commercial data available, we are soliciting new information from the public, governmental agencies, Tribes, the scientific community, industry, environmental entities, and any other interested parties concerning the status of the endangered WDPS of the Steller sea lion. Categories of requested information include: (1) species biology including, but not limited to, population trends, distribution, abundance, demographics, and genetics; (2) habitat conditions including, but not limited to, amount, distribution, suitability, and important features for conservation; (3) status and trends of threats to the species and its habitats; (4) conservation measures that have been implemented that benefit the species, including monitoring data demonstrating effectiveness of such measures; (5) need for additional conservation measures; and (6) other new information, data, or corrections including, but not limited to, taxonomic or nomenclatural changes and improved analytical methods for evaluating extinction risk.

If you wish to provide information for this review, you may submit your information and materials electronically

or via mail (see **ADDRESSES** section). We request that all information be accompanied by supporting documentation such as maps, bibliographic references, or reprints of pertinent publications. We also would appreciate the submitter’s name, address, and any association, institution, or business that the person represents; however, anonymous submissions will also be accepted.

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

Dated: April 12, 2024.

**Angela Somma,**

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

[FR Doc. 2024–08208 Filed 4–16–24; 8:45 am]

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648–XD875]

#### Marine Mammals and Endangered Species

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

**ACTION:** Notice; issuance of permits and permit amendments.

**SUMMARY:** Notice is hereby given that permits and permit amendments have been issued to the following entities under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) and the Endangered Species Act (ESA), as applicable.

**ADDRESSES:** The permits and related documents are available for review upon written request via email to [NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov](mailto:NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Amy Hapeman (Permit No. 25563–01) and Jennifer Skidmore (Permit Nos. 22095–01 and 27514); at (301) 427–8401.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Notices were published in the **Federal Register** on the dates listed below that requests for a permit or permit amendment had been submitted by the below-named applicants. To locate the **Federal Register** notice that announced our receipt of the application and a complete description of the activities, go to <https://www.federalregister.gov> and search on the permit number provided in table 1 below.

TABLE 1—ISSUED PERMITS AND PERMIT AMENDMENTS

Permit No.	RTID	Applicant	Previous <b>Federal Register</b> Notice	Issuance date
22095–01 .....	0648–XG371 ....	SeaWorld LLC, 9205 South Park Center Loop, Suite 400, Orlando, FL 32819 (Responsible Party: Christopher Dold, DVM).	84 FR 15595, April 16, 2019 .....	March 15, 2024.
25563–01 .....	0648–XD609 ....	NMFS Alaska Fisheries Science Center, Marine Mammal Laboratory, 7600 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle, WA 98115 (Responsible Party: John Bengtson, Ph.D.).	89 FR 906, January 8, 2024 .....	March 8, 2024.
27514 .....	0648–XD552 .....	Heather E. Liwanag, Ph.D., California Polytechnic State University, 1 Grand Avenue, San Luis Obispo, CA 93407.	88 FR 81368, November 22, 2023.	March 21, 2024.

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), a final determination has been made that the activities proposed are categorically excluded from the requirement to prepare an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement.

As required by the ESA, as applicable, issuance of these permit was based on a finding that such permits: (1) were applied for in good faith; (2) will not operate to the disadvantage of such endangered species; and (3) are consistent with the purposes and policies set forth in section 2 of the ESA.

*Authority:* The requested permits have been issued under the MMPA of 1972, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*), the regulations governing the taking and importing of marine mammals (50 CFR part 216), the ESA of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), and the regulations governing the taking, importing, and exporting of endangered and threatened species (50 CFR parts 222–226), as applicable.

Dated: April 12, 2024.

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

[FR Doc. 2024–08190 Filed 4–16–24; 8:45 am]

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

#### National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS) Executive Council Meeting

**AGENCY:** Climate Program Office (CPO), Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce (DOC).

**ACTION:** Notice of open meeting.

**SUMMARY:** The National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS) Program Office will hold an organizational meeting of the NIDIS Executive Council on April 25, 2024.

**DATES:** The meeting will be held Thursday, April 25, 2024 from 8:30 a.m. EST to 3:30 p.m. EST. These times and the agenda topics are subject to change.

**ADDRESSES:** The meeting will be held at the Hall of the States, Room 233/235, 444 North Capitol St. NW, Washington, DC 20001.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Veva Deheza, NIDIS Executive Director, David Skaggs Research Center, Room GD102, 325 Broadway, Boulder, CO 80305. Email: [Veva.Deheza@noaa.gov](mailto:Veva.Deheza@noaa.gov); or visit the NIDIS website at [www.drought.gov](http://www.drought.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS) was established by Public Law 109–430 on December 20, 2006, and reauthorized by Public Law 113–86 on March 6, 2014 and Public Law 115–423 on January 7, 2019, with a mandate to provide an effective drought early warning system for the United States; coordinate, and integrate as practicable, Federal research in support of a drought early warning system; and build upon existing forecasting and assessment programs and partnerships. See 15 U.S.C. 313d. The Public Law also calls for consultation with “relevant Federal, regional, State, tribal, and local government agencies, research institutions, and the private sector” in the development of NIDIS. 15 U.S.C. 313d(c). The NIDIS Executive Council provides the NIDIS Program Office with an opportunity to engage in individual consultation with senior resource officials from NIDIS’s Federal partners, as well as leaders from state and local government, academia, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector.

*Status:* This meeting will be open to public participation. Individuals

interested in attending should register at <https://cpaess.ucar.edu/meetings/nidis-executive-spring-council-meeting-2024>. Please refer to this web page for the most up-to-date meeting times and agenda. Seating at the meeting will be available on a first-come, first-served basis.

*Special Accommodations:* This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for special accommodations may be directed no later than 12:00 p.m. on April 19, 2024, to Elizabeth Ossowski, Program Manager, David Skaggs Research Center, Room GD102, 325 Broadway, Boulder, CO 80305; Email: [Elizabeth.Ossowski@noaa.gov](mailto:Elizabeth.Ossowski@noaa.gov).

*Matters to Be Considered:* The meeting will include the following topics: (1) NIDIS implementation updates and 2024 priorities; (2) Executive Council member updates and 2024 priorities relevant to Drought, Climate Adaptation and Resilience, Water, Fire; (3) Regional Drought Early Warning Systems and Partnership Opportunities, as well as Research and Development; and (4) Managing for both too much and too little water across water resource management disciplines.

#### David Holst,

Chief Financial Officer/Administrative Officer, Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

[FR Doc. 2024–08192 Filed 4–16–24; 8:45 am]

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