

and ventless traps, a total of 10,614 biological samples from lobsters and crabs have been recorded.

Year 2 of this project would expand the program to up to 20 federally-permitted Maine lobster vessels. Each vessel would fish with 3 modified, ventless traps designed to catch juvenile lobsters, totaling up to 60 modified traps. The ventless trap configuration is as follows: 40 inch length x 21 inch width x 14 inch height, single parlor, 1 inch square rubber-coated 12-gauge wire, standard shrimp mesh netting, cement runners, and 4 inch x 6 inch disabling door. The modified traps would adhere to the standard coastwide survey gear for lobster and Jonah crab set by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and would be fished with standard Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan-compliant trawls.

This study would take place during regular fishing activity of the participating vessels, but catch from the modified traps would remain separate from that of standard gear. Operators would collect data on size, sex, presence of eggs, and shell hardness for lobsters and Jonah crabs, and v-notch and shell disease for lobsters. Operators would return all specimens from modified gear to the ocean once sampling is complete.

The study is designed to inform management by addressing questions about changing reproduction and recruitment dynamics of lobster and to develop a foundation of knowledge for the data-deficient Jonah crab fishery. All data collected by the participants using the CFRF data collection app would be

sent to ME DMR for processing. ME DMR would then share final datasets with CFRF, to further share with the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program, the Northeast Fisheries Science Center, and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission.

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: December 10, 2025.

Kelly Denit,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648-XF361]

Marine Mammals and Endangered Species

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

ACTION: Notice; issuance of permits and a permit amendment.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that permits and a permit amendment have been issued 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.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Jennifer Skidmore (File No. 28233), Sara Young (File Nos. 23858 and 28742), Erin Markin, Ph.D., (File No. 29122), and Shasta McClenahan, Ph.D., (File Nos. 29090 and 29152); at (301) 427-8401.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The requested permits and permit amendment 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. Notices were published in the **Federal Register** on the dates listed below that permit requests had been submitted. 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 for the file number provided in table 1 below.

TABLE 1—ISSUED PERMITS AND PERMIT AMENDMENTS

File No.	Version No.	RTID	Applicant	Previous Federal Register notice	Issuance date
23858 ..	01	0648-XA919	NMFS' Marine Mammal Laboratory, 7600 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle, WA 98115 (Responsible Party: John Bengtson, Ph.D.).	86 FR 13700, March 10, 2021.	November 19, 2025.
28223 ..	N/A	0648-XE619	Clearwater Marine Aquarium, 249 Windward Passage, Clearwater, FL 33767 (Responsible Party: Joe Handy).	90 FR 7661, January 22, 2025.	November 18, 2025.
28742 ..	N/A	0648-XE876	Institute of Marine Sciences, University of California at Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz, CA 95064 (Responsible Party: Roxanne Beltran, Ph.D.).	90 FR 38466, August 8, 2025	November 20, 2025.
29090 ..	N/A	0648-XF186	Mark Clementz, Ph.D., University of Wyoming, 1000 East University Avenue, Laramie, WY 82071.	90 FR 45022, September 18, 2025.	November 21, 2025.
29122 ..	N/A	0648-XF119	Pacific Whale Foundation, 300 Ma'alaea Road, Suite 211, Wailuku, HI 26793 (Responsible Party: Selket Kaufman).	90 FR 42232, August 29, 2025.	November 20, 2025.
29152 ..	N/A	0648-XF221	Adam Gilbertsen, University of Minnesota, 689 23rd Avenue SE, MRF Room 1-151, Minneapolis, MN 55455.	90 FR 46565, September 29, 2025.	November 26, 2025.

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 permits 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.

Dated: December 10, 2025.

Shannon Bettridge,

Chief, Marine Mammal and Sea Turtle Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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