

Instructions: NMFS is not responsible for comments sent by any other method, to any other address or individual, or received after the end of the comment period. Comments received electronically, including all attachments, must not exceed a 25-megabyte file size. Attachments to electronic comments will be accepted in Microsoft Word, Excel, or Adobe PDF file formats only. All comments received are a part of the public record and will generally be posted online at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/marine-mammal-protection/incidental-take-authorizations-construction-activities> without change. All personal identifying information (e.g., name, address) voluntarily submitted by the commenter may be publicly accessible. Do not submit confidential business information or otherwise sensitive or protected information.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Krista Graham, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, (301) 427-8401. An electronic copy of the State Parks' application may be obtained online at: <https://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

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, a notice of a proposed authorization is provided to the public for review.

An incidental take authorization shall be granted if NMFS finds that the taking will have a negligible impact on the species or stock(s), will not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of the species or stock(s) for subsistence uses (where relevant), and if the permissible methods of taking and requirements pertaining to the mitigation, monitoring, and reporting of such takings are set forth.

NMFS has defined "negligible impact" in 50 CFR 216.103 as an impact resulting from the specified activity that cannot be reasonably expected to, and is not reasonably likely to, adversely affect

the species or stock through effects on annual rates of recruitment or survival.

The MMPA states that the term "take" means to harass, hunt, capture, kill, or attempt to harass, hunt, capture, or kill any marine mammal.

Except for certain activities not pertinent here, the MMPA defines "harassment" as: any act of pursuit, torment, or annoyance, which (i) has the potential to injure a marine mammal or marine mammal stock in the wild (Level A harassment); or (ii) has the potential to disturb a marine mammal or marine mammal stock in the wild by causing disruption of behavioral patterns, including, but not limited to, migration, breathing, nursing, breeding, feeding, or sheltering (Level B harassment).

Summary of Request

On April 30, 2025, NMFS received an application from the State Parks requesting authorization to take marine mammals incidental to the MFRP, specifically the repair and improvement of six marine facilities in four State Parks within North Puget Sound in Western Washington (the San Juan Islands and Deception Pass). We provided comments on the application, and the State Parks submitted a revised version on July 25, 2025. The application subsequently underwent substantial updates due to project changes, and a final application was received on March 23, 2026. The application was deemed adequate and complete on March 24, 2026. The requested regulations would be valid for 5 years, from August 1, 2026, through July 31, 2031. The State Parks plans to conduct necessary work, including pile driving and removal (vibratory and impact) and rotary drilling (rock socket drilling or down-the-hole (DTH) drilling). Only pile removal and installation associated with in-water construction and maintenance activities of the marine facilities are anticipated to result in takes of marine mammals due to elevated underwater noise. The underwater sound generated by these in-water activities may result in Level A harassment and/or Level B harassment of marine mammal species. Therefore, the State Parks requests authorization to incidentally take marine mammals.

Specified Activities

The purpose of the State Parks' activities is to conduct maintenance and improvement projects at Reid Harbor and Prevost Harbor in Stuart Island Marine State Park, at Fossil Bay in Sucia Island Marine State Park, at Olga Pier at Olga State Park, and at Bowman Bay and Rosario Pier at Deception Pass State Park. The proposed activities would

include removing or replacing existing timber piles with aluminum and steel piles and structures to improve piers, ramps, floats, and moorage facilities. Construction activities will last up to 14 hours per day and will occur annually between August 1, 2026, and February 15, 2027, through 2031. The State Parks' application includes mitigation and monitoring measures designed to minimize impacts on marine mammals.

Information Solicited

Interested persons may submit information, suggestions, and comments concerning the State Parks' request (see **ADDRESSES**). NMFS will consider all information, suggestions, and comments related to the request during the development of proposed regulations governing the incidental taking of marine mammals by the State Parks, if appropriate.

Dated: March 25, 2026.

Kim Damon-Randall,

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

[FR Doc. 2026-06050 Filed 3-27-26; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Ocean Research Advisory Panel (ORAP)

AGENCY: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce (DOC).

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: This notice sets forth the schedule and proposed agenda of a meeting of the Ocean Research Advisory Panel (ORAP). The members will discuss issues outlined in the section on *Matters to be Considered*.

DATES: The meeting is scheduled for May 21, 2026 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Eastern Time (ET). These times and the agenda topics described below are subject to change.

For the latest agenda please refer to the ORAP website: <https://www.noaa.gov/ocean-research-advisory-panel/orap-public-meetings>.

ADDRESSES: The May 21, 2026 meeting will be at the AGU Conference Center, 2000 Florida Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20009. The link for the webinar registration will be posted, when available, on the ORAP website: <https://www.noaa.gov/ocean-research-advisory-panel/orap-public-meetings>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Viviane Silva, ORAP Designated Federal

Officer (DFO), SSMC3, Room 11320, 1315 East-West Hwy., Silver Spring, MD 20910; Phone Number: 240-624-0656; Email: DFO.orap@noaa.gov; or visit the ORAP website at <https://www.noaa.gov/ocean-research-advisory-panel/orap-public-meetings>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Ocean Research Advisory Panel (ORAP) advises the Ocean Policy Committee (OPC) and provides independent recommendations to the Federal Government on matters of ocean policy.

Congress directed the establishment of the ORAP in Section 1055(c) of the William M. (Mac) Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021 (Pub. L. 116-283), 10 U.S.C. 8933.

Status: The May 21, 2026 meeting will be open to public participation with a 15-minute public comment period at time allocated on the published agenda. The ORAP expects that public statements presented at its meetings will not be repetitive of previously submitted verbal or written statements. In general, each individual or group making a verbal presentation will be limited to a total time of three minutes. Written comments for the May 21, 2026 meeting should be received by May 8, 2026 by the ORAP DFO (DFO.orap@noaa.gov) to provide sufficient time for ORAP review. Written comments received by the ORAP DFO after this date will be distributed to the ORAP, but may not be reviewed prior to the meeting date.

Special Accommodations: These meetings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for special accommodations may be directed to the ORAP DFO no later than 12:00 p.m. EST on May 1, 2026.

Matters to be Considered: During the ORAP public meeting on December 13-14, 2023, the OPC requested that ORAP provide advice on two key areas. The first was to advise on opportunities for partnerships (such as through the National Oceanic Partnership Program) on the topic of emerging technology (which could include Artificial Intelligence/Machine Learning, eDNA, and similar technology) with ocean industry and other sectors over the next 5-10 years. The second request was for ORAP to self-select another topic for consideration. ORAP members determined that the topic of accessible, interoperable, interdisciplinary, and trusted ocean data is critical to meeting research and user needs and warranted immediate attention. ORAP delivered its first report, "Toward a National Ocean Data Strategy," to the OPC in September 2024. At this meeting on May 21, 2026,

ORAP will discuss the draft of its second report, "Recommendations for Supporting Public-Private Partnerships to Advance Emerging Ocean Technologies," and decide if it is ready for approval and submission to the OPC. Additionally, the OPC Co-Chairs will provide an update on OPC priorities.

Meeting materials, including work products, will be made available on the ORAP website: <https://www.noaa.gov/ocean-research-advisory-panel/orap-public-meetings>.

Dated: March 26, 2026.

Nikola Garber,

Deputy Director of Sea Grant, Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648-XF495]

Takes of Marine Mammals Incidental to Specified Activities; Taking Marine Mammals Incidental to Furie Operating Alaska, LLC Natural Gas Activities in Cook Inlet, Alaska

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

ACTION: Notice; request for comments on proposed renewal incidental harassment authorization.

SUMMARY: NMFS received a request from Furie Operating Alaska, LLC (Furie) for the renewal of their currently active incidental harassment authorization (IHA) to take marine mammals incidental to activities supporting natural gas production in Cook Inlet, Alaska. Furie's activities under the renewal IHA would be identical to a subset of those covered in the current IHA. Pursuant to the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), prior to issuing the current IHA, NMFS requested comments on two consecutive proposed IHAs ("initial IHAs") and the potential for a renewal IHA if certain requirements were satisfied. The renewal requirements have been satisfied, and NMFS is now providing an additional 15-day comment period to allow for any additional comments on the proposed renewal of the current IHA not previously submitted during the initial IHA 30-day comment period.

DATES: Comments and information must be received no later than April 14, 2026.

ADDRESSES: Comments should be addressed to the Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service, and should be submitted via email to ITP.Davis@noaa.gov. 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: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/permit/incidental-take-authorizations-under-marine-mammal-protection-act>. In case of problems accessing these documents, please call the contact listed below.

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Leah Davis, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, (301) 427-8401.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The 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 proposed or, if the taking is limited to harassment, a notice of a proposed IHA is provided to the public for review.

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