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Subparts J–X[Reserved]

FIGURE 1 TO PART 216—NORTHERN FUR SEAL BREEDING AREAS (ROOKERIES) AND HAULING GROUNDS ON ST. GEORGE ISLAND, ALASKA

AUTHORITY: 16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*, unless otherwise noted.

SOURCE: 39 FR 1852, Jan. 15, 1974, unless otherwise noted.

NOTE TO PART 216: See also 50 CFR parts 228 and 229 for regulations governing certain incidental takings of marine mammals.

Subpart A—Introduction

§216.1 Purpose of regulations.

The regulations in this part implement the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, 86 Stat. 1027, 16 U.S.C. 1361–1407, Pub. L. 92–522, which, among other things, restricts the taking, possession, transportation, selling, offering for sale, and importing of marine mammals.

§216.2 Scope of regulations.

This part 216 applies solely to marine mammals and marine mammal products as defined in §216.3. For regulations under the MMPA, with respect to other marine mammals and marine mammal products, see 50 CFR part 18.

[39 FR 1852, Jan. 15, 1974, as amended at 59 FR 50375, Oct. 3, 1994]

§216.3 Definitions.

In addition to definitions contained in the MMPA, and unless the context otherwise requires, in this part 216:

Acts means, collectively, the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*, the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*, and the Fur Seal Act of 1966, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 1151 *et seq.*

Active sportfishing means paying passengers have their terminal fishing

gear (lures, hooks, etc.) in the water in an attempt to catch fish or, in the case of fishing involving chumming, fishing is considered to be in progress from the instant fish have been sighted taking bait (boiling) during that chumming process.

Administrator, Southwest Region means the Regional Administrator, Southwest Region, National Marine Fisheries Service, 501 W. Ocean Blvd., Suite 4200, Long Beach, CA 90802-4213, or his or her designee.

Agreement on the International Dolphin Conservation Program (Agreement on the IDCP) means the Agreement establishing the formal binding IDCP that was signed in Washington, DC on May 21, 1998.

Alaskan Native means a person defined in the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1602(b)) (85 Stat. 588) as a citizen of the United States who is of one-fourth degree or more Alaska Indian (including Tsimishian Indians enrolled or not enrolled in the Metlaktla Indian Community), Eskimo, or Aleut blood or combination thereof. The term includes any Native, as so defined, either or both of whose adoptive parents are not Natives. It also includes, in the absence of proof of a minimum blood quantum, any citizen of the United States who is regarded as an Alaska Native by the Native village or group, of which he claims to be a member and whose father or mother is (or, if deceased, was) regarded as Native by any Native village or Native group. Any such citizen enrolled by the Secretary of the Interior pursuant to section 5 of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act shall be conclusively presumed to be an Alaskan Native for purposes of this part.

Albacore tuna means the species *Thunnus alalunga*.

Article of handicraft means items made by an Indian, Aleut or Eskimo from the nonedible byproducts of fur seals taken for personal or family consumption which—

(1) Were commonly produced by Alaskan Natives on or before October 14, 1983;

(2) Are composed wholly or in some significant respect of natural materials, and;

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(3) Are significantly altered from their natural form and which are produced, decorated, or fashioned in the exercise of traditional native handicrafts without the use of pantographs, multiple carvers, or similar mass copying devices. Improved methods of production utilizing modern implements such as sewing machines or modern tanning techniques at a tannery registered pursuant to §216.23(c) may be used so long as no large scale mass production industry results. Traditional native handicrafts include, but are not limited to, weaving, carving, stitching, sewing, lacing, beading, drawing, and painting. The formation of traditional native groups, such as a cooperative, is permitted so long as no large scale mass production results.

Assistant Administrator means the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Silver Spring, MD 20910, or his/her designee.

Authentic native articles of handicrafts and clothing means items made by an Indian, Aleut or Eskimo which (a) were commonly produced on or before December 21, 1972, and (b) are composed wholly or in some significant respect of natural materials, and (c) are significantly altered from their natural form and which are produced, decorated, or fashioned in the exercise of traditional native handicrafts without the use of pantographs, multiple carvers, or similar mass copying devices. Improved methods of production utilizing modern implements such as sewing machines or modern tanning techniques at a tannery registered pursuant to §216.23(c) may be used so long as no large scale mass production industry results. Traditional native handicrafts include, but are not limited to, weaving, carving, stitching, sewing, lacing, beading, drawing, and painting. The formation of traditional native groups, such as a cooperative, is permitted so long as no large scale mass production results.

Bigeye tuna means the species *Thunnus obesus*.

Bluefin tuna means the species *Thunnus thynnus* or *Thunnus orientalis*.

Bona fide scientific research: (1) Means scientific research on marine mammals

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conducted by qualified personnel, the results of which:

(i) Likely would be accepted for publication in a refereed scientific journal;

(ii) Are likely to contribute to the basic knowledge of marine mammal biology or ecology. (Note: This includes, for example, marine mammal parts in a properly curated, professionally accredited scientific collection); or

(iii) Are likely to identify, evaluate, or resolve conservation problems.

(2) Research that is not on marine mammals, but that may incidentally take marine mammals, is not included in this definition (see sections 101(a)(3)(A), 101(a)(5)(A), and 101(a)(5)(D) of the MMPA, and sections 7(b)(4) and 10(a)(1)(B) of the ESA).

Bycatch limit means the calculation of a potential biological removal level for a particular marine mammal stock, as defined in §229.2 of this chapter, or comparable scientific metric established by the harvesting nation or applicable regional fishery management organization or intergovernmental agreement.

Carrying capacity means the Regional Director's determination of the maximum amount of fish that a vessel can carry in short tons based on the greater of the amount indicated by the builder of the vessel, a marine surveyor's report, or the highest amount reported landed from any one trip.

Certified charter vessel means a fishing vessel of a non-U.S. flag nation, which is operating under the jurisdiction of the marine mammal laws and regulations of another, harvesting, nation by a formal declaration entered into by mutual agreement of the nations.

Co-investigator means the on-site representative of a principal investigator.

Commercial fishing operation means the lawful harvesting of fish from the marine environment for profit as part of an ongoing business enterprise. Such terms may include licensed commercial passenger fishing vessel (as defined) activities, but no other sportfishing activities, whether or not the fish so caught are subsequently sold.

Commercial passenger fishing vessel means any vessel licensed for commercial passenger fishing purposes within the State out of which it is operating

and from which, while under charter or hire, persons are legally permitted to conduct sportfishing activities.

Comparability finding means a finding by the Assistant Administrator that the harvesting nation for an export or exempt fishery has met the applicable conditions specified in §216.24(h)(6)(iii) subject to the additional considerations for comparability determinations set out in §216.24(h)(7).

Custody means holding a live marine mammal pursuant to the conditional authority granted under the MMPA, and the responsibility therein for captive maintenance of the marine mammal.

Declaration of Panama means the declaration signed in Panama City, Republic of Panama, on October 4, 1995.

Director, Office of Protected Resources means Director, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910.

Dolphin Mortality Limit (DML) means the maximum allowable number of incidental dolphin mortalities per calendar year assigned to a vessel, unless a shorter time period is specified.

Endangered Species means a species or subspecies of marine mammal listed as “endangered” pursuant to the Endangered Species Act of 1973, 87 Stat. 884, Pub. L. 93-205 (see part 17 of this title).

ESA means the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*

ETP means the eastern tropical Pacific Ocean which includes the Pacific Ocean area bounded by 40° N. latitude, 40° S. latitude, 160° W. longitude and the coastlines of North, Central and South America.

Exempt fishery means a foreign commercial fishing operation determined by the Assistant Administrator to be the source of exports of commercial fish and fish products to the United States and to have a remote likelihood of, or no known, incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammals in the course of commercial fishing operations. A commercial fishing operation that has a remote likelihood of causing incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammals is one that collectively with other foreign fisheries exporting fish and fish prod-

ucts to the United States causes the annual removal of:

(1) Ten percent or less of any marine mammal stock’s bycatch limit; or

(2) More than 10 percent of any marine mammal stock’s bycatch limit, yet that fishery by itself removes 1 percent or less of that stock’s bycatch limit annually; or

(3) Where reliable information has not been provided by the harvesting nation on the frequency of incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammals caused by the commercial fishing operation, the Assistant Administrator may determine whether the likelihood of incidental mortality and serious injury is “remote” by evaluating information concerning factors such as fishing techniques, gear used, methods used to deter marine mammals, target species, seasons and areas fished, qualitative data from logbooks or fisher reports, stranding data, the species and distribution of marine mammals in the area, or other factors at the discretion of the Assistant Administrator. A foreign fishery will not be classified as an exempt fishery unless the Assistant Administrator has reliable information from the harvesting nation, or other information to support such a finding.

Exemption period means the one-time, six-year period that commences January 1, 2017 and ends December 31, 2022, during which commercial fishing operations that are the source of exports of commercial fish and fish products to the United States will be exempt from the prohibitions of §216.24(h)(1).

Export fishery means a foreign commercial fishing operation determined by the Assistant Administrator to be the source of exports of commercial fish and fish products to the United States and to have more than a remote likelihood of incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammals (as defined in the definition of an “exempt fishery”) in the course of its commercial fishing operations. Where reliable information has not been provided by the harvesting nation on the frequency of incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammals caused by the commercial fishing operation, the Assistant Administrator may determine whether the likelihood of incidental

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mortality and serious injury is more than “remote” by evaluating information concerning factors such as fishing techniques, gear used, methods used to deter marine mammals, target species, seasons and areas fished, qualitative data from logbooks or fisher reports, stranding data, and the species and distribution of marine mammals in the area, or other factors at the discretion of the Assistant Administrator that may inform whether the likelihood of incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammals caused by the commercial fishing operation is more than “remote.” Commercial fishing operations not specifically identified in the current List of Foreign Fisheries as either exempt or export fisheries are deemed to be export fisheries until the next List of Foreign Fisheries is published unless the Assistant Administrator has reliable information from the harvesting nation to properly classify the foreign commercial fishing operation. Additionally, the Assistant Administrator, may request additional information from the harvesting nation and may consider other relevant information as set forth in §216.24(h)(3) about such commercial fishing operations and the frequency of incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammals, to properly classify the foreign commercial fishing operation.

Facility means, in the context specific to captive marine mammals: (1) One or more permanent primary enclosures used to hold marine mammals captive (i.e., pools, lagoons) and associated infrastructure (i.e., equipment and supplies necessary for the care and maintenance of marine mammals) where these enclosures are either located within the boundaries of a single contiguous parcel of land and water, or are grouped together within the same general area within which enclosure-to-enclosure transport is expected to be completed in less than one hour; or

(2) A traveling display/exhibit, where the enclosure(s) and associated infrastructure is transported together with the marine mammals.

Feeding is offering, giving, or attempting to give food or non-food items to marine mammals in the wild. It includes operating a vessel or providing other platforms from which

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feeding is conducted or supported. It does not include the routine discard of bycatch during fishing operations or the routine discharge of waste or fish byproducts from fish processing plants or other platforms if the discharge is otherwise legal and is incidental to operation of the activity.

First exporter means the person or company that first exports the fish or fish product, or, in the case of shipments that are subject to the labeling requirements of 50 CFR part 247 and that only contain fish harvested by vessels of the United States, the first seller of the fish or fish product.

Fish and fish product means any marine finfish, mollusk, crustacean, or other form of marine life other than marine mammals, reptiles, and birds, whether fresh, frozen, canned, pouched, or otherwise prepared.

Fisheries Certificate of Origin, or *FCO*, means NOAA Form 370, as described in §216.24(f)(4).

Force majeure means forces outside the vessel operator’s or vessel owner’s control that could not be avoided by the exercise of due care.

FSA means the Fur Seal Act of 1966, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 1151 *et seq.*

Fur seal means North Pacific fur seal, scientifically known as *Callorhinus ursinus*.

Hard part means any bone, tooth, baleen, treated pelt, or other part of a marine mammal that is relatively solid or durable.

Harvesting nation means the country under whose flag one or more fishing vessels are documented, or which has by formal declaration agreed to assert jurisdiction over one or more certified charter vessels, from which vessel(s) fish are caught that are a part of any cargo or shipment of fish to be imported into the United States, regardless of any intervening transshipments.

Humane means the method of taking, import, export, or other activity which involves the least possible degree of pain and suffering practicable to the animal involved.

Import means to land on, bring into, or introduce into, or attempt to land on, bring into, or introduce into, any place subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, whether or not such

landing, bringing, or introduction constitutes an importation within the Customs laws of the United States; except that, for the purpose of any ban on the importation of fish or fish products issued under the authority of 16 U.S.C. 1371(a)(2)(B), the definition of "import" in § 216.24(f)(1)(ii) shall apply.

Incidental catch means the taking of a marine mammal (1) because it is directly interfering with commercial fishing operations, or (2) as a consequence of the steps used to secure the fish in connection with commercial fishing operations: *Provided*, That a marine mammal so taken must immediately be returned to the sea with a minimum of injury and further, that the taking of a marine mammal, which otherwise meets the requirements of this definition shall not be considered an incidental catch of that mammal if it is used subsequently to assist in commercial fishing operations.

Intentional purse seine set means that a tuna purse seine vessel or associated vessels chase marine mammals and subsequently make a purse seine set.

Intermediary nation means a nation that imports fish or fish products from a fishery on the List of Foreign Fisheries and re-exports such fish or fish products to the United States.

International Dolphin Conservation Program (IDCP) means the international program established by the agreement signed in La Jolla, California, in June 1992, as formalized, modified, and enhanced in accordance with the Declaration of Panama and the Agreement on the IDCP.

International Dolphin Conservation Program Act (IDCPA) means Public Law 105-42, enacted into law on August 15, 1997.

International Review Panel (IRP) means the International Review Panel established by the Agreement on the IDCP.

Intrusive research means a procedure conducted for bona fide scientific research involving: A break in or cutting of the skin or equivalent, insertion of an instrument or material into an orifice, introduction of a substance or object into the animal's immediate environment that is likely either to be ingested or to contact and directly affect animal tissues (i.e., chemical sub-

stances), or a stimulus directed at animals that may involve a risk to health or welfare or that may have an impact on normal function or behavior (i.e., audio broadcasts directed at animals that may affect behavior). For captive animals, this definition does not include:

(1) A procedure conducted by the professional staff of the holding facility or an attending veterinarian for purposes of animal husbandry, care, maintenance, or treatment, or a routine medical procedure that, in the reasonable judgment of the attending veterinarian, would not constitute a risk to the health or welfare of the captive animal; or

(2) A procedure involving either the introduction of a substance or object (i.e., as described in this definition) or a stimulus directed at animals that, in the reasonable judgment of the attending veterinarian, would not involve a risk to the health or welfare of the captive animal.

Label means a display of written, printed, or graphic matter on or affixed to the immediate container of any article.

Land or landing means to begin offloading any fish, to arrive in port with the intention of offloading fish, or to cause any fish to be offloaded.

Large-scale driftnet means a gillnet that is composed of a panel or panels of webbing, or a series of such gillnets, with a total length of 2.5 kilometers or more that is used on the high seas and allowed to drift with the currents and winds for the purpose of harvesting fish by entangling the fish in the webbing of the net.

Level A Harassment means any act of pursuit, torment, or annoyance which has the potential to injure a marine mammal or marine mammal stock in the wild.

Level B Harassment means any act of pursuit, torment, or annoyance which 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 but which does not have the potential to injure a marine mammal or marine mammal stock in the wild.

List of Foreign Fisheries means the most recent list, organized by harvesting nation, of foreign commercial fishing operations exporting fish or fish products to the United States, that is published in the FEDERAL REGISTER by the Assistant Administrator and that classifies commercial fishing operations according to the frequency and likelihood of incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammals during such commercial fishing operations as either an exempt fishery or an export fishery.

Longtail tuna means the species *Thunnus tonngol*.

Marine environment means the oceans and the seas, including estuarine and brackish waters.

Marine mammal means those specimens of the following orders, which are morphologically adapted to the marine environment, and whether alive or dead, and any part thereof, including but not limited to, any raw, dressed or dyed fur or skin: Cetacea (whales, dolphins, and porpoises) and Pinnipedia, other than walrus (seals and sea lions).

MMPA means the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*

Native village or town means any community, association, tribe, band, clan or group.

Optimum sustainable population is a population size which falls within a range from the population level of a given species or stock which is the largest supportable within the ecosystem to the population level that results in maximum net productivity. Maximum net productivity is the greatest net annual increment in population numbers or biomass resulting from additions to the population due to reproduction and/or growth less losses due to natural mortality.

Per-stock per-year dolphin mortality limit means the maximum allowable number of incidental dolphin mortalities and serious injuries from a specified stock per calendar year, as established under the IDCP.

Pregnant means pregnant near term.

Pribilovians means Indians, Aleuts, and Eskimos who live on the Pribilof Islands.

Principal investigator means the individual primarily responsible for the

taking, importation, export, and any related activities conducted under a permit issued for scientific research or enhancement purposes.

Public display means an activity that provides opportunities for the public to view living marine mammals at a facility holding marine mammals captive.

Regional Director means the Regional Administrator, Northeast Regional Office, NMFS, One Blackburn Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930; or Regional Administrator, Northwest Regional Office, NMFS, 7600 Sandpoint Way, N.E., Building 1, Seattle, WA 98115; or Regional Administrator, Southeast Regional Office, NMFS, 9721 Executive Center Drive North, St. Petersburg, FL 33702; or Regional Administrator, Southwest Regional Office, NMFS, 501 West Ocean Boulevard, Suite 4200, Long Beach, CA 90802; or Regional Administrator, Pacific Islands Regional Office, NMFS, 1601 Kapiolani Boulevard, Suite 1110, Honolulu, HI 96814; or Regional Administrator, Alaska Regional Office, NMFS, PO Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802.

Rehabilitation means treatment of beached and stranded marine mammals taken under section 109(h)(1) of the MMPA or imported under section 109(h)(2) of the MMPA, with the intent of restoring the marine mammal's health and, if necessary, behavioral patterns.

Secretary shall mean the Secretary of Commerce or his authorized representative.

Serious injury means any injury that will likely result in mortality.

Sexual harassment means any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favors, or other verbal and physical conduct of a sexual nature which has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Skipjack tuna means the species *Euthynnus (Katsuwonus) pelamis*.

Soft part means any marine mammal part that is not a hard part. Soft parts do not include urine or fecal material.

South Pacific Ocean means any waters of the Pacific Ocean that lie south of the equator.

South Pacific Tuna Treaty means the Treaty on Fisheries Between the Governments of Certain Pacific Island States and the Government of the United States of America (50 CFR part 300, subpart D).

Southern bluefin tuna means the species *Thunnus maccoyii*.

Stranded or *stranded marine mammal* means a marine mammal specimen under the jurisdiction of the Secretary:

(1) If the specimen is dead, and is on a beach or shore, or is in the water within the Exclusive Economic Zone of the United States; or

(2) If the specimen is alive, and is on a beach or shore and is unable to return to the water, or is in the water within the Exclusive Economic Zone of the United States where the water is so shallow that the specimen is unable to return to its natural habitat under its own power.

Subsistence means the use of marine mammals taken by Alaskan Natives for food, clothing, shelter, heating, transportation, and other uses necessary to maintain the life of the taker or those who depend upon the taker to provide them with such subsistence.

Subsistence uses means the customary and traditional uses of fur seals taken by Pribilovians for direct personal or family consumption as food, shelter, fuel, clothing, tools or transportation; for the making and selling of handicraft articles out of nonedible byproducts of fur seals taken for personal or family consumption; and for barter, or sharing for personal or family consumption. As used in this definition—

(1) *Family* means all persons related by blood, marriage, or adoption, or any person living within a household on a permanent basis.

(2) *Barter* means the exchange of fur seals or their parts, taken for subsistence uses—

(i) For other wildlife or fish or their parts, or

(ii) For other food or for nonedible items other than money if the exchange is of a limited and noncommercial nature.

Take means to harass, hunt, capture, collect, or kill, or attempt to harass, hunt, capture, collect, or kill any marine mammal. This includes, without limitation, any of the following: The

collection of dead animals, or parts thereof; the restraint or detention of a marine mammal, no matter how temporary; tagging a marine mammal; the negligent or intentional operation of an aircraft or vessel, or the doing of any other negligent or intentional act which results in disturbing or molesting a marine mammal; and feeding or attempting to feed a marine mammal in the wild.

Threatened species means a species of marine mammal listed as “threatened” pursuant to the Endangered Species Act of 1973, 87 Stat. 884, Pub. L. 93-205.

Transboundary stock means a marine mammal stock occurring in the:

(1) Exclusive economic zones or territorial sea of the United States and one or more other coastal States; or

(2) Exclusive economic zone or territorial sea of the United States and on the high seas.

Trip means a voyage starting when a vessel leaves port with all fish wells empty of fish and ending when a vessel unloads all of its fish.

Tuna means any fish of the genus *Thunnus* and the species *Euthynnus* (*Katsuwonus*) *pelamis*.

Tuna product means any food product processed for retail sale and intended for human or animal consumption that contains an item listed in §216.24(f)(2)(i) or (ii), but does not include perishable items with a shelf life of less than 3 days.

Wasteful manner means any taking or method of taking which is likely to result in the killing of marine mammals beyond those needed for subsistence, subsistence uses, or for the making of authentic native articles of handicrafts and clothing, or which results in the waste of a substantial portion of the marine mammal and includes, without limitation, the employment of a method of taking which is not likely to assure the capture or killing of a marine mammal, or which is not immediately followed by a reasonable effort to retrieve the marine mammal.

U.S. regulatory program means the regulatory program governing the incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammals in the course of commercial fishing operations as specified in the Marine Mammal Protection Act and its implementing regulations.

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Yellowfin tuna means the species *Thunnus albacares* (synonymy: *Neothunnus macropterus*).

[39 FR 1852, Jan. 15, 1974]

EDITORIAL NOTE: For FEDERAL REGISTER citations affecting §216.3, see the List of CFR Sections Affected, which appears in the Finding Aids section of the printed volume and at www.govinfo.gov.

§216.4 Other laws and regulations.

(a) *Federal*. Nothing in this part, nor any permit issued under authority of this part, shall be construed to relieve a person from any other requirements imposed by a statute or regulation of the United States, including any applicable statutes or regulations relating to wildlife and fisheries, health, quarantine, agriculture, or customs.

(b) *State laws or regulations*. See part 403 of this chapter.

[39 FR 1852, Jan. 15, 1974, as amended at 41 FR 36662, Aug. 31, 1976; 58 FR 65134, Dec. 13, 1993]

§216.5 Payment of penalty.

The respondent shall have 30 days from receipt of the final assessment decision within which to pay the penalty assessed. Upon a failure to pay the penalty, the Secretary may request the Attorney General to institute a civil action in the appropriate United States District Court to collect the penalty.

[39 FR 1852, Jan. 15, 1974. Redesignated at 46 FR 61652, Dec. 18, 1981]

§216.6 Forfeiture and return of seized property.

(a) Whenever any cargo or marine mammal or marine mammal product has been seized pursuant to section 107 of the MMPA, the Secretary shall expedite any proceedings commenced under these regulations.

(b) Whenever a civil penalty has been assessed by the Secretary under these regulations, any cargo, marine mammal, or marine mammal product seized pursuant to section 107 of the MMPA shall be subject to forfeiture. If respondent voluntarily forfeits any such seized property or the monetary value thereof without court proceedings, the Secretary may apply the value thereof, if any, as determined by the Secretary, toward payment of the civil penalty.

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(c) Whenever a civil penalty has been assessed under these regulations, and whether or not such penalty has been paid, the Secretary may request the Attorney General to institute a civil action in an appropriate United States District Court to compel forfeiture of such seized property or the monetary value thereof to the Secretary for disposition by him in such manner as he deems appropriate. If no judicial action to compel forfeiture is commenced within 30 days after final decision-making assessment of a civil penalty, pursuant to §216.60, such seized property shall immediately be returned to the respondent.

(d) If the final decision of the Secretary under these regulations is that respondent has committed no violation of the MMPA or of any permit or regulations issued thereunder, any marine mammal, marine mammal product, or other cargo seized from respondent in connection with the proceedings under these regulations, or the bond or other monetary value substituted therefor, shall immediately be returned to the respondent.

(e) If the Attorney General commences criminal proceedings pursuant to section 105(b) of the MMPA, and such proceedings result in a finding that the person accused is not guilty of a criminal violation of the MMPA, the Secretary may institute proceedings for the assessment of a civil penalty under this part: *Provided*, That if no such civil penalty proceedings have been commenced by the Secretary within 30 days following the final disposition of the criminal case, any property seized pursuant to section 107 of the MMPA shall be returned to the respondent.

(f) If any seized property is to be returned to the respondent, the Regional Director shall issue a letter authorizing such return. This letter shall be dispatched to the respondent by registered mail, return receipt requested, and shall identify the respondent, the seized property, and, if appropriate, the bailee of the seized property. It shall also provide that upon presentation of the letter and proper identification, the seized property is authorized to be released. All charges for storage, care,