impose any information collection requirements that require the approval of the Office of Management and Budget under 44 U.S.C. 3501, *et seq.*

D. Determination To Issue an Interim Rule

A determination has been made under the authority of the Secretary of Defense that urgent and compelling reasons exist to publish an interim rule prior to affording the public an opportunity to comment. This interim rule implements Section 818 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007 (Pub. L. 109–364). Section 818 requires DoD to modify regulations regarding the determination of contract type for major development programs to address requirements for selection of the contract type that is consistent with the level of program risk. Comments received in response to this interim rule will be considered in the formation of the final rule.

List of Subjects in 48 CFR Parts 234 and 235

Government procurement.

Michele P. Peterson,

Editor, Defense Acquisition Regulations System.

■ Therefore, 48 CFR parts 234 and 235 are amended as follows:

■ 1. The authority citation for 48 CFR parts 234 and 235 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 41 U.S.C. 421 and 48 CFR Chapter 1.

PART 234—MAJOR SYSTEM ACQUISITION

■ 2. Section 234.004 is revised to read as follows:

234.004 Acquisition strategy.

(1) See 209.570 for policy applicable to acquisition strategies that consider the use of lead system integrators.

(2) In accordance with Section 818 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007 (Pub. L. 109–364), for major defense acquisition programs as defined in 10 U.S.C. 2430—

(i) The Milestone Decision Authority shall select, with the advice of the contracting officer, the contract type for a development program at the time of Milestone B approval or, in the case of a space program, Key Decision Point B approval;

(ii) The basis for the contract type selection shall be documented in the acquisition strategy. The documentation—

(A) Shall include an explanation of the level of program risk; and

(B) If program risk is determined to be high, shall outline the steps taken to reduce program risk and the reasons for proceeding with Milestone B approval despite the high level of program risk; and

(iii) If a cost-type contract is selected, the contract file shall include the Milestone Decision Authority's written determination that—

(A) The program is so complex and technically challenging that it would not be practicable to reduce program risk to a level that would permit the use of a fixed-price type contract; and

(B) The complexity and technical challenge of the program is not the result of a failure to meet the requirements of 10 U.S.C. 2366a.

PART 235—RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CONTRACTING

■ 3. Section 235.006 is revised to read as follows:

235.006 Contracting methods and contract type.

(b)(i) For major defense acquisition programs as defined in 10 U.S.C. 2430—

(A) Follow the procedures at 234.004; and

(B) Notify the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics) (USD(AT&L)) of an intent not to exercise a fixed-price production option on a development contract for a major weapon system reasonably in advance of the expiration of the option exercise period.

(ii) For other than major defense acquisition programs—

(A) Do not award a fixed-price type contract for a development program effort unless—

(1) The level of program risk permits realistic pricing;

(2) The use of a fixed-price type contract permits an equitable and sensible allocation of program risk between the Government and the contractor; and

(3) A written determination that the criteria of paragraphs (b)(ii)(A)*(1)* and *(2)* of this section have been met is executed—

(i) By the USD(AT&L) if the contract is over $25 million and is for: research and development for a non-major system; the development of a major system (as defined in FAR 2.101); or the development of a subsystem of a major system; or

(ii) By the contracting officer for any development not covered by paragraph (b)(ii)(A)*(3)(i)* of this section.

(B) Obtain USD(AT&L) approval of the Government's prenegotiation position before negotiations begin, and obtain USD(AT&L) approval of the negotiated agreement with the contractor before the agreement is executed, for any action that is—

(1) An increase of more than $250 million in the price or ceiling price of a fixed-price type development contract, or a fixed-price type contract for the lead ship of a class;

(2) A reduction in the amount of work under a fixed-price type development contract or a fixed-price type contract for the lead ship of a class, when the value of the work deleted is $100 million or more; or

(3) A repricing of fixed-price type production options to a development contract, or a contract for the lead ship of a class, that increases the price or ceiling price by more than $250 million for equivalent quantities.

[FR Doc. E8–1092 Filed 1–23–08; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 229

[Docket No. 080117051–8053–01]

RIN 0648–XF17

Taking of Marine Mammals Incidental to Commercial Fishing Operations; Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan

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

ACTION: Temporary rule.

SUMMARY: The Assistant Administrator for Fisheries (AA), NOAA, announces temporary restrictions consistent with the requirements of the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan's (ALWTRP) implementing regulations. These regulations apply to lobster trap/pot and anchored gillnet fishermen in an area totaling approximately 2,251 nm^2 (7,720 km^2), southeast of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, for 15 days. The purpose of this action is to provide protection to an aggregation of northern right whales (right whales).

DATES: Effective beginning at 0001 hours January 26, 2008, through 2400 hours February 9, 2008.

ADDRESSES: Copies of the proposed and final Dynamic Area Management (DAM) rules, Environmental Assessments (EAs), Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team (ALWTRT) meeting summaries, and progress reports on

implementation of the ALWTRP may also be obtained by writing Diane Borggaard, NMFS/Northeast Region, One Blackburn Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Diane Borggaard, NMFS/Northeast Region, 978–281–9300 x6503; or Kristy Long, NMFS, Office of Protected Resources, 301–713–2322.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Electronic Access

Several of the background documents for the ALWTRP and the take reduction planning process can be downloaded from the ALWTRP web site at *http://www.nero.noaa.gov/whaletrp/*.

Background

The ALWTRP was developed pursuant to section 118 of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) to reduce the incidental mortality and serious injury of three endangered species of whales (right, fin, and humpback) due to incidental interaction with commercial fishing activities. In addition, the measures identified in the ALWTRP would provide conservation benefits to a fourth species (minke), which are neither listed as endangered nor threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The ALWTRP, implemented through regulations codified at 50 CFR 229.32, relies on a combination of fishing gear modifications and time/area closures to reduce the risk of whales becoming entangled in commercial fishing gear (and potentially suffering serious injury or mortality as a result).

On January 9, 2002, NMFS published the final rule to implement the ALWTRP's DAM program (67 FR 1133). On August 26, 2003, NMFS amended the regulations by publishing a final rule, which specifically identified gear modifications that may be allowed in a DAM zone (68 FR 51195). The DAM program provides specific authority for NMFS to restrict temporarily on an expedited basis the use of lobster trap/pot and anchored gillnet fishing gear in areas north of 40° N. lat. to protect right whales. Under the DAM program, NMFS may: (1) require the removal of all lobster trap/pot and anchored gillnet fishing gear for a 15–day period; (2) allow lobster trap/pot and anchored gillnet fishing within a DAM zone with gear modifications determined by NMFS to sufficiently reduce the risk of entanglement; and/or (3) issue an alert to fishermen requesting the voluntary removal of all lobster trap/pot and anchored gillnet gear for a 15–day period and asking fishermen not to set any additional gear in the DAM zone during the 15–day period.

A DAM zone is triggered when NMFS receives a reliable report from a qualified individual of three or more right whales sighted within an area (75 nm^2 (139 km^2)) such that right whale density is equal to or greater than 0.04 right whales per nm^2 (1.85 km^2). A qualified individual is an individual ascertained by NMFS to be reasonably able, through training or experience, to identify a right whale. Such individuals include, but are not limited to, NMFS staff, U.S. Coast Guard and Navy personnel trained in whale identification, scientific research survey personnel, whale watch operators and naturalists, and mariners trained in whale species identification through disentanglement training or some other training program deemed adequate by NMFS. A reliable report would be a credible right whale sighting.

On January 13, 2008, an aerial survey reported two aggregations of right whales, totaling seven individuals: four whales in the proximity of 42° 37′ N. latitude and 70° 01′ W. longitude, and three whales in the proximity of 42° 51′ N. latitude and 70° 04′ W. longitude. These positions lie northeast of Boston, Massachusetts, and southeast of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, respectively. After conducting an investigation, NMFS ascertained that the report came from a qualified individual and determined that the report was reliable. Thus, NMFS has received a reliable report from a qualified individual of the requisite right whale density to trigger the DAM provisions of the ALWTRP.

Once a DAM zone is triggered, NMFS determines whether to impose restrictions on fishing and/or fishing gear in the zone. This determination is based on the following factors, including but not limited to: the location of the DAM zone with respect to other fishery closure areas, weather conditions as they relate to the safety of human life at sea, the type and amount of gear already present in the area, and a review of recent right whale entanglement and mortality data.

NMFS has reviewed the factors and management options noted above relative to the DAM under consideration. As a result of this review, NMFS prohibits lobster trap/pot and anchored gillnet gear in this area during the 15–day restricted period unless it is modified in the manner described in this temporary rule.

The DAM Zone is bound by the following coordinates:

43° 09′ N., 70° 29′ W. (NW Corner)
43° 09′ N., 69° 39′ W.
42° 56′ N., 69° 39′ W.
42° 56′ N., 69° 33′ W.
42° 16′ N., 69° 33′ W.
42° 16′ N., 70° 33′ W.
42° 56′ N., 70° 33′ W.
42° 56′ N., 70° 29′ W.
43° 09′ N., 70° 29′ W. (NW Corner)

In addition to those gear modifications currently implemented under the ALWTRP at 50 CFR 229.32, the following gear modifications are required in the DAM zone. If the requirements and exceptions for gear modification in the DAM zone, as described below, differ from other ALWTRP requirements for any overlapping areas and times, then the more restrictive requirements will apply in the DAM zone.

Lobster Trap/pot Gear

Fishermen utilizing lobster trap/pot gear within the portions of Northern Nearshore Lobster Waters, Northern Inshore State Lobster Waters, and the Stellwagen Bank/Jeffrey's Ledge Restricted Area that overlap with the DAM zone are required to utilize all of the following gear modifications while the DAM zone is in effect:

1. Groundlines must be made of either sinking or neutrally buoyant line. Floating groundlines are prohibited;
2. All buoy lines must be made of either sinking or neutrally buoyant line, except the bottom portion of the line, which may be a section of floating line not to exceed one-third the overall length of the buoy line;
3. Fishermen are allowed to use two buoy lines per trawl; and
4. A weak link with a maximum breaking strength of 600 lb (272.4 kg) must be placed at all buoys.

Fishermen utilizing lobster trap/pot gear within the portion of the Offshore Lobster Waters Area that overlap with the DAM zone are required to utilize all of the following gear modifications while the DAM zone is in effect:

1. Groundlines must be made of either sinking or neutrally buoyant line. Floating groundlines are prohibited;
2. All buoy lines must be made of either sinking or neutrally buoyant line, except the bottom portion of the line, which may be a section of floating line not to exceed one-third the overall length of the buoy line;
3. Fishermen are allowed to use two buoy lines per trawl; and
4. A weak link with a maximum breaking strength of 1,500 lb (680.4 kg) must be placed at all buoys.

Anchored Gillnet Gear

Fishermen utilizing anchored gillnet gear within the portions of Other Northeast Gillnet Waters and the

Stellwagen Bank/Jeffrey's Ledge Restricted Area that overlap with the DAM zone are required to utilize all the following gear modifications while the DAM zone is in effect:

1. Groundlines must be made of either sinking or neutrally buoyant line. Floating groundlines are prohibited;

2. All buoy lines must be made of either sinking or neutrally buoyant line, except the bottom portion of the line, which may be a section of floating line not to exceed one-third the overall length of the buoy line;

3. Fishermen are allowed to use two buoy lines per string;

4. The breaking strength of each net panel weak link must not exceed 1,100 lb (498.8 kg). The weak link requirements apply to all variations in net panel size. One weak link must be placed in the center of the floatline and one weak link must be placed in the center of each of the up and down lines at both ends of the net panel. Additionally, one weak link must be placed as close as possible to each end of the net panels on the floatline; or, one weak link must be placed between floatline tie-loops between net panels and one weak link must be placed where the floatline tie-loops attach to the bridle, buoy line, or groundline at each end of a net string;

5. A weak link with a maximum breaking strength of 1,100 lb (498.8 kg) must be placed at all buoys; and

6. All anchored gillnets, regardless of the number of net panels, must be securely anchored with the holding power of at least a 22 lb (10.0 kg) Danforth-style anchor at each end of the net string.

The restrictions will be in effect beginning at 0001 hours January 26, 2008, through 2400 hours February 9, 2008, unless terminated sooner or extended by NMFS through another notification in the **Federal Register**.

The restrictions will be announced to state officials, fishermen, ALWTRT members, and other interested parties through e-mail, phone contact, NOAA website, and other appropriate media immediately upon issuance of the rule by the AA.

Classification

In accordance with section 118(f)(9) of the MMPA, the Assistant Administrator (AA) for Fisheries has determined that this action is necessary to implement a take reduction plan to protect North Atlantic right whales.

Environmental Assessments for the DAM program were prepared on December 28, 2001, and August 6, 2003. This action falls within the scope of the analyses of these EAs, which are available from the agency upon request.

NMFS provided prior notice and an opportunity for public comment on the regulations establishing the criteria and procedures for implementing a DAM zone. Providing prior notice and opportunity for comment on this action, pursuant to those regulations, would be impracticable because it would prevent NMFS from executing its functions to protect and reduce serious injury and mortality of endangered right whales. The regulations establishing the DAM program are designed to enable the agency to help protect unexpected concentrations of right whales. In order to meet the goals of the DAM program, the agency needs to be able to create a DAM zone and implement restrictions on fishing gear as soon as possible once the criteria are triggered and NMFS determines that a DAM restricted zone is appropriate. If NMFS were to provide prior notice and an opportunity for public comment upon the creation of a DAM restricted zone, the aggregated right whales would be vulnerable to entanglement which could result in serious injury and mortality. Additionally, the right whales would most likely move on to another location before NMFS could implement the restrictions designed to protect them, thereby rendering the action obsolete. Therefore, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B), the AA finds that good cause exists to waive prior notice and an opportunity to comment on this action to implement a DAM restricted zone to reduce the risk of entanglement of endangered right whales in commercial lobster trap/pot and anchored gillnet gear as such procedures would be impracticable.

For the same reasons, the AA finds that, under 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3), good cause exists to waive the 30–day delay in effective date. If NMFS were to delay for 30 days the effective date of this action, the aggregated right whales would be vulnerable to entanglement, which could cause serious injury and mortality. Additionally, right whales would likely move to another location between the time NMFS approved the action creating the DAM restricted zone and the time it went into effect, thereby rendering the action obsolete and ineffective. Nevertheless, NMFS recognizes the need for fishermen to have time to either modify or remove (if not in compliance with the required restrictions) their gear from a DAM zone once one is approved. Thus, NMFS makes this action effective 2 days after the date of publication of this document in the **Federal Register**. NMFS will also endeavor to provide notice of this action to fishermen through other means upon issuance of the rule by the AA, thereby providing approximately 3 additional days of notice while the Office of the **Federal Register** processes the document for publication.

NMFS determined that the regulations establishing the DAM program and actions such as this one taken pursuant to those regulations are consistent to the maximum extent practicable with the enforceable policies of the approved coastal management program of the U.S. Atlantic coastal states. This determination was submitted for review by the responsible state agencies under section 307 of the Coastal Zone Management Act. Following state review of the regulations creating the DAM program, no state disagreed with NMFS' conclusion that the DAM program is consistent to the maximum extent practicable with the enforceable policies of the approved coastal management program for that state.

The DAM program under which NMFS is taking this action contains policies with federalism implications warranting preparation of a federalism assessment under Executive Order 13132. Accordingly, in October 2001 and March 2003, the Assistant Secretary for Intergovernmental and Legislative Affairs, Department of Commerce, provided notice of the DAM program and its amendments to the appropriate elected officials in states to be affected by actions taken pursuant to the DAM program. Federalism issues raised by state officials were addressed in the final rules implementing the DAM program. A copy of the federalism Summary Impact Statement for the final rules is available upon request (**ADDRESSES**).

The rule implementing the DAM program has been determined to be not significant under Executive Order 12866.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.* and 50 CFR 229.32(g)(3)

Dated: January 17, 2008.

John Oliver,

Deputy Assistant Administrator for Operations, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 08–262 Filed 1–18–08; 2:32 pm]

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