

to a voluntary annual post card survey to list the number of days spent fishing for billfish, where they fished, and what they caught. This information is used to help determine changes in areas of local abundance of Pacific billfish and is useful in the management of billfish resources.

II. Method of Collection

A paper form the size of a postcard is used.

III. Data

OMB Number: 0648-0020.

Form Number: NOAA Form 88-10.

Type of Review: Regular submission.

Affected Public: Individuals or households.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 1,500.

Estimated Time Per Response: 5 minutes.

Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours: 125.

Estimated Total Annual Cost to Public: \$0.

IV. Request for Comments

Comments are invited on: (a) whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden (including hours and cost) of the proposed collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized and/or included in the request for OMB approval of this information collection; they also will become a matter of public record.

Dated: June 8, 2001.

Gwellnar Banks,

Management Analyst, Office of the Chief Information Officer.

[FR Doc. 01-15064 Filed 6-13-01; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-S

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Intent To Distribute Digital Electronic Navigational Charts on the Internet

AGENCY: Office of Coast Survey, National Ocean Service, National

Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), DOC.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: NOAA's National Ocean Service (NOS) is announcing its intention to distribute digital Electronic Navigational Charts (ENC) of U.S. waters on the Internet.

This notice announces that NOS intends to distribute digital ENC's of U.S. waters via the Internet beginning on or about July 16, 2001. NOS plans to post its ENC's and associated updates on the World Wide Web with the data accessible to all users.

The purpose of distributing ENC's in this manner is to promote maximum availability of these valuable data, which have primary application in navigation and in a broad range of Geographic Information System (GIS) activities. For users interested in navigational applications, the data will be posted at NOAA's Office of Coast Survey Web Site,

www.chartmaker.nos.noaa.gov.

Initially digital ENC's will be provided as prototype products. At the outset, the data will not be supported by regular updates. Therefore, these ENC's should not be used for navigation. Rather, during this initial period, the intent is for users to familiarize themselves with downloading procedures and for NOS to evaluate the products and to determine the level of support necessary to maintain the distribution service. Once NOS develops and implements an update process and assuming that no problems are identified during the initial phase and that such problems are resolved, NOS intends to make the ENC's available for use in navigation. The NOS ENC products are designed in compliance with the International Hydrographic Organization's S-57 ENC Product Specification.

Initially, ENC's will be available for the nation's 40 major ports. However, NOS plans to expand coverage as resources become available. The ENC data posted on the Web will not be encrypted, but may have some type of authentication built in, such as a digital watermark, so that end users can verify that data issued by NOS has not been corrupted.

NOS does not intend to limit access to or restrict use of ENC's available on the Internet. However, NOS does plan to develop specific procedures for users who wish to incorporate these ENC's in products designed to satisfy chart carriage requirements mandated by the International Safety Of Life At Sea Convention (SOLAS) and the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations. This means that

users planning to provide value added navigation products must establish a certifiable process by which NOS ENC data are incorporated in the products without compromise to the data quality or data lineage.

NOS intends to issue guidelines governing the certification process for derived navigational products. Among the guidelines under consideration are: (1) The operation of a quality assurance system that is in essential compliance with a recognized quality standard, such as ISO 9000 series or equivalent and (2) the certification by a United States Coast Guard-approved quality standards organization that results in products being consistently manufactured to the same specification.

Once NOS makes its ENC's available on the Web, it anticipates that industry will develop services in support of derived products. For example, a portfolio management service or an ENC distributor may provide NOS ENC's "as-is" and "push" the appropriate updates to a segment of users who choose not to download the data directly. Likewise, a system manufacturer may bundle or resell the ENC's by converting the data to a proprietary "System ENC" (SENC) before distributing it to customers. In the latter case, the SENC product and supporting updates must be based on a certifiable process by which there is no compromise to NOS-provided data. Further, since ENC's will be provided in the open, non-proprietary S-57 format, NOS anticipates that most users will be well versed in the format and its feature attribution. With this in mind, it is expected that S-57 technical support will be provided by expertise available in the private sector.

The coastal management community, a major NOAA constituency, will also benefit from this distribution policy in that ENC data will be widely available for use as base map information in a variety of GIS applications. Coastal managers, emergency planners, and others will have easy access to ENC data. To assist these users, NOAA will investigate means to convert the data to a format that is more suitable for GIS applications and to post it in a manner similar to the navigational data. However, the level of specialized technical support by NOS is expected to be limited.

NOS intends to conduct several workshops in order to familiarize the public with the distribution policy, to entertain comments from interested parties on its implementation, to consider complaints with the distribution of prototype products and to answer questions pertaining to the use of ENC's for production of derived

navigational products and for GIS related applications. The workshops will be announced in the NOS Web sites, www.nos.noaa.gov, and the Office of Coast Survey, noted above, and by mail to NOS constituents.

NOS plans to conduct an initial briefing that will be open to the general public concerning its plan to release ENC's on the Internet. The briefing will be held at 9 AM, July 11, 2001, Room 4527, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, Maryland. Members of the public who plan on attending this briefing should contact Mike Brown at (301)-713-2712 x153 or e-mail Mike.Brown@noaa.gov.

NOS has been in contact with the U.S. Coast Guard concerning 33 CFR 164.33, Nautical Charts and Publications, as it pertains to this announced policy. Questions concerning those regulations should be addressed to the Director of Waterways Management, United States Coast Guard, Washington, DC 20593-0001.

NOS is publishing this notice consistent with section 8a(6)(j) of the Office of Management and Budget Circular A-130. Anyone with comments or questions regarding this subject should address them to Captain Nicholas Perugini, NOAA, Chief, Marine Chart Division, Office of Coast Survey, NOS/NOAA, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3282.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Captain Nicholas E. Perugini, NOAA, Chief, Marine Chart Division, Office of Coast Survey, NOS/NOAA 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3282, 301-713-2724, Extension 101, FAX: 301-713-4516.

Dated: June 7, 2001.

Margaret A. Davidson,

Acting Assistant Administrator for Ocean Services and Coastal Zone Management.

[FR Doc. 01-14974 Filed 6-13-01; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-M

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 052401B]

Small Takes of Marine Mammals Incidental to Specified Activities; Offshore Seismic Activities in the Beaufort Sea

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

ACTION: ACTION: Notice of receipt of application and proposed authorization for a small take exemption; request for comments.

SUMMARY: NMFS has received a request from WesternGeco, LLC (formerly Western Geophysical) for an authorization to take small numbers of marine mammals by harassment incidental to conducting ocean bottom cable (OBC) seismic surveys in the Alaskan Beaufort Sea. Under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), NMFS is requesting comments on its proposal to authorize WesternGeco to incidentally take, by harassment, small numbers of bowhead whales and other marine mammals in the above mentioned area during the open water period of 2001.

DATES: Comments and information must be received no later than July 16, 2001.

ADDRESSES: Comments on the application should be addressed to Donna Wieting, Chief, Marine Mammal Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910-3225. A copy of the application, the Technical Monitoring Plan, the Environmental Assessment (EA), and a list of references used in this document may be obtained by writing to this address or by telephoning one of the contacts listed here.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Simona Perry Roberts, Office of Protected Resources (301) 713-2322, ext. 106, or Brad Smith, Alaska Region (907) 271-5006.

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

Permission may be granted if NMFS finds that the taking will have no more than 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 subsistence uses and that the permissible methods of taking and requirements pertaining to the

monitoring and reporting of such taking are set forth.

On April 10, 1996 (61 FR 15884), NMFS published an interim rule establishing, among other things, procedures for issuing incidental harassment authorizations (IHAs) under section 101 (a)(5)(D) of the MMPA for activities in Arctic waters. For additional information on the procedures to be followed for this authorization, please refer to that document.

Summary of Request

On April 16, 2001, NMFS received an application from WesternGeco requesting an authorization for the harassment of small numbers of several species of marine mammals incidental to conducting OBC seismic surveys during the open water season in the south central Beaufort Sea off Alaska between western Camden Bay and Harrison Bay. The primary area of seismic activity is expected to be an area approximately 16 by 7 kilometers (km) (10 miles (mi) by 4 mi) in and near Simpson Lagoon, west of Prudhoe Bay and offshore of Oliktok Point. Weather permitting, the survey is expected to take place between approximately July 15 and late October, 2001. WesternGeco anticipates completing six survey patches during the 2001 open water season. A detailed description of the work proposed for 2001 is contained in the application (WesternGeco, 2001) which is available upon request (see **ADDRESSES**).

Description of the Activity

Seismic surveys are used to obtain data about geological formations several thousands of feet deep. The proposed seismic operation is an OBC survey. WesternGeco's OBC survey involves dropping cables from a ship to the ocean bottom, forming a patch consisting of 4 parallel cables 8.9 km (5.5 mi) long, separated by approximately 600 meters (m) (1,968 feet (ft)) from each other. Hydrophones and geophones, attached to the cables, are used to detect seismic energy reflected back from rock strata below the ocean bottom. The source of this energy is a submerged acoustic source, called a seismic airgun array, that releases compressed air into the water, creating an acoustical energy pulse that is directed downward toward the seabed. WesternGeco will use two source vessels for the open-water 2001 seismic surveys, one for deep water and one for shallow water, primarily shoreward of the barrier islands. The deep water vessel, the R/V *Arctic Star*, will utilize an airgun array with an air discharge volume of 1,210 cubic inches