Permit 13380—2R

The NWFSC is seeking to renew for five years a permit that currently allows them to annually take natural juvenile SR spring/summer Chinook salmon and SR steelhead in the Salmon River subbasin in Idaho. This research has been in progress for over ten years and is designed to assess three alternative methods of nutrient enhancement (Salmon carcasses, carcass analogues, and nutrient pellets) on biological communities in Columbia River tributaries. In general, the purpose of the research is to learn how salmonids acquire nutrients from the carcasses of dead spawners and test three methods of using those nutrients to increase growth and survival among naturally produced salmonids. The research would benefit the fish by helping managers use nutrient enhancement techniques to recover listed salmonid populations. Moreover, managers would gain a broader understanding of the role marine-derived nutrients play in ecosystem health as a whole. This, in turn, would help inform management decisions and actions intended to help salmon recovery in the future.

Under the proposed research, the fish would variously be (a) captured (using seines, nets, traps, and possibly, electrofishing equipment) and anesthetized; (b) measured, weighed and fin-clipped; (c) held for a time in enclosures in the stream from which they are captured; and (d) released. A number of the captured fish would also be intentionally killed so the researchers may conduct stable isotope, otolith, and diet analyses with the purpose of linking growth and survival to habitat conditions. It is also likely that a small percentage of the fish being captured would unintentionally be killed during the process; in such instances, any unintentional mortalities would be used in place of any fish that would otherwise be lethally taken. In addition, tissue samples would be taken from adult carcasses.

Permit 16979

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is seeking a five-year permit to collect data on UCR Chinook and steelhead abundance, status, distribution, diversity, species/ecological interactions, and behavior in the Columbia River from its confluence with the Yakima River upstream to Chief Joseph Dam. The research will benefit fish by helping managers (a) understand the distribution and proportion of hatchery and natural origin steelhead, and Chinook in UCR tributaries, (b) understand the influences of other biotic and abiotic factors with respect to recovering listed species, (c) understand the potential effects of proposed land use practices, (d) determine appropriate regulatory and habitat protection measures in the areas where land use actions are planned, (e) project the impacts of potential hydraulic projects, and (f) evaluate the effectiveness of local forest practices and instream habitat improvement projects in terms of their ability to protect and enhance listed salmonid populations.

The researchers would capture fish via a wide variety of means (snorkeling, dip netting, seining, using electrofishing equipment, traps and weirs, and barbless hook-and-line sampling). The captured fish would be variously tissue sampled, measured, tagged, allowed to recover, and released. The researchers do not intend to kill any of the fish being captured, but a small percentage of them may inadvertently be killed as a result of the proposed activities.

Permit 17306

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) is seeking a five-year permit to capture threatened MCR steelhead (adults and juveniles) in the upper Deschutes River, Oregon. The various proposed activities would include adult and juvenile snorkel surveys throughout the basin, screw trapping, backpack and boat electrofishing and mark/recapture studies, hook and line surveys, telemetry, seining, spawning ground surveys using weirs and redd counts, monitoring habitat restoration projects, and setting traps and nets in reservoirs for population monitoring. Data collected from this work would be used to inform management decisions. Biologists from the ODFW have been conducting this work in the area for decades without the need for a permit, but since threatened MCR steelhead have recently been reintroduced to the area, they are seeking a permit that would allow them to continue it. The researchers do not intend to kill any of the fish being captured, but a small percentage may be killed as an inadvertent result of the activities.

This notice is provided pursuant to section 10(c) of the ESA. NMFS will evaluate the applications, associated documents, and comments submitted to determine whether the applications meet the requirements of section 10(a) of the ESA and Federal regulations. The final permit decisions will not be made until after the end of the 30-day comment period. NMFS will publish notice of its final action in the **Federal Register**.

Angela Somma,

Chief, Endangered Species Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 2013–00138 Filed 1–7–13; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–22–P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648–XC426

Endangered and Threatened Species; Take of Anadromous Fish

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

ACTION: Issuance of five scientific research permits.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that NMFS has issued Permit 14808 to the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG), Permit 15573 to the Glenn-Colusa Irrigation District (GCID), Permit 16543 to the California Department of Water Resources (CDWR), Permit 13791 to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and Permit 17077 to Dr. Peter Moyle with the University of California, Davis (UCD).

ADDRESSES: The approved application for each permit is available on the Applications and Permits for Protected Species (APPS), *https://apps.nmfs.noaa.gov* Web site by searching the permit number within the Search Database page. The applications, issued permits and supporting documents are also available upon written request or by appointment: Protected Resources Division, NMFS, 650 Capitol Mall, Room 5–100, Sacramento, CA 95814 (phone: (916) 930–3600, fax: (916) 930–3629).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Amanda Cranford at 916–930–3706, or email: *Amanda.Cranford@noaa.gov.*

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Authority

The issuance of permits and permit modifications, as required by the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531–1543) (ESA), is based on a finding that such permits/modifications: (1) Are applied for in good faith; (2) would not operate to the disadvantage of the listed species which are the subject of the permits; and (3) are consistent with the purposes and policies set forth in section 2 of the

ESA. Authority to take listed species is subject to conditions set forth in the permits. Permits and modifications are issued in accordance with and are subject to the ESA and NMFS regulations (50 CFR parts 222–226) governing listed fish and wildlife permits.

Species Covered in This Notice

This notice is relevant to federally endangered Sacramento River (SR) winter-run Chinook salmon (*Oncorhyncus tshawytscha*), threatened Central Valley (CV) spring-run Chinook salmon (*O. tshawytscha*), threatened California Central Valley (CCV) steelhead (*O. mykiss*), and threatened southern distinct population segment (SDPS) of North American green sturgeon (*Acipenser medirostris*), henceforth referred to as ESA-listed salmonids and SDPS green sturgeon.

Permits Issued

Permit 14808

A notice of the receipt of an application for a scientific research permit (14808) was published in the **Federal Register** on April 24, 2012 (77 FR 24469). Permit 14808 was issued to CDFG on September 26, 2012 and expires on December 31, 2017.

Permit 14808 is for research to be conducted at two different sites within the upper Sacramento River, California. The main purpose of the research conducted by CDFG is to monitor the outmigration of juvenile salmonids on a real-time basis and provide daily summaries of timing, abundance and size distribution of salmonids in the Sacramento River at two different sites before they enter the Delta. Data can then be forwarded to various water agencies for better management decisions and to reduce frequency of ESA-listed fish entrainment. Permit 14808 authorizes capture (by rotary screw trap), anesthetizing, handling (fork length measurements and wet weights), and release of smolt and juvenile SR winter-run and CV spring-run Chinook salmon, adult and juvenile CCV steelhead and juvenile SDPS green sturgeon downstream of the trapping location.

Permit 14808 authorizes non-lethal take and low levels (not to exceed two percent) of unintentional lethal take. Permit 14808 also authorizes intentional, directed lethal take of smolt and juvenile adipose fin-clipped, hatchery produced, SR winter-run Chinook salmon for coded wire tag retrieval and processing.

Permit 15573

A notice of the receipt of an application for a scientific research and enhancement permit renewal (15573) was published in the **Federal Register** on December 15, 2010 (75 FR 78226). Permit 15573 was issued to GCID on October 5, 2012 and expires on December 31, 2017.

Permit 15573 is for research to be conducted in an oxbow of the Sacramento River, immediately downstream of the Hamilton City Pumping Plant, Glenn County, California. The primary objectives to which ESA-listed salmonids and SDPS green sturgeon may be taken are to collect emigration data as a reference and research tool to provide short-term monitoring specifically related to restoration actions and long-term monitoring to detect annular and cyclic population changes. Take activities associated with research on smolt and juvenile ESA-listed salmonids and juvenile SDPS green sturgeon include the following: capture (by rotary screw trap), anesthetizing, and release of fish downstream of the trapping location.

Permit 15573 authorizes non-lethal and low levels (not to exceed two percent) of unintentional lethal take of smolt and juvenile ESA-listed salmonids and juvenile SDPS green sturgeon. Permit 15573 does not authorize any intentional lethal take of ESA-listed salmonids and SDPS green sturgeon.

Permit 16543

A notice of the receipt of an application for a scientific research and enhancement permit (16543) was published in the **Federal Register** on July 18, 2012 (77 FR 42278). Permit 16543 was issued to CDWR on October 22, 2012 and expires on December 31, 2014.

Permit 16543 is for research to be conducted in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, California. The primary objectives to which ESA-listed salmonids and SDPS green sturgeon may be taken are to provide information on spatial and environmental patterns of predation; critical information for guiding future restoration projects on conditions likely to support or discourage higher predation rates on ESA-listed and native fishes. Take activities associated with research on adult ESA-listed salmonids and both juvenile and adult SDPS green sturgeon include the following: capture (by trammel net), handling (species identification and enumeration), and release of fish downstream of the capture location.

Permit 16543 authorizes CDWR non-lethal take of adult ESA-listed salmonids and both juvenile and adult SDPS green sturgeon. Permit 16543 does not authorize any unintentional or intentional lethal take of ESA-listed salmonids and SDPS green sturgeon.

Permit 13791

A notice of the receipt of an application for a scientific research and enhancement permit (13791) was published in the **Federal Register** on April 24, 2012 (77 FR 24469). Permit 13791 was issued to USFWS on October 23, 2012 and expires on December 31, 2015.

Permit 13791 is for research to be conducted in the Sacramento River basin and the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, California. The primary objectives to which ESA-listed salmonids and SDPS green sturgeon may be taken by the USFWS' Delta Juvenile Fish Monitoring Program and the Breach III Project are to provide basic biological and population information on fishes of management concern. Additionally, data collected can be used by natural resource managers to evaluate the effectiveness of water operations, aquatic habitat restoration, and fish management practices within the San Francisco Estuary (SFE) and its watershed. Take activities associated with research on juvenile ESA-listed salmonids and SDPS green sturgeon include the following: capture (by fyke nets, multi-mesh gill nets, larval fish trawls, midwater trawls, Kodiak trawls, electrofishing and beach seines), handling (species and race identification and enumeration, fork-length measurements, tissue/scale samples if applicable), and release of fish downstream of the capture location.

Permit 13791 authorizes non-lethal take and low levels (not to exceed 12.5 percent) of unintentional lethal take. Permit 13791 also authorizes intentional, directed lethal take of smolt and juvenile adipose fin-clipped, hatchery produced, SR winter-run and CV spring-run Chinook salmon for coded wire tag retrieval and processing.

Permit 17077

A notice of the receipt of an application for a scientific research and enhancement permit (17077) was published in the **Federal Register** on August 24, 2012 (77 FR 51520). Permit 17077 was issued to Dr. Peter Moyle on November 26, 2012 and expires on December 31, 2015.

Permit 17077 is for research to be conducted in three distinct regions across the SFE: the Cache-Lindsay Slough complex, the Sherman Lake

complex, and Suisun Marsh. The primary objectives to which ESA-listed salmonids and SDPS green sturgeon may be taken by Dr. Moyle are to determine the extent that native fishes use intertidal and subtidal shallow water and marsh (SWM) habitats in the northern arc of the SFE and to understand how fishes commonly inhabiting Suisun Marsh use the Sacramento River corridor to access SWM habitats that are not currently surveyed in Sherman Lake, Cache Slough and Lindsey Slough. Further, Dr. Moyle will model fish abundance and assembly using biophysical habitat data (including slough geomorphology, hydrology, and water quality) to guide restoration projects that will successfully support native fishes and discourage aliens.

Permit 17077 authorizes non-lethal take and low levels (not to exceed 20 percent, equivalent to one fish) of unintentional lethal take of adult and juvenile ESA-listed salmonids and both adult and juvenile SDPS green sturgeon. Permit 17077 does not authorize any intentional lethal take of ESA-listed salmonids or SDPS green sturgeon.

Angela Somma,

Chief, Endangered Species Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 2013–00139 Filed 1–7–13; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648–XC359

Taking and Importing Marine Mammals; Taking Marine Mammals Incidental to Hydrographic Surveys

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

ACTION: Notice; receipt of application for letter of authorization; request for comments and information.

SUMMARY: NMFS' Office of Protected Resources has received a request from the NOAA Office of Coast Survey (OCS) for authorization to take small numbers of marine mammals incidental to conducting hydrographic surveys, over the course of 5 years from the date of issuance. Pursuant to regulations implementing the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), NMFS is announcing receipt of OCS's request under the MMPA for the development and implementation of regulations governing the incidental taking of marine mammals. We invite information, suggestions, and comments on OCS's application and request.

DATES: Comments and information must be received no later than February 7, 2013.

ADDRESSES: Comments on the application should be addressed to P. Michael Payne, Chief, Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910–3225. The mailbox address for providing email comments is *ITP.Laws@noaa.gov.* We are not responsible for email comments sent to addresses other than the one provided here. Comments sent via email, including all attachments, must not exceed a 10-megabyte file size.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ben Laws, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, (301) 427–8401.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Availability

An electronic copy of OCS's application may be obtained by visiting the Internet at: *http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/permits/incidental.htm#applications.*

The OCS released a draft Environmental Assessment, prepared pursuant to requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act, for the conduct of their hydrographic surveys on June 20, 2012. A copy of the draft EA which would also support our proposed rulemaking under the MMPA, is also available at *http://www.nauticalcharts.noaa.gov/Legal/.*

Background

Section 101(a)(5)(A) of the MMPA (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*) directs the Secretary of Commerce (Secretary) 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) if certain findings are made and regulations are issued.

Incidental taking shall be allowed if NMFS finds that the taking will have a negligible impact on the species or stock(s) affected and will not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of the species or stock(s) for taking for subsistence uses, and if the permissible methods of taking and requirements pertaining to the mitigation, monitoring and reporting of such taking 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.'' Except with respect to 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 December 27, 2012, we received a complete and adequate application from OCS requesting authorization for take of marine mammals incidental to hydrographic surveys conducted by OCS. The requested governing regulations would be valid for 5 years from the date of issuance. OCS operates active acoustic devices that have the potential to disturb marine mammals, and operates throughout coastal waters of the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone. During 2013–18, OCS plans to conduct surveys in all coastal waters of the U.S. except for those in the Caribbean and in Hawaii and other Pacific islands. Because the specified activities have the potential to take marine mammals present within the action areas, OCS requests authorization to take small numbers of multiple species or stocks of marine mammal.

Specified Activities

Hydrographic survey projects support OCS's mandated mission to provide reliable nautical charts and other products necessary for safe navigation, economic security, and environmental sustainability in U.S. coastal waters. OCS surveys approximately 3,000 square nautical miles of coastal waters each year, and proposes to continue the same level of activity. In order to conduct these surveys, OCS uses active acoustic devices, including some that may result in behavioral harassment of marine mammals. These include high-frequency single-beam and multibeam echosounders and side-scan sonars mounted on or towed behind vessels traveling at a slow speed.

A more detailed description of the hydrographic surveys conducted by OCS may be found in their application, which is available at: *http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/permits/incidental.htm.*