

individuals may return multiple times in a day, but PSOs would count them as separate takes if they cannot be individually identified.

The most recent estimate for the Alaska stock of Dall's porpoise was 13,110 animals, however this number just accounts for a portion of the stock's range. Therefore, the 183 takes of this stock authorized is believed to be an even smaller portion of the overall stock abundance.

Likewise, there is no current or historical estimate of the Alaska minke whale stock, but minke whale abundance has been estimated to be over 1,000 whales in portions of Alaska (Muto *et al.*, 2022) so the 8 takes proposed for authorization represent small numbers of this stock.

Additionally, the range of the Alaska stock of minke whales is extensive, stretching from the Canadian Pacific coast to the Chukchi Sea, and DOT&PF's project area impacts a small portion of this range. Therefore, the eight takes of minke whale proposed for authorization is small relative to estimated survey abundance, even if each proposed take occurred to a new individual.

Based on the analysis contained herein of the planned activity (including the mitigation and monitoring measures) and the anticipated take of marine mammals, NMFS finds that small numbers of marine mammals would be taken relative to the population size of the affected species or stocks.

Unmitigable Adverse Impact Analysis and Determination

In order to issue an IHA, NMFS must find that the specified activity will not have an "unmitigable adverse impact" on the subsistence uses of the affected marine mammal species or stocks by Alaskan Natives. NMFS has defined "unmitigable adverse impact" in 50 CFR 216.103 as an impact resulting from the specified activity: (1) That is likely to reduce the availability of the species to a level insufficient for a harvest to meet subsistence needs by: (i) Causing the marine mammals to abandon or avoid hunting areas; (ii) Directly displacing subsistence users; or (iii) Placing physical barriers between the marine mammals and the subsistence hunters; and (2) That cannot be sufficiently mitigated by other measures to increase the availability of marine mammals to allow subsistence needs to be met.

In the Skagway area, sea lions and harbor seals are available for subsistence harvest authorized under the MMPA. The subsistence areas used by the Hoonah and Angoon communities are in the vicinity of the project area, but will

not directly overlap with the project areas. During subsistence harvest in Southeast Alaska in 2012, the most recent year of available data from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, 595 harbor seals were taken, while only 9 sea lions were taken in the region (Wolfe *et al.*, 2013). The project at worst may cause short-term disturbance to sea lions and harbor seals in the area.

The activity will take place in Taiya Inlet, and no activities overlap with subsistence hunting areas; therefore, there are no relevant subsistence uses of marine mammals adversely impacted by this action. The planned project is not likely to adversely impact the availability of any marine mammal species or stocks that are commonly used for subsistence purposes or to impact subsistence harvest of marine mammals in the region because:

- Construction activities are localized and temporary;
- Mitigation measures will be implemented to minimize disturbance of marine mammals in the action area; and,
- The project will not result in significant changes to availability of subsistence resources.

Based on the description of the specified activity, the measures described to minimize adverse effects on the availability of marine mammals for subsistence purposes, and the mitigation and monitoring measures, NMFS has determined that there will not be an unmitigable adverse impact on subsistence uses from MOS's activities.

Endangered Species Act

Section 7(a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA; 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) requires that each Federal agency insure that any action it authorizes, funds, or carries out is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any endangered or threatened species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of designated critical habitat. To ensure ESA compliance for the issuance of IHAs, NMFS consults internally whenever we plan to authorize take for endangered or threatened species, in this case with the Alaska Regional Office.

NMFS is authorizing take of the Mexico-North Pacific stock of humpback whale and the Western US stock of Steller sea lion, which are listed or include individuals that are listed under the ESA.

The Permit and Conservation Division completed a Section 7 consultation with the Alaska Regional Office for the issuance of this IHA on August 23, 2023. The Alaska Regional Office's

biological opinion states that the action is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the listed species.

National Environmental Policy Act

To comply with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA; 42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*) and NOAA Administrative Order (NAO) 216-6A, NMFS must review our proposed action (*i.e.*, the issuance of an IHA) with respect to potential impacts on the human environment.

This action is consistent with categories of activities identified in Categorical Exclusion B4 (IHAs with no anticipated serious injury or mortality) of the Companion Manual for NOAA Administrative Order 216-6A, which do not individually or cumulatively have the potential for significant impacts on the quality of the human environment and for which we have not identified any extraordinary circumstances that would preclude this categorical exclusion. Accordingly, NMFS determined that the issuance of the IHA qualifies to be categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

Authorization

As a result of these determinations, NMFS has issued an IHA to MOS for the potential harassment of small numbers of 7 marine mammal species incidental to the terminal redevelopment project in Skagway, Alaska that includes the previously explained mitigation, monitoring, and reporting requirements. The final IHA can be found at: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/action/incidental-take-authorization-municipality-skagways-skagway-ore-terminal-redevelopment>.

Dated: August 29, 2023.

Catherine Marzin,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648-XD310]

Marine Mammals; File No. 27361

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

ACTION: Notice; receipt of application.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that Brent Stewart, Ph.D., Brent S Stewart Associates, 3889 Creststone Place, San

Diego, CA 92130, has applied in due form for a permit to conduct research on pinnipeds in California.

DATES: Written comments must be received on or before October 5, 2023.

ADDRESSES: The application and related documents are available for review by selecting "Records Open for Public Comment" from the "Features" box on the Applications and Permits for Protected Species (APPS) home page, <https://apps.nmfs.noaa.gov>, and then selecting File No. 27361 from the list of available applications. These documents are also available upon written request via email to NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov.

Written comments on this application should be submitted via email to NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov. Please include File No. 27361 in the subject line of the email comment.

Those individuals requesting a public hearing should submit a written request via email to NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov. The request should set forth the specific reasons why a hearing on this application would be appropriate.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Carrie Hubbard or Courtney Smith, Ph.D., (301) 427-8401.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The subject permit is requested under the authority of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (MMPA; 16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*) and the regulations governing the taking and importing of marine mammals (50 CFR part 216).

The applicant proposes to study California sea lions (*Zalophus californianus*), northern elephant seals (*Mirounga angustirostris*), and harbor seals (*Phoca vitulina*) at several sites in California, including San Nicolas Island, San Miguel Island, Santa Rosa Island, Santa Cruz Island, Piedras Blancas, Cape San Martin, and Gorda. The objectives of the research are to continue long-term research on the comparative ecology, demography, demography, behavior, foraging biogeography, pathology and phenology of California pinnipeds and to further characterize the resource and habitats used by each species, including patterns of spatial and temporal similarities and differences. Seals and sea lions would be captured and sampled. Some animals would only receive a flipper tag or a dye mark. Other animals would be physically or chemically restrained; measured and weighed; have a variety of samples taken, including: blood, skin, blubber, and mucus membrane swabs; and have tracking or data recording instruments attached. For proposed take numbers by species and location and

details on sampling methodologies, see the application. The applicant has requested authorization for the unintentional research related mortality of up to four animals of each species annually. The permit would be valid for 5 years.

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), an initial determination has been made that the activity proposed is categorically excluded from the requirement to prepare an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement.

Concurrent with the publication of this notice in the **Federal Register**, NMFS is forwarding copies of the application to the Marine Mammal Commission and its Committee of Scientific Advisors.

Dated: August 29, 2023.

Julia M. Harrison,

Chief, Permits and Conservation Division,
Office of Protected Resources, National
Marine Fisheries Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648-XD313]

New England Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

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

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: The New England Fishery Management Council (Council) is scheduling a hybrid meeting of its Scallop Joint Advisory Panel and Plan Development Team to consider actions affecting New England fisheries in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ). Recommendations from this group will be brought to the full Council for formal consideration and action, if appropriate. **DATES:** This meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 20, 2023, at 9 a.m.

ADDRESSES:

Meeting address: This meeting will be held at the Radisson Airport Hotel, 2081 Post Road, Warwick, RI 02886; telephone: (401) 298-2294.

Webinar URL information: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/665193973090158423>.

Council address: New England Fishery Management Council, 50 Water Street, Mill 2, Newburyport, MA 01950.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Cate O'Keefe, Ph.D., Executive Director, New England Fishery Management Council; telephone: (978) 465-0492.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Agenda

The Advisory Panel and Plan Development Team will discuss Framework 38—Review results of 2023 scallop surveys, and preliminary projections. The primary focus of this meeting will be to develop input on the range of potential specification alternatives for FY 2024 and FY 2025. The action will set ABC/ACLs, days-at-sea, access area allocations, total allowable landings for the Northern Gulf of Maine (NGOM) management area, targets for General Category incidental catch, General Category access area trips and trip accounting, and set-asides for the observer and research programs for fishing year 2024 and default specifications for fishing year 2025.

They also plan to discuss the Northern Edge Action—Review work in response to tasking. Discuss possible measures for development in a Northern Edge Habitat Scallop Framework. Also on the agenda is work priorities (Advisory Panel and Committee Only)—Receive updates on the progress toward 2023 work priorities and Committee tasking. Provide input on the range of possible 2024 scallop work priorities. Other business will be discussed, if necessary.

Although non-emergency issues not contained on the agenda may come before this Council for discussion, those issues may not be the subject of formal action during this meeting. Council action will be restricted to those issues specifically listed in this notice and any issues arising after publication of this notice that require emergency action under section 305(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, provided the public has been notified of the Council's intent to take final action to address the emergency. The public also should be aware that the meeting will be recorded. Consistent with 16 U.S.C. 1852, a copy of the recording is available upon request.

Special Accommodations

This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Cate O'Keefe, Ph.D., Executive Director, at (978) 465-0492, at least 5 days prior to the meeting date.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*