

resource managers, other decision makers, and stakeholders with the ecosystem information and tools needed to balance society's environmental, social, and economic goals in mitigating and adapting to stressors such as climate change, extreme natural events, pollution, invasive species, and resource use.

Humans are integral to ecosystems, and the human dimensions of ecosystems are an integral focus of the science NCCOS conducts and conveys. NOAA's Strategic Plan (FY2006–FY2011) (available at: http://www.ppi.noaa.gov/pdfs/STRATEGIC%20PLAN/Strategic_Plan_2006_FINAL_04282005.pdf) defines an ecosystem as a geographically specified system of organisms, including humans, the environment, and the processes that control its dynamics. An environment encompasses the biological, chemical, physical, and social conditions that surround organisms. The human dimensions of ecosystems can be expressed in terms of three points of interaction between environmental and human systems: human causes, consequences, and responses to environmental change. Encompassing a broad array of social science, humanities, and other disciplines, human dimensions research aims to understand these human-environmental interactions and facilitate use of this understanding to assist decisions affecting environmental processes and their societal outcomes.

NCCOS developed a Draft Human Dimensions Strategic Plan (FY2008–2013) to define and implement human dimensions research critical to support an ecosystem approach to the management of coastal and ocean resources. The plan expands a Societal Stressors Objective in NCCOS's Strategic Plan (<http://coastalscience.noaa.gov/documents/strategicplan.pdf>). The final Human Dimensions Strategic Plan will guide development of the NCCOS ecosystem science agenda, workforce, organization, partnerships, and other capacities, including research conducted through extramural partners, grants, and contracts. Planning, programming, budgeting, and execution of NCCOS activities will reflect the objectives of the final plan through FY 2013.

The draft plan puts forth the following human dimensions research goals and objectives. First, to provide human dimensions information essential to support an ecosystem approach to coastal and ocean resource management (Goal 1), the plan recommends identifying and

characterizing stakeholders and their values (Objective 1.1), monitoring human dimensions (Objective 1.2), assessing and monitoring human causes of ecosystem stress (Objective 1.3), documenting traditional and local ecological knowledge (Objective 1.4), addressing value and ethical dimensions (Objective 1.5), and developing institutional strategies (Objective 1.6). Second, to provide integrated ecosystem information essential to support an ecosystem approach to coastal and ocean resource management, the plan recommends developing and operationalizing integrative information products and tools (Objective 2.1) and defining and implementing integrated ecosystem assessments (Objective 2.2). Third, to promote resilient ecosystems (Goal 3), the plan recommends assessing the cumulative impacts of hazards on coastal communities (Objective 3.1), assessing risk and vulnerability (Objective 3.2), developing risk communication strategies (Objective 3.3), and evaluating forecasting and other capabilities (Objective 3.4). Finally, to provide critical support (Goal 4), the plan recommends building essential organizational capacities (Objective 4.1) and developing communications, outreach, and educational strategies (Objective 4.2).

The purpose of this notice is to solicit comments on the Draft Human Dimensions Strategic Plan (FY2008–2013) to ensure the value of the final document for coastal and ocean resource science and governance. NCCOS encourages Federal and non-Federal Government partners, resource managers, other decision makers, stakeholders, and other interested parties to submit comments. We especially encourage comments related to the value of the plan to support an ecosystem approach to the management of coastal and ocean resources, and its collaborative implementation.

To facilitate efficient and thorough consideration of all submissions, please format your comments as follows: (1) Background information on yourself, including name, title, organizational affiliation, and contact information including email address; (2) general comments; and (3) specific comments with references to line numbers. Please follow all substantive, non-editorial comments with well-developed suggestions for revision. Please include identifying information at the top of all pages. The Draft NCCOS Human Dimensions Strategic Plan (FY2008–2013) is being issued for comment only and is not intended for interim use.

Dated: February 8, 2007.

Gary C. Matlock,

Director, National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science.

[FR Doc. 07–690 Filed 2–14–07; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D.020907B]

Marine Mammals; File No. 984–1814–01

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

ACTION: Notice; receipt of application for amendment.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that Dr. Terrie Williams, Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, Center for Ocean Health - Long Marine Laboratory, University of California, 100 Shaffer Road, Santa Cruz, CA 95060, has requested an amendment to scientific research Permit No. 984–1814.

DATES: Written, telefaxed, or e-mail comments must be received on or before March 19, 2007.

ADDRESSES: The amendment request and related documents are available for review upon written request or by appointment in the following office(s):

Permits, Conservation and Education Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13705, Silver Spring, MD 20910; phone (301)713–2289; fax (301)427–2521; and Southwest Region, NMFS, 501 West Ocean Blvd., Suite 4200, Long Beach, CA 90802–4213; phone (562)980–4001; fax (562)980–4018.

Written comments or requests for a public hearing on this request should be submitted to the Chief, Permits, Conservation and Education Division, F/PR1, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13705, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Those individuals requesting a hearing should set forth the specific reasons why a hearing on this particular amendment request would be appropriate.

Comments may also be submitted by facsimile at (301)427–2521, provided the facsimile is confirmed by hard copy submitted by mail and postmarked no later than the closing date of the comment period.

Comments may also be submitted by e-mail. The mailbox address for providing e-mail comments is NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov. Include in the subject line of the e-mail

comment the following document identifier: File No. 984-1814-01.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Kate Swails or Tammy Adams, (301)713-2289.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The subject amendment to Permit No. 984-1814, issued on June 19, 2006 (71 FR 37060), is requested under the authority of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*), and the regulations governing the taking and importing of marine mammals (50 CFR part 216).

Permit No. 984-1814 authorizes the permit holder to capture up to 20 adult Weddell seals (*Leptonychotes weddellii*) and disturb up to 30 adult and 10 juvenile seals annually in McMurdo Sound, Antarctica. The animals have a data logger/video system attached, muscle biopsies and blood samples collected, and blubber thickness measured. The permit also authorizes up to 3 research-related mortalities per year. The permit holder requests an amendment to change the field season for this project from five August to December field seasons to three back to back field seasons over the course of two research years. This would allow researchers to investigate different light phases. Researchers would attach data logger/video systems to 24 adult seals and another 24 seals would have time-depth recorders attached annually. Researchers would measure metabolic rates of all captured seals using open-flow respirometry.

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

Dated: February 12, 2007.

P. Michael Payne,

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

[FR Doc. E7-2688 Filed 2-14-07; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 020907C]

Marine Mammals; Scientific Research Permit Applications

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

ACTION: Notice; receipt of applications.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that: seven applications have been received for permits to conduct research on free-ranging threatened and endangered Steller sea lions (*Eumetopias jubatus*) in California, Washington, Oregon, and Alaska; five applications have been received for permits to conduct research on free-ranging northern fur seals (*Callorhinus ursinus*) in Alaska; and one application has been received for an amendment to a permit for activities with captive Steller sea lions in Alaska.

DATES: Written, telefaxed, or e-mail comments must be received on or before April 2, 2007.

ADDRESSES: The applications and related documents are available for review upon written request or by appointment in the following office(s): See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**.

Written comments or requests for a public hearing on these applications should be mailed to the Chief, Permits, Conservation and Education Division, F/PR1, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13705, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Those individuals requesting a hearing should set forth the specific reasons why a hearing on the particular request(s) would be appropriate.

Comments may also be submitted by facsimile at (301)427-2521, provided the facsimile is confirmed by hard copy submitted by mail and postmarked no later than the closing date of the comment period.

Comments may also be submitted by e-mail. The mailbox address for providing e-mail comments is NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov. Include the appropriate File Number(s) in the subject line of the e-mail comment as a document identifier.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Tammy Adams, Amy Sloan, Kate Swails, or Jaclyn Daly, (301)713-2289.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The subject permits for research on Steller sea lions are requested under the authority of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (MMPA; 16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*), the regulations governing the taking and importing of marine mammals (50 CFR part 216), the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA; 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), and the regulations governing the taking, importing, and exporting of endangered and threatened species (50 CFR 222-226). The subject permits for research on northern fur seals are requested under the authority of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (MMPA; 16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*), the regulations governing the taking and importing of marine

mammals (50 CFR part 216), and the Fur Seal Act of 1966, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1151 *et seq.*).

File No. 782-1889: The National Marine Mammal Laboratory (NMML), NMFS, Seattle, Washington, requests a 5-year permit to measure Steller sea lion population status, vital rates, foraging behavior, and condition in North Pacific Ocean areas including California, Washington, Oregon, and Alaska. Annually in the western Distinct Population Segment (DPS), up to 73,000 sea lions may be exposed to aerial surveys, 27,000 to rookery-based activities, and 23,000 to incidental activities. Up to 1,280 could be captured annually, with up to 630 having blood, skin and swab samples collected, 580 hot-branded, and up to 180 blubber and lesion biopsied, tooth and vibrissa removed, be ultrasonically imaged, and subject to stomach intubation or enema. Instruments may be attached on up to 280 per year, and 880 per year may receive a non-permanent tag or mark. Annually in the eastern DPS, up to 26,000 may be exposed to aerial surveys, and 5,000 to incidental activities. Up to 12 could be captured per year, and have blood, skin, blubber, fecal, and culture samples collected, a tooth and vibrissa removed, hot-brand, tag or non-permanent mark applied, and have an instrument attached. NMML requests authorization for up to 10 research-related mortalities of Steller sea lions per year (not to exceed 5 per year in the western DPS). Up to 5,000 harbor seals (*Phoca vitulina richardsi*) and 15,000 northern fur seals may be disturbed per year incidental to activities in Alaska. Up to 3,000 California sea lions (*Zalophus californianus*) and 200 harbor seals may be incidentally disturbed per year along the U.S. west coast.

File No. 358-1888: The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G), Division of Wildlife Conservation, Juneau, Alaska, requests a 5-year permit to continue investigating the various hypotheses for the decline or lack of recovery of Steller sea lions in Alaska. The research covers a variety of activities including incidental disturbance during aerial surveys (up to 20,000 individuals per year in the eastern DPS), disturbance of animals on rookeries and haulouts during brand resighting surveys (up to 25,000 individuals annually in the eastern DPS and up to 5,000 individuals annually in the western DPS), and incidental to scat collection, capture for instrument attachment, physiological research and sample collection (up to 15,000 individuals in the eastern DPS and 2,000 in the western DPS per year). Up