

Following NOAA's review of the relevant information, it was determined that there are still significant threats to the area, and it is still an area of national significance. However, there is not currently demonstrated broad community support for the nomination remaining on the inventory of possible designations. ONMS has also determined that it is not clear, at this time, how a sanctuary designation would supplement or complement existing management and regulatory authorities for the Marianas Trench. Therefore, and in consideration of the nominating organization's request to withdraw the nomination, the ONMS Director has determined the nomination for the Mariana Trench NMS should not remain on the inventory of successful nominations.

*Authority:* 16 U.S.C. 1431 *et seq.*

**John Armor,**

*Director, Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, National Ocean Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.*

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**BILLING CODE 3510-NK-P**

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

[RTID 0648-XD335]

**Marine Mammals; File No. 27426**

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

**ACTION:** Notice; receipt of application.

**SUMMARY:** Notice is hereby given that Oregon State University, Marine Mammal Institute, 2030 Marine Science Drive, Newport, OR 97365 (Responsible Party: Lisa Ballance, Ph.D.), has applied in due form for a permit to conduct research on marine mammals.

**DATES:** Written comments must be received on or before October 11, 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. 27426 from the list of available applications. These documents are also available upon written request via email to [NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov](mailto:NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov).

Written comments on this application should be submitted via email to

[NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov](mailto:NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov). Please include File No. 27426 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](mailto: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:**

Shasta McClenahan, Ph.D., or Amy Hapeman, (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.*), 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.*), the regulations governing the taking, importing, and exporting of endangered and threatened species (50 CFR parts 222-226), and the Fur Seal Act of 1966, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1151 *et seq.*).

The applicant requests a 5-year research permit to study abundance, density, distribution, movements, behavior, ecology, health, and stock structure of marine mammals in the Atlantic, Pacific, and Southern Oceans. Research may occur in U.S. and international waters on 72 species of marine mammals, including the following ESA-listed cetaceans: blue (*Balaenoptera musculus*), bowhead (*Balaena mysticetes*), fin (*Balaenoptera physalus*), gray (*Eschrichtius robustus*); Western North Pacific distinct population segment [DPS]), humpback (*Megaptera novaeangliae*; Central America, Mexico, Western North Pacific, and Cape Verde DPSs), killer (*Orcinus orca*; Southern Resident DPS), North Pacific right (*Eubalaena japonica*), Rice's (*Balaenoptera ricei*), sei (*Balaenoptera borealis*), Southern right (*E. australis*), and sperm (*Physeter macrocephalus*) whales. Research for cetaceans would include vessel and aerial surveys (manned and unmanned) for observations, photography, video recordings, thermal imaging, photogrammetry, passive acoustics, echosounders for prey mapping, biological sampling (exhaled air, sloughed skin, feces, and skin and blubber biopsy), and tagging (suction-cup, dart, and deep-implant). Eleven species of pinnipeds may be harassed and opportunistically studied during research including the following ESA-listed species: Steller sea lions (*Eumetopias jubatus*; Western DPS), and bearded (*Erignathus barbatus*), Guadalupe fur (*Arctocephalus*

*townsendi*), Hawaiian monk (*Neomonachus schauinslandi*), ringed (*Phoca hispida*), and spotted (*P. largha*) seals. Parts from all species of cetaceans and pinnipeds (excluding walrus) collected under separate authorizations may be imported, exported, and received annually for scientific research, and secondarily used for curation and education. See the application for complete numbers of animals requested by species and procedure.

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: September 5, 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-XD328]

**Caribbean Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting**

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

**ACTION:** Notice of a public virtual meeting.

**SUMMARY:** The Caribbean Fishery Management Council's (Council) Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) will hold a public virtual meeting to address the items contained in the tentative agenda included in the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION.**

**DATES:** The SSC public virtual meeting will be held on September 27, 2023, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Eastern Standard Time.

**ADDRESSES:** You may join the SSC public virtual meeting (via Zoom) from a computer, tablet or smartphone by entering the following address: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81086075177?pwd=TIbLb0NjWmZaR2h0b2NEbmpOTWtQT09>.