

Control Numbers 0348–0043, 0348–0044, 0348–0040, 0348–0046, and 0605–0001.

Notwithstanding any other provision of the law, no person is required to respond to, nor shall any person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with, a collection subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act, unless that collection of information displays a currently valid OMB Control Number.

Research Projects Involving Human Subjects, Human Tissue, Data or Recordings Involving Human Subjects: Any proposal that includes research involving human subjects, human tissue, data or recordings involving human subjects must meet the requirements of the Common Rule for the Protection of Human Subjects, codified for the Department of Commerce at 15 CFR part 27. In addition, any proposal that includes research on these topics must be in compliance with any statutory requirements imposed upon the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and other federal agencies regarding these topics, all regulatory policies and guidance adopted by DHHS, the Food and Drug Administration, and other Federal agencies on these topics, and all Presidential statements of policy on these topics.

NIST will accept the submission of human subjects protocols that have been approved by Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) possessing a current registration filed with DHHS and to be performed by institutions possessing a current, valid Federal-wide Assurance (FWA) from DHHS. NIST will not issue a single project assurance (SPA) for any human subjects protocol proposed to NIST.

On August 9, 2001, the President announced his decision to allow Federal funds to be used for research on existing human embryonic stem cell lines as long as prior to his announcement (1) the derivation process (which commences with the removal of the inner cell mass from the blastocyst) had already been initiated and (2) the embryo from which the stem cell line was derived no longer had the possibility of development as a human being. NIST will follow guidance issued by the National Institutes of Health at <http://ohrp.osophs.dhhs.gov/humansubjects/guidance/stemcell.pdf> for funding such research.

Research Projects Involving Vertebrate Animals: Any proposal that includes research involving vertebrate animals must be in compliance with the National Research Council's "Guide for

the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals" which can be obtained from National Academy Press, 2101 Constitution Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20055. In addition, such proposals must meet the requirements of the Animal Welfare Act (7 U.S.C. 2131 *et seq.*), 9 CFR parts 1, 2, and 3, and if appropriate, 21 CFR part 58. These regulations do not apply to proposed research using pre-existing images of animals or to research plans that do not include live animals that are being cared for, euthanized, or used by the project participants to accomplish research goals, teaching, or testing. These regulations also do not apply to obtaining animal materials from commercial processors of animal products or to animal cell lines or tissues from tissue banks.

Limitation of Liability: Funding for the program listed in this notice is contingent upon the availability of Fiscal Year 2008 appropriations. NIST issues this notice subject to the appropriations made available under the current continuing resolution, H.J. Res. 52, "Continuing Appropriations Resolution, 2008," Public Law 110–92 as amended by H.R. 3222, Public Law 110–116. NIST anticipates making awards for the program listed in this notice provided that funding for the program is continued beyond December 14, 2007, the expiration of the current continuing resolution. In no event will NIST or the Department of Commerce be responsible for proposal preparation costs if these programs fail to receive funding or are cancelled because of other agency priorities. Publication of this announcement does not oblige the agency to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds. Funding of any award under any program announced in this notice is subject to the availability of funds.

Executive Order 12866: This funding notice was determined to be not significant for purposes of Executive Order 12866.

Executive Order 13132 (Federalism): It has been determined that this notice does not contain policies with federalism implications as that term is defined in Executive Order 13132.

Executive Order 12372: Applications under this program are not subject to Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs."

Administrative Procedure Act/Regulatory Flexibility Act: Notice and comment are not required under the Administrative Procedure Act (5 U.S.C. 553) or any other law, for rules relating to public property, loans, grants, benefits or contracts (5 U.S.C. 553(a)).

Because notice and comment are not required under 5 U.S.C. 553, or any other law, for rules relating to public property, loans, grants, benefits or contracts (5 U.S.C. 553(a)), a Regulatory Flexibility Analysis is not required and has not been prepared for this notice, 5 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.*

Dated: December 5, 2007.

Richard F. Kayser,

Acting Deputy Director, NIST.

[FR Doc. E7–24276 Filed 12–13–07; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648–XE27

Taking of Marine Mammals Incidental to Specified Activities; Central California Seabird Research Operations

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

ACTION: Notice of issuance of an incidental harassment authorization.

SUMMARY: In accordance with provisions of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) as amended, notification is hereby given that an Incidental Harassment Authorization (IHA) to take marine mammals, by harassment, incidental to conducting seabird research in central California, have been issued to PRBO Conservation Science (PRBO) for a period of one year.

DATES: The authorization of the IHA is effective from December 12, 2007, until December 11, 2008.

ADDRESSES: A copy of the application, IHA, Environmental Assessment (EA), and a list of references used in this document may be obtained by writing to P. Michael Payne, Chief, Permits, Conservation and Education Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910–3225, or by telephoning one of the contacts listed here (see FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Shane Guan, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, (301) 713–2289, ext 137, or Monica DeAngelis, Southwest Regional Office, NMFS, (562) 980–3232.

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.

An authorization shall be granted if NMFS finds that the taking will have 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 certain subsistence uses and 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."

Section 101(a)(5)(D) of the MMPA established an expedited process by which citizens of the United States can apply for an authorization to incidentally take small numbers of marine mammals by harassment. 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].

Section 101(a)(5)(D) establishes a 45-day time limit for NMFS review of an application followed by a 30-day public notice and comment period on any proposed authorizations for the incidental harassment of small numbers of marine mammals. Within 45 days of the close of the comment period, NMFS must either issue or deny issuance of the authorization.

Summary of Request

On December 15, 2006, PRBO submitted an application to NMFS requesting an Incidental Harassment Authorization (IHA) for the possible harassment of small numbers of California sea lions (*Zalophus californianus*), Pacific harbor seals (*Phoca vitulina richardsi*), northern

elephant seals (*Mirounga angustirostris*), and Steller sea lions (*Eumetopias jubatus*) incidental to central California seabird research operations on Southeast Farallon Island, Ano Nuevo Island, and Point Reyes NS. A detailed description of the proposed activity is provided in the July 27, 2007, **Federal Register** notice (72 FR 41294), therefore, it is not repeated here.

Comments and Responses

A notice of receipt and request for 30-day public comment on the applications and proposed authorizations was published on July 27, 2007 (72 FR 41294). During the 30-day public comment period, NMFS received comments from the Marine Mammal Commission (Commission).

Comment: The Commission recommends that NMFS issue the IHAs subject to the mitigation measures proposed by the applicant. The Commission further recommends that any authorization issued specify that, if a mortality or serious injury of a marine mammal occurs that appears to be related to the research, activities will be suspended while NMFS determines whether steps can be taken to avoid further injuries or mortalities or until such taking can be authorized by regulations promulgated under section 101(a)(5)(A) of the MMPA.

Response: NMFS agrees with the Commission's comments and recommendation that the applicant must institute monitoring and mitigation measures sufficient to afford the potentially affected marine mammal species adequate protection from sources of disturbance, including disturbance of behavior.

NMFS further agrees with the Commission that research activities must be suspended immediately if a dead or injured marine mammal is found in the vicinity of the project area and the death or injury of the animal could be attributable to the applicant's activities. This requirement is a condition in the IHA.

Description of the Marine Mammals Potentially Affected by the Activity

The marine mammals most likely to be found in the proposed seabird research areas are the California sea lions, Pacific harbor seals, Steller sea lions, and northern elephant seals. General information of these species can be found in Caretta et al. (2007), which is available at the following URL: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/sars/po2006.pdf>. Additional information on these species is provided in the July 27, 2007, **Federal Register** notice (72 FR

41294). Refer to these documents for information on these species.

Potential Effects on Marine Mammals and Their Habitat

The only anticipated impacts would be temporary disturbances caused by the appearance of researchers near the pinnipeds. The potential disturbance might alter pinniped behavior and cause animals to flush from the area. Animals may return to the same site once researchers have left or go to an alternate haul out site, which usually occurs within 30 minutes (Allen et al., 1985). Long term effects of this disturbance are unlikely, as very few breeding animals will be present in the vicinity of the proposed seabird research areas. The proposed seabird research would not result in the physical altering of marine mammal habitat. No marine mammal habitat is expected to be affected by the proposed action. No marine mammal critical habitat is found within the proposed research area.

There is no subsistence harvest of marine mammals in the proposed research area, therefore, there will be no impact of the activity on the availability of the species or stocks of marine mammals for subsistence uses.

Number of Marine Mammals Estimated to Be Taken

It is estimated that approximately 2,422 California sea lions, 500 harbor seals, 273 northern elephant seals, and 14 Steller sea lions could be potentially taken by Level B harassment. This estimate is based on previous research experiences, with the same activities conducted in the proposed research area, and on marine mammal research activities in these areas. These incidental harassment take numbers represent approximately 1 percent of the U.S. stock of California sea lion, 1.5 percent of the California stock of Pacific harbor seal, 0.3 percent of the California breeding stock of northern elephant seal, and 0.03 percent of the eastern U.S. stock of Steller sea lion. All of the potential takes are expected to be Level B behavioral harassment only. No injury or mortality to pinnipeds is expected or requested.

Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting

The researchers would take all possible measures to reduce marine mammal disturbance for the activities described above. Researchers would keep their voices hushed and bodies low in the visual presence of pinnipeds. Seabird observations at North Landing on Southeast Farallon Island would be conducted in an observation blind

where researchers are shielded from the view of hauled out pinnipeds. Beach landings on Ano Nuevo Island would only occur after any pinnipeds that might be present on the landing beach have entered the water. Researchers accessing seabird nest boxes would crawl slowly if pinnipeds are within view.

Visits to intertidal areas of Southeast Farallon Island during research activities would be coordinated to reduce potential take. All research goals on Ano Nuevo Island would be coordinated to minimize the necessary number of trips to the island. Once on Ano Nuevo Island, researchers would coordinate monitoring schedules so areas near any pinnipeds would be accessed only once per visit.

Researchers would take notes of sea lions and seals observed within the proposed research area during studies. The notes would provide dates, time, tidal height, species, numbers of sea lions and seals present, and any behavior changes. PRBO will submit a final report, including these notes, to NMFS within 90 days after the expiration of the IHA, if it is issued.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

In July 2007, NMFS prepared a draft EA on the issuance of an IHA to PRBO to take marine mammals by Level B harassment incidental to conducting seabird research in central California. The draft EA was released for public review and comment along with the application and the proposed IHA. All comments are addressed in full in the Comments and Responses section. Subsequently, NMFS finalized the draft EA and on December 4, 2007, issued a Finding of No Significant Impact on the proposed project. No environmental impact statement was prepared.

ESA

A section 7 consultation under the ESA was conducted with NMFS Headquarters Office of Protected Resources' Endangered Species Division. On October 19, 2007, NMFS issued a Biological Opinion and concluded that the issuance of an IHA to PRBO is likely to affect, but not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of Steller sea lions. An incidental take statement is included in the Biological Opinion.

Determinations

For the reasons discussed in this document and in the identified supporting documents, NMFS has determined that the impact of seabird research on Southeast Farallon Island,

Ano Nuevo Island, and Point Reyes NS would result, at worst, in the Level B harassment of small numbers of California sea lions, Pacific harbor seals, northern elephant seals, and Steller sea lions hauled out in the vicinity of the proposed research area. While behavioral modifications, including temporarily vacating the area during the survey period, may be made by these species, this action will have a negligible impact on California sea lions, Pacific harbor seals, northern elephant seals, and Steller sea lions.

In addition, no take by Level A harassment (injury) or death is anticipated and harassment takes should be at the lowest level practicable due to incorporation of the mitigation measures described in this document.

Authorization

NMFS has issued an IHA to PRBO for the potential harassment of small numbers of California sea lions, harbor seals, northern elephant seals, and Steller sea lions incidental to conducting of seabird research on Southeast Farallon Island, Ano Nuevo Island, and Point Reyes NS, provided the previously mentioned mitigation, monitoring, and reporting requirements are incorporated.

Dated: December 10, 2007.

Helen Golde,

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

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COMMITTEE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF TEXTILE AGREEMENTS

Request for Public Comment on Short Supply Petition under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)

December 11, 2007.

AGENCY: Committee for the Implementation of Textile Agreements (CITA).

ACTION: Request for Public Comments concerning a request for modification of the NAFTA rules of origin for textile filaments, staple yarns, and woven fabrics and nonwoven and other textile articles from rayon fiber.

SUMMARY: On October 16, 2007, the Chairman of CITA received a request from the National Textile Association (NTA), alleging that certain rayon fibers (other than "lyocell") cannot be supplied by the domestic industry in commercial quantities in a timely manner and requesting that CITA

consider whether the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) rule of origin for textile filaments, staple yarns, and woven fabrics, classified under chapters 52, 54 and 55 of the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States (HTSUS) and nonwoven and other textile articles of chapter 56, should be modified to allow the use of non-North American rayon fibers (other than "lyocell"). CITA is also considering a broad change in the rule of origin for all other textile products to allow the use of non-North American rayon fibers (other than "lyocell"). The President may proclaim a modification to the NAFTA rules of origin under these circumstances to implement an agreement with the other NAFTA countries on the modification. CITA hereby solicits public comments on this request, in particular with regard to whether rayon fibers (other than "lyocell") can be supplied by the domestic industry in commercial quantities in a timely manner. Comments must be submitted by (January 14, 2008 to the Chairman, Committee for the Implementation of Textile Agreements, Room 3001, United States Department of Commerce, Washington, DC 20230.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Robert Carrigg, International Trade Specialist, Office of Textiles and Apparel, U.S. Department of Commerce, (202) 482-3400.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Authority: Section 204 of the Agricultural Act of 1956, as amended (7 USC 1854); Section 202(q) of the North American Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act (19 USC 3332(q)); Executive Order 11651 of March 3, 1972, as amended.

BACKGROUND

Under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), NAFTA countries are required to eliminate customs duties on textile and apparel goods that qualify as originating goods under the NAFTA rules of origin, which are set out in Annex 401 to the NAFTA. The NAFTA provides for the Parties to consult to consider issues of availability of supply of fibers, yarns or fabrics in the free trade area. See NAFTA Annex 300-B, Section 7.2(a). The NAFTA implementing legislation authorizes the President to modify the rules of origin pursuant to any agreement reached by the NAFTA Parties, as provided in Section 7.2(a) of Annex 300-B. See Section 202(q)(3)(A) of the NAFTA Implementation Act. The Statement of Administrative Action (SAA) that accompanies the NAFTA Implementation Act stated that any interested person may submit to CITA a