

species or stock of ringed, bearded, and spotted seals is expected to be negligible for the following reasons:

(1) The proposed activity would only occur in a small area which supports a small proportion (<0.1 percent) of the ringed seal populations in the Beaufort Sea. The numbers of bearded and spotted seals within the proposed project area is expected to be even lower than that of ringed seals.

(2) The following mitigation and monitoring procedures will be implemented: (a) using trained seal lair sniffing dogs to conduct pre-operational survey and monitoring of ringed seal lairs and breathing holes within the proposed action area; (b) conducting activities as far away from any observed seal structures as possible; (c) establishing safety zone based on isopleth of 190 dB_{rms} re: 1 microPa and (d); monitoring safety zones during operations of airgun and impact sources by a trained MMO, and soft-start (ramp-up) procedure when initiating airgun.

As a result, NMFS believes the effects of on-ice geophysical R&D program are expected to be limited to short-term and localized behavioral changes involving relatively small numbers of ringed seals, and may also potentially affect any bearded and spotted seals in the vicinity. NMFS has preliminarily determined, based on information in the application and supporting documents, that these changes in behavior will have no more than a negligible impact on the affected pinniped species and populations within the proposed action area. Also, the potential effects of the proposed on-ice geophysical project during 2007 will not have an unmitigable adverse impact on subsistence uses of these species.

Proposed Authorization

NMFS proposes to issue an IHA to SOI for conducting on-ice geophysical R&D program in the U.S. Beaufort Sea, provided the previously mentioned mitigation, monitoring, and reporting requirements are incorporated. NMFS has preliminarily determined that the proposed activity would result in the harassment of small numbers of ringed seals, and potentially any bearded and spotted seals in the vicinity; would have no more than a negligible impact on the affected pinniped species and stocks; and would not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of seals for subsistence uses.

Dated: January 31, 2007.

James H. Lecky,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Draft Framework for Developing the National System of Marine Protected Areas

AGENCY: National Ocean Service, NOAA, Department of Commerce.

ACTION: Extension of Public Comment Period on the Draft Framework for Developing the National System of Marine Protected Areas.

SUMMARY: The Department of Commerce published a notice in the **Federal Register** on September 22, 2006 (71 FR 55432) announcing a 145-day public comment period on the Draft Framework for Developing the National System of Marine Protected Areas (Draft Framework). Copies of the Draft Framework can be requested via the contact information below or downloaded from <http://www.mpa.gov>. The deadline for public comment on the draft Framework is hereby extended.

DATES: The extended deadline for public comment on the draft Framework is 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on February 28, 2007.

ADDRESSES: Comments should be sent to Joseph Uravitch, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Protected Areas Center, 1305 East West Highway, N/ORM, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Fax: (301) 713-3110. E-mail: mpa.comments@noaa.gov. Comments will be accepted in written form by mail, e-mail, or fax.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Refer to the **Federal Register** notice of September 22, 2006, or contact Jonathan Kelsey at (301) 563-1130, or via e-mail at mpa.comments@noaa.gov.

Dated: January 31, 2007.

David M. Kennedy,

Director, Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Patent and Trademark Office

Legal Processes

ACTION: Proposed collection; comment request.

SUMMARY: The United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO), as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, invites the general public and other Federal agencies to take this opportunity to

comment on the continuing information collection, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Public Law 104-13 (44 U.S.C. 3506(c)(2)(A)).

DATES: Written comments must be submitted on or before April 9, 2007.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments by any of the following methods:

- *E-mail:* Susan.Fawcett@uspto.gov. Include "0651-0046 comment" in the subject line of the message.

- *Fax:* 571-273-0112, marked to the attention of Susan Brown.

- *Mail:* Susan K. Brown, Records Officer, Office of the Chief Information Officer, Architecture, Engineering and Technical Services, Data Architecture and Services Division, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.

- *Federal e-Rulemaking Portal:* <http://www.regulations.gov>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Requests for additional information should be directed to Shirley Hassan, Office of General Law, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450; by telephone at 571-272-3000; or by e-mail at Shirley.Hassan@uspto.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Abstract

The purpose of this collection is to cover information requirements related to civil actions and claims involving current and former employees of the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO). The rules for these legal processes may be found under 37 CFR Part 104, which outlines procedures for service of process, demands for employee testimony and production of documents in legal proceedings, reports of unauthorized testimony, employee indemnification, and filing claims against the USPTO under the Federal Tort Claims Act (28 U.S.C. 2672) and the corresponding Department of Justice regulations (28 CFR Part 14). The public may also petition the USPTO Office of General Counsel under 37 CFR 104.3 to waive or suspend these rules in extraordinary cases.

The procedures under 37 CFR Part 104 ensure that service of process intended for current and former employees of the USPTO is handled properly. The USPTO will only accept service of process for an employee acting in an official capacity. This