

Comment 11: The Service should take every action available to investigate and, where possible, mitigate the impact of infectious disease and should improve enforcement of the provisions of the MMPA that prevent the intentional shooting of marine mammals.

Response: We support and have provided funding for studies aimed at determining and mitigating the impact of infectious disease. We continue to investigate, and pursue actions in response to, intentional shooting of sea otters.

Comment 12: While section 118 of the MMPA does not govern the incidental taking of southern sea otters, the zero mortality rate goal (ZMRG) provisions in section 101 do apply to southern sea otters. The fact that the Service cannot make a status determination with respect to ZMRG confirms that ZMRG has not been achieved for sea otters and that the Service has not satisfied its requirements under the law. This failure strongly supports the need for [the Service] to aggressively place observers on fisheries that have the potential to take southern sea otters so that it can determine the status of the stock with respect to ZMRG.

Response: Please see our response to comment 4.

Comment 13: The SAR should provide additional discussion and references on the topic of food limitation and nutritional deficiency.

Response: We have included additional references in the final SAR and will expand our discussion as data become available.

Additional References Cited:

Bentall, G.B., 2005. Morphological and Behavioral Correlates of Population Status in the Southern Sea Otter: A Comparative Study Between Central California and San Nicolas Island. Masters Thesis, University of California, Santa Cruz, CA, unpublished.

Hatfield, B.B., J.A. Ames, J.A. Estes, M.T. Tinker, A.B. Johnson, M.M. Staedler, and M.D. Harris. Manuscript in preparation. The potential for sea otter mortality in fish and shellfish traps. 22 pp. + appendices.

Authority: The authority for this action is the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et al.*).

Dated: December 17, 2008.

Kenneth Stansell,

Acting Director, Fish and Wildlife Service.

[FR Doc. E8-31022 Filed 12-29-08; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

[FWS-R5-FHC-2008-N0336; 53330-1335-0000-J3]

Lake Champlain Sea Lamprey Control Alternatives Workgroup

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), announce a meeting of the Lake Champlain Sea Lamprey Control Alternatives Workgroup (Workgroup). The Workgroup's purpose is to provide, in an advisory capacity, recommendations and advice on research and implementation of sea lamprey control techniques alternative to lampricide that are technically feasible, cost effective, and environmentally safe. The primary objective of the meeting will be to discuss potential research initiatives that may enhance alternative sea lamprey control techniques. The meeting is open to the public.

DATES: The Workgroup will meet on Thursday February 5, 2009, from 5 to 8 p.m., with an alternate date of Thursday February 12, 2009, from 5 to 8 p.m., should the meeting need to be cancelled due to inclement weather. Any member of the public who wants to find out whether the meeting has been postponed may contact Stefi Flanders of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at 802-872-0629 ext. 10 (telephone); or Stefi_Flanders@fws.gov (electronic mail) during regular business hours on the primary meeting date.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Ilsley Public Library, Jessica Swift Community Meeting Room, 75 Main Street, Middlebury, VT 05753; telephone 802-388-4095.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dave Tilton, Designated Federal Officer, Lake Champlain Sea Lamprey Control Alternatives Workgroup, Lake Champlain Fish and Wildlife Resources Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 11 Lincoln Street, Essex Junction, VT 05452 (U.S. mail); 802-872-0629 (telephone); or Dave_Tilton@fws.gov (electronic mail).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: We publish this notice under section 10(a)(2) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.). The Workgroup's specific responsibilities are to provide advice regarding the implementation of sea lamprey control methods alternative to lampricides, to recommend priorities for research to be

conducted by cooperating organizations and demonstration projects to be developed and funded by State and Federal agencies, and to assist Federal and State agencies with the coordination of alternative sea lamprey control research to advance the state of the science in Lake Champlain and the Great Lakes.

Dated: December 5, 2008.

Wendi Weber,

Acting Regional Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

[FWS-R9-IA-2008-N0335; 96300-1671-0000-P5]

Receipt of Applications for Permit

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of receipt of applications for permit.

SUMMARY: The public is invited to comment on the following applications to conduct certain activities with endangered species.

DATES: Written data, comments or requests must be received by January 29, 2009.

ADDRESSES: Documents and other information submitted with these applications are available for review, subject to the requirements of the Privacy Act and Freedom of Information Act, by any party who submits a written request for a copy of such documents within 30 days of the date of publication of this notice to: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Management Authority, 4401 North Fairfax Drive, Room 212, Arlington, Virginia 22203; fax 703/358-2281.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Division of Management Authority, telephone 703/358-2104.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Endangered Species

The public is invited to comment on the following applications for a permit to conduct certain activities with endangered species. This notice is provided pursuant to Section 10(c) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*). Written data, comments, or requests for copies of these complete applications should be submitted to the Director (address above).