

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Mr. Rick G. Gooch, Regional Permit Coordinator, Atlanta, Georgia (see ADDRESSES above), telephone: 404/679-7110; or Mr. Jay Herrington at the Jacksonville, Florida, Field Office (see ADDRESSES above), telephone: 904/232-2580.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Florida scrub-jay, *Aphelocoma coerulescens*, is geographically isolated from other subspecies of scrub jays found in Mexico and the Western United States. The Florida scrub jay is found almost exclusively in peninsular Florida and is restricted to scrub habitat. The total estimated population is between 7,000 and 11,000 individuals. Due to habitat loss and degradation throughout the State of Florida, it has been estimated that the Florida scrub jay population has been reduced by at least half in the last 100 years. Construction of the Project's infrastructure and subsequent construction of the individual homesites will likely result in death of, or injury to, *Aphelocoma coerulescens* incidental to the carrying out of these otherwise lawful activities. Habitat alteration due to the expanded placement of permanent infrastructure, homes, and other attributes of the amended project (now including both Waterside Downs-Phase I and Waterside Downs-Phase II) will reduce the availability of feeding, shelter, and nesting habitat.

The supplement to the May 1996, EA considers the environmental consequences of several alternatives for the amended project. One action proposed is issuance of the amended ITP based upon submittal of the revised HCP as proposed. The no action alternative may result in loss of habitat for *Aphelocoma coerulescens* and exposure of the Applicant under Section 9 of the Act. A third alternative is a proposed Project that is designed with a different mitigation strategy focusing on management of existing lands surrounding the project area. The proposed action alternative is issuance of the ITP as requested to be amended to minimize and mitigate the loss of an additional 4.96 acres of occupied scrub-jay habitat. This provides for restrictions of construction activity during the species' nesting season. Further, the revised HCP and ITP proposes to increase, in relative proportion compared to the original project, and purchase of additional offsite habitat for the Florida scrub jay, and the endowment fund for the offsite acquired habitat.

As stated above, the Service has made a preliminary determination that the

issuance of an amended ITP is not a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment within the meaning of Section 102(2)(C) of NEPA. This preliminary information may be revised due to public comment received in response to this notice and is based on information contained in the EA, HCP, and appropriate amendments. An appropriate excerpt from the FONSI reflecting the Service's finding on the application is provided below:

Based on the analysis conducted by the Service, it has been determined that:

1. Issuance of an amended ITP would not have significant effects on the human environment in the project area.

2. The additional proposed take is incidental to an otherwise lawful activity.

3. The applicant has ensured that adequate additional funding will be provided to implement the measures proposed in the submitted revisions to the HCP.

4. Other than impacts to endangered and threatened species as outlined in the documentation of this decision, the indirect impacts which may result from issuance of the amended ITP are addressed by other regulations and statutes under the jurisdiction of other government entities. The validity of the Service's ITP is contingent upon the Applicant's compliance with the terms of his permit and all other laws and regulations under the control of State, local, and other Federal governmental entities.

The Service will also evaluate whether the issuance of the amended Section 10(a)(1)(B) ITP complies with Section 7 of the Act by conducting an intra-Service Section 7 consultation. The results of the biological opinions, in combination with the above findings, will be used in the final analysis to determine whether or not to issue an amended ITP.

Dated: February 26, 1998.

**H. Dale Hall,**

*Deputy Regional Director.*

[FR Doc. 98-5664 Filed 3-4-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-P

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Fish and Wildlife Service

#### Issuance of Permit for Marine Mammals

On September 4, 1997, a notice was published in the **Federal Register**, Vol. 62, No. 176, Page 47826, that an application had been filed with the Fish and Wildlife Service by Darryl Hastings

for a permit (PRT-834072) to import a sport-hunted polar bear (*Ursus maritimus*) trophy taken from the Davis Strait population, Northwest Territories, Canada prior to April 30, 1994.

Notice is hereby given that on February 6, 1998, as authorized by the provisions of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, *as amended* (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*) the Fish and Wildlife Service authorized the requested permit subject to certain conditions set forth therein.

Documents and other information submitted for these applications are available for review by any party who submits a written request to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Management Authority, 4401 North Fairfax Drive, Rm 700, Arlington, Virginia 22203. Phone (703) 358-2104 or Fax (703) 358-2281.

Dated: February 27, 1998.

**Mary Ellen Amtower,**

*Acting Chief, Branch of Permits, Office of Management Authority.*

[FR Doc. 98-5613 Filed 3-4-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-P

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Fish and Wildlife Service

#### Marine Mammals; Stock Assessment Reports

**AGENCY:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of availability of draft revised marine mammal stock assessment reports for Alaska sea otter, walrus and polar bear; request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) has developed draft revised marine mammals stock assessment reports for sea otter, polar bear and walrus in Alaska which are available for public review and comment.

**DATES:** Comments must be received by June 3, 1998.

**ADDRESSES:** Copies of the draft revised stock assessment reports are available from the (1) Office of Marine Mammals Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1011 East Tudor Road, Anchorage, AK 99503; or (2) Division of Fish and Wildlife Management Assistance, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Room 840-ARLSQ, 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Arlington, VA 22203. Copies of FWS's final stock assessment reports for the southern sea otter in California, the northern sea otter in

Washington State, and the Florida and Antillean stocks of West Indian manatees from the southeastern United States and Puerto Rico, respectively, are available from address (2) above.

Comments on the draft revised stock assessment reports for Alaska species should be sent to Supervisor, Office of Marine Mammals Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1011 East Tudor Road, Anchorage, AK 99503.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Jeff Horwath in the FWS's Division of Fish and Wildlife Management Assistance, Arlington, Virginia at (703) 358-1718. For information specifically about sea otter, polar bears, and Pacific walrus in Alaska, contact David McGillivray at (907) 786-3800 or FAX: (907) 786-3816.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Section 117 of the MMPA (16 U.S.C. 1361-1407) requires the FWS and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to

prepare stock assessment reports for each marine mammal stock that occurs in waters under the jurisdiction of the United States. In late 1995, the FWS issued final stock assessment reports for marine mammals in Alaska as required, and announced their completion and public availability in a **Federal Register** notice on October 4, 1995 (60 FR 52008). These reports contained information regarding the distribution and abundance of the stocks, population growth rates and trends, estimates of human-caused mortality from all sources, descriptions of the fisheries with which the stocks interact, and the status of each stock.

Section 117 of the MMPA also requires the FWS and the NMFS, consistent with any new information that indicates that the status of a stock has changed or can be more accurately determined, to revise these reports annually for strategic stocks of marine

mammals and every three years for stocks determined to be none-strategic. In accordance with these statutory provisions, the FWS has reviewed all of the final stock assessment reports and determined that it would be appropriate at this time to revise the reports for the Alaska species in order to incorporate new information that was not available in 1995. Although the FWS has decided to revise these reports based on additional information, the status of the stocks has not changed.

Table 1 in this notice summarizes the draft revised stock assessment reports. The table lists the stocks, their geographic range, regional designation, estimated abundance ( $N_{EST}$ ), minimum abundance estimate ( $N_{MIN}$ ), Potential Biological Removal level (PBR), maximum theoretical growth rate ( $R_{MAX}$ ), recovery factor ( $F_R$ ), annual estimated average human-caused mortality, and the status of the stock.

TABLE 1.—SUMMARY OF DRAFT STOCK ASSESSMENT REPORTS FOR SEA OTTER, POLAR BEAR, AND PACIFIC WALRUS IN ALASKA

Species	Stock	$N_{EST}$	$N_{MIN}$	$R_{MAX}$	$F_R$	PBR	Mortality causes (5 yr average)			Stock status
							Subsistence	Fishery	Other	
Sea otter .....	Southeast Alaska .....	8,807	8,709	0.20	1.00	871	376	0	Unk	Non-strategic.
Sea otter .....	Southcentral Alaska .....	22,867	20,948	0.20	1.00	2,095	312	<1	Unk	Non-strategic.
Sea otter .....	Southwest Alaska .....	68,212	65,761	0.20	0.86	5,659	99	<2	Unk	Non-strategic.
Polar bear .....	Alaska Chukchi/Bering Seas.	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>1</sup> )	0.50	Unk	45	0	<10	Non-strategic.
Polar bear .....	Alaska Southern Beaufort Sea.	1,801	1,599	0.06	1.00	72	55	0	<1	Non-strategic.
Pacific Walrus .....	Alaska .....	201,039	188,316	0.08	1.00	7,533	4,869	17	4	Non-strategic.

<sup>1</sup> Probably similar to Alaska Southern Beaufort Sea Stock.

<sup>2</sup> Not available.

Dated: February 24, 1998.

**Robyn Thorson,**

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

[FR Doc. 98-5701 Filed 3-4-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-01-M

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Bureau of Land Management

[NV-030-98-1020-24-1 A]

#### Sierra Front/Northwest Great Basin Resource Advisory Council; Meeting Locations and Times

**AGENCY:** Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

**ACTION:** Resource Advisory Council meeting locations and times.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act and the Federal Advisory Committee Act of 1972 (FACA), the Department of the Interior, Bureau of

Land Management (BLM) Council meetings will be held as indicated below. The agenda includes: options on Black Rock Desert; Winnemucca Land Use Plan amendment options; Walker River water rights; meeting structure and schedule for 1998; and public comment period.

All meetings are open to the public. The public may present written comments to the council. Each formal council meeting will have a time allocated for public comments. The public comment period for the council meeting is listed below. Individuals who plan to attend and need further information about the meeting or need special assistance such as sign language interpretation or other reasonable accommodations, should contact Joan Sweetland at the Carson City Field Office, 5665 Morgan Mill Road, Carson City, NV 89701, telephone (702) 885-6000.

**DATE, TIME:** The council will meet on Thursday, April 2, 1998 from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Friday, April 3, 1998,

from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Bureau of Land Management, Nevada State Office, 1340 Financial Boulevard, Reno, NV 89502-7147, in the first floor conference room. This is the new Nevada State Office. If due to unforeseeable problems this site is not available, the alternate site of the meeting will be the Carson City Field Office, 5665 Morgan Mill Road, Carson City, NV 89701. The dates and times will remain the same. The public comment period will be Friday, April 3, 1998 at 1:00 p.m.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Joan Sweetland, Public Affairs Specialist, Carson City Field Office, telephone (702) 885-6000.

Dated: February 20, 1998.

**Karl L. Kipping,**

*Associate District Manager.*

[FR Doc. 98-5640 Filed 3-4-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-HC-M