

the Council's intent to take final action to address the emergency.

Special Accommodations

This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Kitty M. Simonds, 808-522-8220 (voice) or 808-522-8226 (fax), at least 5 days prior to the meeting date.

16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: April 11, 2000.

George H. Darcy,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 041000A]

Endangered Species; Permits

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

ACTION: Receipt of an application for a scientific research permit (1236) and an application to modify a permit (1190).

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given of the following actions regarding permits for takes of endangered and threatened species for the purposes of scientific research and/or enhancement:

NMFS has received a permit application from John A. Musick, Ph.D., of the College of William and Mary at Williamsburg, VA (JM-CWM)(1226) and NMFS has received an application for permit modifications from Dr. Charles Karnella, of NMFS' Pacific Islands Area Office (CK-PIAO)(1190).

DATES: Comments or requests for a public hearing on either the new application or modification request must be received at the appropriate address or fax number (see **ADDRESSES**) no later than 5 pm eastern standard time on May 15, 2000.

ADDRESSES: Written comments on any of the new applications or modification requests should be sent to the Office of Protected Resources, Endangered Species Division, F/PR3, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Comments may also be sent via fax to 301-713-0376. Comments will not be accepted if submitted via e-mail or the internet. The applications and related documents are available for review by appointment in the Office of Protected

Resources, Endangered Species Division, F/PR3, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910 (ph: 301-713-1401).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Terri Jordan, Silver Spring, MD (ph: 301-713-1401, fax: 301-713-0376, e-mail: Terri.Jordan@noaa.gov).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Authority

Issuance of permits and permit modifications, as required by the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531-1543) (ESA), is based on a finding that such permits/modifications: (1) Are applied for in good faith; (2) would not operate to the disadvantage of the listed species which are the subject of the permits; and (3) are consistent with the purposes and policies set forth in section 2 of the ESA. Authority to take listed species is subject to conditions set forth in the permits. Permits and modifications are issued in accordance with and are subject to the ESA and NMFS regulations governing listed fish and wildlife permits (50 CFR parts 222-226).

Those individuals requesting a hearing on an application listed in this notice should set out the specific reasons why a hearing on that application would be appropriate (see **ADDRESSES**). The holding of such hearing is at the discretion of the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA. All statements and opinions contained in the permit action summaries are those of the applicant and do not necessarily reflect the views of NMFS.

Species Covered in this Notice

The following species are covered in this notice: endangered and threatened Green (*Chelonia mydas*) and olive ridley (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) sea turtles; endangered Hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), Kemp's ridley (*Lepidochelys kempii*), and Leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*) sea turtles; and threatened Loggerhead sea turtle (*Caretta caretta*).

New Application Received

JM-CWM (1236) has requested a 5-year permit to take listed sea turtles in the coastal waters of Virginia, the Chesapeake Bay and in the US Virgin Islands (USVI). Research conducted in the Chesapeake Bay and coastal waters of Virginia will study inter-nesting movements of sea turtles in Virginia via satellite telemetry and to assess the effects of beach replenishment on turtle activities. Research conducted in the USVI will study habitat utilization of juvenile Hawksbill turtles at the Buck Island Reef National Monument off of

St. Croix, USVI. Both studies will capture, handle, tag (PIT, flipper, satellite, radio and acoustic), collect biological samples (via humeral bone biopsy, blood samples and laparoscopy) and release loggerhead, green, Kemp's ridley, hawksbill and leatherback turtles.

Modification Request Received

CK-PIAO requests a modification to Permit 1190. Permit 1190 authorizes the take of up to 10 olive ridley turtles annually that have been captured incidentally by longline fishery vessels in the Hawaiian region. These activities will aid in monitoring the Hawaiian longline fishery, a term and condition of the November 3, 1998 biological opinion on that fishery. In addition, these research activities are described in the Pacific Sea Turtle Recovery Plans. The incidental take of these turtles is covered by the incidental take statement of the November 3, 1998 opinion. The purpose of the research is to document and evaluate the incidental take of pelagic turtles by the longline fishery, to help estimate the impact of the fishery on listed turtles as individuals and as populations, and to determine methods to reduce that impact. Research will evaluate how incidental captures affect sea turtle anatomy and physiology as a function of season, location of take, water temperature, species, size, time of day, and gear configuration. The results of the research will help NMFS to better meet the goals and objectives of the Pacific Sea Turtle Recovery Plans, the Hooking Mortality Workshop, and the requirements of Section 7 Biological Opinions developed for this fishery, and ultimately, to fulfill ESA responsibilities to protect, conserve, and recover listed species.

Incidentally-captured turtles will be examined, tagged, weighed, measured, resuscitated using approved techniques, have tissue samples taken, and be released. Some of these turtles will have transmitters attached. Dead turtles will be removed from the marine environment for research purposes, including necropsy and collection of life history data. Tissue samples may be used lab studies including the following: toxicology, histopathology, and genetic studies to identify nesting origins of incidentally taken turtles. The modification would increase the authorized annual take of olive ridleys from 10 to 15 annually due to greater coverage of the Hawaii longline fishery than originally anticipated in the original permit issued March 8, 1999.

Dated: April 10, 2000.

Craig Johnson,

*Acting Chief, Endangered Species Division,
Office of Protected Resources, National
Marine Fisheries Service.*

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Department of the Army

Environmental Impact Statement for Follow-On Tests Including Design, Construction and Operation of One or More Pilot Test Facilities for Assembled Chemical Weapon Destruction Technologies at One or More Sites

AGENCY: Program Manager, Assembled Chemical Weapons Assessment, Department of Defense.

ACTION: Notice of intent.

SUMMARY: This announces the Army's intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement on the potential impacts of the design, construction and operation of one or more pilot test facilities for assembled chemical weapon destruction technologies at one or more chemical weapons stockpile sites, potentially simultaneously with any existing demilitarization programs and schedules at these sites. The size of the pilot tests and the location of the test facilities will be determined in this process.

DATES: Written comments must be received not later than May 30, 2000 in order to be considered in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

ADDRESSES: Written comments may be forwarded to the Program Manager Assembled Chemical Weapons Assessment, Public Affairs, Building E-5101, Room 219, 5183 Blackhawk Road, Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD 21010-5424.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ms. Ann Gallegos at 410-436-4345, by fax at 410-436-5297, or via email at ann.gallegos@sbccom.apgea.army.mil, or Program Manager Assembled Chemical Weapons Assessment, Public Affairs, Building E-5101, Room 212, 5183 Blackhawk Road, Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD 21010-5424.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This proposed action continues the process that began when Congress established the Assembled Chemical Weapons Assessment Program through passage of Public Law 104-208. The authorizing legislation instructed the Department of Defense to identify and demonstrate

alternatives to baseline incineration for the destruction of assembled chemical weapons. Baseline incineration is the technology and process in place at the Johnston Atoll in the Pacific and at Deseret Chemical Depot in Utah. Assembled chemical weapons are munitions containing both chemical agents and explosives that are stored in the United States unitary chemical weapons stockpile. This includes rockets, projectiles, and mines. Unitary agents include chemical blister agents (e.g., the mustard H, HD, and HT) and chemical nerve agents (e.g., GB (Sarin) and VX).

With the National Defense Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 1999, Congress directed the Program Manager, Assembled Chemical Weapons Assessment to plan for the pilot testing of alternatives technologies.

While all of the chemical stockpile sites were initially believed to be potential test sites, Edgewood Chemical Activity in Maryland, Newport Chemical Depot in Indiana, and Johnston Atoll in the Pacific Ocean have been eliminated from any consideration. Chemical stockpile sites at Edgewood and Newport will not be considered because no assembled chemical weapons are at those locations. Johnston Atoll will not be considered because all chemical weapons at the site will be destroyed before the National Environmental Policy Act analysis can be completed.

Sites at Anniston Chemical Activity in Alabama, Pine Bluff Chemical Activity in Arkansas, Pueblo Chemical Depot in Colorado, and Blue Grass Chemical Activity in Kentucky are being considered. Deseret Chemical Depot in Utah and Umatilla Chemical Depot in Oregon are not currently being considered because the current schedule for those plants indicates that the assembled chemical weapons will be destroyed prior to the time that a pilot facility would be ready to operate. If new information indicates that assembled chemical weapons in sufficient quantity will remain at these sites, then placement of the pilot facility at those sites will be analyzed.

Technologies under consideration include a variety of processes, such as, chemical neutralization, biological treatment, and supercritical water oxidation. The Program Manager, Assembled Chemical Weapons Assessment pilot tests will not halt or delay the operation or construction of any baseline incineration facility currently in progress. Transportation of assembled chemical weapons between stockpile sites is precluded by public law and will not be considered.

Alternatives that will be considered in the Environmental Impact Statement are: (a) No action, (b) pilot test of chemical neutralization followed by super critical water oxidation, and (c) pilot test of chemical neutralization followed by biological treatment.

There is a second Notice of Intent, entitled "Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for the Design, Construction, and Operation of a Facility for the Destruction of Chemical Agent at Pueblo Chemical Depot, Colorado." The focus of this complementary Environmental Impact Statement will be specifically on what technology should be used for the destruction of the chemical weapons stockpile at Pueblo Chemical Depot. The focus of the Assembled Chemical Weapons Assessment Environmental Impact Statement is on whether or not pilot testing of any Assembled Chemical Weapons Assessment technology should be conducted, and if so where, but it will leave to the Pueblo Chemical Depot Environment Impact Statement the question whether a full-scale facility operated initially as a pilot facility should be constructed to destroy the stockpile at that location. The emphasis for the Assembled Chemical Weapons Assessment document is to consider Assembled Chemical Weapons Assessment technologies and the various stockpile sites that may be suitable for conducting pilot tests, considering such factors as existing facilities, resource requirements for each technology and the ability of the site to provide those resources, munitions configurations and availability at each site at the time actual testing would begin. At the conclusion of both these Environmental Impact Statements, the same officials will issue The Records of Decision.

During scoping meetings, the Program Manager, Assembled Chemical Weapons Assessment is seeking to identify significant issues related to the proposed action. The Program Manager, Assembled Chemical Weapons Assessment desires information on: (1) The potential chemical weapons stockpile sites and surrounding areas, (2) concerns regarding the testing and/or operation of multiple technologies at these sites, (3) issues regarding the scale of the pilot test facilities, and (4) specific concerns regarding any potential technologies. Individuals or organizations may participate in the scoping process by written comment or by attending public meetings to be held in Alabama, Arkansas, Colorado, Kentucky and the Washington, DC metropolitan area. The dates, times, and locations of these meetings will be