

In the past, NMFS has made plans and annual reports from states available through the internet and plans to continue this practice.

III. Data

OMB Control Number: 0648–0466.

Form Number: None.

Type of Review: Regular submission (extension of a currently approved collection).

Affected Public: Business or other for-profit organizations; State, local or tribal governments.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 1.

Estimated Time per Response: 2,500 hours to complete each agreement or plan that has the intention of making listing unnecessary; 320 hours to conduct monitoring for successful agreements; and 80 hours to prepare a report for successful agreements.

Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours: 2,820.

Estimated Total Annual Cost to Public: \$150 in recordkeeping/reporting costs.

IV. Request for Comments

Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden (including hours and cost) of the proposed collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized and/or included in the request for OMB approval of this information collection; they also will become a matter of public record.

Dated: September 10, 2018.

Sarah Brabson,

NOAA PRA Clearance Officer.

[FR Doc. 2018–19900 Filed 9–12–18; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648–XG331

Takes of Marine Mammals Incidental to Specified Activities; Taking Marine Mammals Incidental to U.S. Air Force Launching of Space Launch Vehicles, Intercontinental Ballistic and Small Missiles, and Aircraft and Helicopter Operations at Vandenberg Air Force Base, California

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

ACTION: Notice; receipt of application for Letters of Authorization; request for comments and information.

SUMMARY: NMFS has received a request from the U.S. Air Force (USAF) for authorization to take marine mammals incidental to launching space launch vehicles, intercontinental ballistic and small missiles, and aircraft and helicopter operations at Vandenberg Air Force Base (VAFB), California, from March 27, 2019 through March 26, 2024. Pursuant to the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), NMFS is announcing our receipt of the USAF's request for the development and implementation of regulations governing the incidental taking of marine mammals and inviting information, suggestions, and comments on the USAF's application and request.

DATES: Comments and information must be received no later than October 15, 2018.

ADDRESSES: Comments on the application should be addressed to Jolie Harrison, Chief, Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service. Physical comments should be sent to 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910 and electronic comments should be sent to ITP.Carduner@noaa.gov.

Instructions: NMFS is not responsible for comments sent by any other method, to any other address or individual, or received after the end of the comment period. Comments received electronically, including all attachments, must not exceed a 25-megabyte file size. Attachments to electronic comments will be accepted in Microsoft Word or Excel or Adobe PDF file formats only. All comments received are a part of the public record and will generally be posted to the internet at www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/

[permits/incidental/military.htm](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/permits/incidental/military.htm) without change. All personal identifying information (e.g., name, address) voluntarily submitted by the commenter may be publicly accessible. Do not submit confidential business information or otherwise sensitive or protected information.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jordan Carduner, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, (301) 427–8401. An electronic copy of the USAF's application may be obtained online at: www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/permits/incidental/military.htm. In case of problems accessing these documents, please call the contact listed above.

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 (Secretary) 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 geographic 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 for incidental takings shall be granted if NMFS finds that the taking will have a negligible impact on the species or stock(s), will not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of the species or stock(s) for subsistence uses (where relevant), and if the permissible methods of taking and requirements pertaining to the mitigation, monitoring and reporting of such takings 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.

The MMPA states that the term “take” means to harass, hunt, capture, kill or attempt to harass, hunt, capture, or kill any marine mammal.

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).

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2004 (Pub. L. 108–136) removed the “small numbers” and “specified geographical region” limitations indicated above and amended the definition of “harassment” as it applies to a “military readiness activity” to read as follows (Section 3(18)(B) of the MMPA): (i) Any act that injures or has the significant potential to injure a marine mammal or marine mammal stock in the wild (Level A Harassment); or (ii) Any act that disturbs or is likely to disturb a marine mammal or marine mammal stock in the wild by causing disruption of natural behavioral patterns, including, but not limited to, migration, surfacing, nursing, breeding, feeding, or sheltering, to a point where such behavioral patterns are abandoned or significantly altered (Level B Harassment).

Summary of Request

On August 10, 2018, NMFS received an adequate and complete application from the USAF requesting a letter of authorization (LOA) for the take of six species of marine mammals (all pinnipeds), by Level B harassment only, incidental to launching space launch vehicles, intercontinental ballistic and small missiles, and aircraft and helicopter operations at VAFB. The USAF is requesting a 5-year LOA for these activities. These activities may result in the take of marine mammals as a result of noise or visual disturbance.

Description of the Specified Activity

VAFB supports launch activities for the USAF, Department of Defense, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and commercial entities. VAFB is the primary launch facility on the West Coast of the United States for placing commercial, government and military satellites into polar orbit on unmanned launch vehicles, and for the testing and evaluation of intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) and sub-orbital target and interceptor missiles. In addition to space vehicle and missile launch activities at VAFB, occasional helicopter and aircraft operations involve search-and-rescue, delivery of space vehicle components, launch mission support, security reconnaissance, and training flights.

There are currently six active facilities at VAFB used to launch satellites into polar orbit. These facilities support launch programs for the Atlas V, Delta II, Delta IV, Falcon 9 and Minotaur rockets. A variety of small missiles are

also launched from various facilities at VAFB, including Minuteman III, an ICBM which is launched from underground silos. In addition, several types of interceptor and target vehicles are launched for the Missile Defense Agency, which develops various systems and elements, including the Ballistic Missile Defense System.

The USAF anticipates that no more than 15 missile and 50 rocket launches would occur in any year, with total launch activities not exceeding 75 missile and 250 rocket launches over five years. All launch operations would occur at VAFB, potentially resulting in impacts to marine mammals at VAFB (as a result of launch noise and visual stimuli) and at the Northern Channel Islands (as a result of noise from sonic booms). A full description of the activities to be conducted by the USAF at VAFB, including descriptions of the space vehicles and missiles proposed for use, is provided in the USAF’s application.

Information Solicited

Interested persons may submit information, suggestions, and comments concerning the USAF’s request (see ADDRESSES). NMFS will consider all information, suggestions, and comments related to the request during the development of proposed regulations governing the incidental taking of marine mammals by the USAF, if appropriate.

Dated: September 7, 2018.

Donna S. Wieting,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648–XG460

Pacific Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

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

ACTION: Notice of public meeting (webinar).

SUMMARY: The Pacific Fishery Management Council’s (Pacific Council) Highly Migratory Species Management Team (HMSMT) will hold a webinar, which is open to the public.

DATES: The webinar meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 3, 2018, from 1:30 p.m. until 4:30 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held via webinar. A public listening station is available at the Pacific Council office (address below). To attend the webinar (1) join the meeting by visiting this link <https://www.gotomeeting.com/webinar>, (2) enter the Webinar ID: 193–653–531, and (3) enter your name and email address (required). After logging in to the webinar, please (1) dial this TOLL number 1–213–929–4232 (not a toll-free number), (2) enter the attendee phone audio access code 380–095–597, and (3) enter the provided audio PIN after joining the webinar. You must enter this PIN for audio access. NOTE: We have disabled Mic/Speakers as an option and require all participants to use a telephone or cell phone to participate. Technical Information and system requirements: PC-based attendees are required to use Windows® 7, Vista, or XP; Mac®-based attendees are required to use Mac OS® X 10.5 or newer; Mobile attendees are required to use iPhone®, iPad®, Android™ phone or Android tablet (See the <https://www.gotomeeting.com/webinar/ipad-iphone-android-webinar-apps>). You may send an email to Mr. Kris Kleinschmidt at Kris.Kleinschmidt@noaa.gov or contact him at (503) 820–2280, extension 411 for technical assistance. A public listening station will also be available at the Pacific Council office.

Council address: Pacific Fishery Management Council, 7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101, Portland, OR 97220.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Kit Dahl, Pacific Council; telephone: (503) 820–2422.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The purpose of the HMSMT webinar is to (1) prepare for the Council’s November 1–8, 2018 meeting, (2) discuss analytical tasks to support the Council finalizing a range of alternatives for authorizing a fishery using deep-set buoy gear, and (3) discuss other topics related to the management of HMS fisheries.

Although non-emergency issues not contained in the meeting agenda may be discussed, those issues may not be the subject of formal action during this meeting. Action will be restricted to those issues specifically listed in this document and any issues arising after publication of this document that require emergency action under section 305(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, provided the public has been notified of