

The application and related documents are available for review upon written request to any of the above addresses.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Peter Hood, 727-824-5305; email: Peter.Hood@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The EFP is requested under the authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*), and regulations at 50 CFR 600.745(b) concerning exempted fishing.

The described research is part of a life history study of goliath grouper and includes a regional age structure study. This research is funded by NOAA through the Marine Fisheries Initiative (cooperative agreement number NA11NMF4330123). The research is intended to involve federally permitted for-hire fishermen in the collection of biological information on goliath grouper. The proposed collection for scientific research involves activities that could otherwise be prohibited by regulations at 50 CFR part 622, as they pertain to reef fish managed by the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council and to snapper-grouper managed by the South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils (Councils). Specific, otherwise prohibited, Federal regulations that the EFP would authorize include regulations at § 622.32(b)(2)(ii) and (b)(3)(ii) (Prohibited and limited harvest species) and § 622.39(b)(ii) and (d)(ii)(D) (Bag and possession limits).

The applicant requests authorization through the EFP to allow for-hire fishermen to temporarily possess goliath grouper for non-lethal sampling during the course of their normal fishing activities in the Federal waters off Florida. The sampling would occur both state and Federal waters off Florida in both the Gulf of Mexico (Gulf) and the South Atlantic. For sampling in Florida state waters, the applicants have received a permit to non-lethally sample goliath grouper from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. To participate in this study, for-hire fishermen would be trained by the applicants on how to sample goliath grouper with minimal harm to the fish. Sampling includes measuring, tagging, and removing a portion of the dorsal fin rays before releasing the live fish. The EFP would apply to specifically designated fishers in Gulf Federal waters who would be required to possess a valid Federal Gulf reef fish charter vessel/headboat permit and to designated fishers in South Atlantic Federal waters who would be required to possess a valid South Atlantic

snapper-grouper charter vessel/headboat permit.

The goal of the research is to provide better life history information for the next stock assessment. Because the possession of goliath grouper is prohibited in Federal waters, obtaining biological samples through dockside sampling cannot be done. The EFP, if approved, would authorize the sampling of no more than 1,000 goliath grouper from both state and Federal waters from the date of issuance of the EFP through August 28, 2014. These fish would be released alive immediately after sampling. The condition (alive or dead) of the released fish would be assessed after release from the vessel by the crew. The EFP would no longer be valid if there is a mortality of 10 or more fish as a result of the activities taken through this EFP.

NMFS finds this application warrants further consideration. Possible conditions the agency may impose on this permit, if it is indeed granted, include but are not limited to, a prohibition of conducting research within marine protected areas, marine sanctuaries, or special management zones, without additional authorization. A report on the research would be due at the end of the collection period, to be submitted to NMFS and reviewed by the councils.

A final decision on issuance of the EFP will depend on NMFS' review of public comments received on the application, consultations with appropriate fishery management agencies of the affected states, the Councils, and the U.S. Coast Guard, as well as a determination that it is consistent with all applicable laws.

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

Dated: June 25, 2012.

Carrie Selberg,

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

[FR Doc. 2012-15892 Filed 6-27-12; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Fisheries of the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico; South Atlantic Fishery Management Council; Public Meetings

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

ACTION: Notice of a public meeting and workshop.

SUMMARY: The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC) will hold a meeting of its Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) to review and discuss Amendment 9 to the Shrimp Fishery Management Plan (FMP), and a workshop of the SSC to consider modifications to the Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) control rule. The meeting and workshop will be held in North Charleston, SC. See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**.

DATES: The meeting and workshop will be held August 1-3, 2012. See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION.

ADDRESSES: The meeting and workshop will be held at the Crowne Plaza, 4831 Tanger Outlet Boulevard, North Charleston, SC 29418; telephone: (843) 744-4422.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Kim Iverson, Public Information Officer, 4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201, North Charleston, SC 29405; telephone: (843) 571-4366; email: Kim.Iverson@safmc.net.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Under the Magnuson-Stevens Reauthorized Act, the SSC is the body responsible for reviewing the Council's scientific materials. During the SSC meeting, the SSC will discuss Amendment 9 to the Shrimp FMP for the South Atlantic Region. The amendment will modify the process for a state to request a concurrent closure of the penaeid shrimp fisheries in the adjacent federal waters during severe winter weather, and revise the overfished status determination criteria for the pink shrimp stock.

During the SSC workshop, the committee will discuss the ABC control rule, with emphasis on methods for deriving ABC for stocks that have reliable catch data only. The SSC will review catch and biological data for unassessed stocks and recommend modifications to the ABC control rule to improve the use of such information when providing ABC recommendations. The SSC will not make ABC recommendations during the workshop. SSC Meeting Schedule:

August 1, 2012, 1 p.m.-2:45 p.m.

SSC Workshop Schedule:

August 1, 2012, 3 p.m.-6 p.m.

August 2, 2012, 9 a.m.-6 p.m.

August 3, 2012, 9 a.m.-12 p.m.

Although non-emergency issues not contained in this agenda may come before this group for discussion, those issues may not be the subject of formal action during these meetings. Action will be restricted to those issues specifically listed in this notice and any issues arising after publication of this

notice that require emergency action under section 305(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, provided the public has been notified of the Council's intent to take final action to address the emergency.

Special Accommodations

These meetings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to the Council office (see **ADDRESSES**) at least 3 business days prior to the meeting.

Dated: June 25, 2012.

Tracey L. Thompson,

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

[FR Doc. 2012-15813 Filed 6-27-12; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XC010

Marine Mammals; File No. 14325

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

ACTION: Notice; issuance of permit amendment.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that a major amendment to Permit No. 14325-01 has been issued to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G), Division of Wildlife Conservation, Juneau, AK, (Principal Investigator: Michael Rehberg).

ADDRESSES: The permit amendment and related documents are available for review upon written request or by appointment in the following offices:

Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13705, Silver Spring, MD 20910; phone (301) 427-8401; fax (301) 713-0376; and Alaska Region, NMFS, P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802-1668; phone (907) 586-7221; fax (907) 586-7249.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Tammy Adams or Amy Sloan, (301)427-8401.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On May 2, 2012, notice was published in the **Federal Register** (77 FR 25963) that a request for an amendment to Permit No. 14325-01 to conduct research on Steller sea lions (*Eumetopias jubatus*) in Alaska had been submitted by the above-named

applicant. The requested permit amendment has been issued under the authority of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*), the regulations governing the taking and importing of marine mammals (50 CFR part 216), the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA; 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), the regulations governing the taking, importing, and exporting of endangered and threatened species (50 CFR parts 222-226), and the Fur Seal Act of 1966, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1151 *et seq.*).

The permit has been amended to incorporate changes to the terms and conditions related to numbers of animals taken and to the location and manner of taking to include: Manual restraint of pups in the eastern Distinct Population Segment (eDPS) and western DPS (wDPS); capture of adult Steller sea lions using remotely delivered immobilization agents; adding jugular blood draw/catheter location for sampling and Evans Blue injection; adding the intraperitoneal cavity to allowable deuterium injection sites; modifying time of year and number of takes for the Alsek/Akwe aerial surveys; and adding aerial surveys at Cape Newenham haulout and in the northern Bering Sea. The amendment is valid through the original permit expiration date, August 31, 2014.

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), NMFS has determined that the activities proposed are consistent with the Preferred Alternative in the Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for Steller Sea Lion and Northern Fur Seal Research (NMFS 2007), and that issuance of the permit would not have a significant adverse impact on the human environment.

As required by the ESA, issuance of this permit was based on a finding that such permit: (1) Was applied for in good faith; (2) will not operate to the disadvantage of such endangered species; and (3) is consistent with the purposes and policies set forth in section 2 of the ESA.

Dated: June 21, 2012.

P. Michael Payne,

Chief, Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 2012-15766 Filed 6-27-12; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XC068

Takes of Marine Mammals Incidental to Specified Activities; Harbor Activities Related to the Delta IV/Evolved Expendable Launch Vehicle at Vandenberg Air Force Base, CA

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

ACTION: Notice; proposed incidental take authorization; request for comments.

SUMMARY: We have received an application from United Launch Alliance, for an Incidental Harassment Authorization to take marine mammals, by harassment, incidental to conducting *Delta Mariner* operations, cargo unloading activities, and harbor maintenance activities at south Vandenberg Air Force Base, CA. United Launch Alliance is requesting an Authorization per the Marine Mammal Protection Act. We are requesting comments on our proposal to issue an Incidental Harassment Authorization to United Launch Alliance to incidentally harass, by Level B harassment only, three species of marine mammals during their specified activities from September 2012, through August 2013.

DATES: We must receive comments and information no later than July 30, 2012.

ADDRESSES: Comments on the application should be addressed to P. Michael Payne, Chief, Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910-3225. The mailbox address for providing email comments is ITP.Cody@noaa.gov. We are not responsible for email comments sent to addresses other than the one provided here. Comments sent via email, including all attachments, must not exceed a 10-megabyte file size.

Instructions: All submitted comments are a part of the public record. We will post comments on our Web site at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/permits/incidental.htm#applications> without change. All Personal Identifying Information (for example, name, address, etc.) voluntarily submitted by the commenter may be publicly accessible. Do not submit confidential business information or otherwise sensitive or protected information.

To obtain an electronic copy of the application containing a list of the