

cetaceans, and sea turtles in U.S. territorial and international waters as mandated by the MMPA and ESA. These studies are conducted through ground, vessel, and aerial surveys for observation, photogrammetry, photo-identification, biological sample collection, and tagging animals. Researchers also may salvage and import/export specimens and biological samples of these species.

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), an initial determination has been made that the activity proposed is categorically excluded from the requirement to prepare an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement.

Concurrent with the publication of this notice in the **Federal Register**, NMFS is forwarding copies of the application to the Marine Mammal Commission and its Committee of Scientific Advisors.

Dated: July 23, 2015.

Julia Harrison,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XD989

Endangered and Threatened Species; Take of Anadromous Fish

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

ACTION: Applications for six new scientific research permits, and fourteen research permit renewals.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that NMFS has received 20 scientific research permit application requests relating to Pacific salmon, sturgeon, and eulachon. The proposed research is intended to increase knowledge of species listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and to help guide management, conservation, and recovery efforts. The applications may be viewed online at: https://apps.nmfs.noaa.gov/preview/preview_open_for_comment.cfm.

DATES: Comments or requests for a public hearing on the applications must be received at the appropriate address or fax number (see **ADDRESSES**) no later

than 5 p.m. Pacific standard time on August 28, 2015.

ADDRESSES: Written comments on the applications should be submitted to the Protected Resources Division, NMFS, 777 Sonoma Avenue, Room 325, Santa Rosa, CA 95404. Comments may also be submitted via fax to 707-578-3435 or by email to nmfs.swr.apps@noaa.gov (include the permit number in the subject line of the fax or email).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jeff Abrams, Santa Rosa, CA (ph.: 707-575-6080), Fax: 707-578-3435, email: Jeff.Abrams@noaa.gov. Permit application instructions are available from the address above, or online at <https://apps.nmfs.noaa.gov>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Species Covered in This Notice

The following listed species are covered in this notice:

Chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*): Threatened California Coastal (CC); Threatened Central Valley spring-run (CVSR); endangered Sacramento River winter-run (SRWR).

Coho salmon (*O. kisutch*): Threatened Southern Oregon/Northern California Coast (SONCC); endangered Central California Coast (CCC).

Steelhead (*O. mykiss*): Threatened Northern California (NC); threatened CCC; threatened California Central Valley (CCV); threatened South-Central California Coast (S-CCC); endangered Southern California (SC).

North American green sturgeon (*Acipenser medirostris*): Threatened southern distinct population segment (sDPS).

Eulachon (*Thaleichthys pacificus*): Threatened sDPS.

Authority

Scientific research permits are issued in accordance with section 10(a)(1)(A) of the ESA (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) and regulations governing listed fish and wildlife permits (50 CFR parts 222-227). NMFS issues permits based on findings that such permits: (1) Are applied for in good faith; (2) if granted and exercised, would not operate to the disadvantage of the listed species that are the subject of the permit; and (3) are consistent with the purposes and policy of section 2 of the ESA. The authority to take listed species is subject to conditions set forth in the permits.

Anyone 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**). Such hearings are held at the discretion of the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NMFS.

Applications Received

Permit 1440-2R

The Interagency Ecological Program (IEP), a consortium of nine state and federal agencies, is seeking to renew Permit 1440 for a period of five years. The permit would authorize IEP to take CVSR Chinook salmon, SRWR Chinook salmon, CCV steelhead, CCC steelhead and sDPS green sturgeon while conducting 11 surveys in the San Francisco Bay-Delta region. The studies would examine the abundance, and temporal and spatial distribution of various life stages of pelagic fishes of management concern, including listed species, and their food (*e.g.*, zooplankton) resources, along with environmental conditions. These IEP studies are intended to monitor/inform the effectiveness of water operations, aquatic habitat restoration, and fish management practices, thereby providing a benefit to listed fish. The 11 studies included are: (1) Adult Striped Bass, a striped bass population study; (2) Fall Midwater Trawl, which monitors the relative abundance of native and introduced fish species; (3) Sturgeon Tagging, a white sturgeon tagging program; (4) Summer Townet, which targets delta smelt and young-of-the-year striped bass; (5) Estuarine and Marine Fish, a San Francisco Bay trawl study; (6) 20mm Survey, a study to monitor juvenile delta smelt distribution and relative abundance; (7) Yolo Bypass, a research effort to understand fish and invertebrate use of the Yolo Bypass seasonal floodplain; (8) Upper Estuary Zooplankton, which targets multiple zooplankters; (9) Spring Kodiak Trawl, which determines the relative abundance and distribution of spawning delta smelt; (10) Suisun Marsh Survey, monitoring to determine the effects of the Suisun Marsh Salinity Control Gates operation on fish, including listed salmonids; and (11) Smelt Larva Survey, which provides distribution data for longfin smelt larvae in the Delta. Listed fish would be captured by fyke net, gill net, midwater trawl, trammel net, hoop net, otter trawl, larval fish net, zooplankton net, Kodiak trawl net, rotary screw trap, and beach seine. The majority of captured fishes would be identified to species, enumerated, measured for standard length, and released. Juvenile SRWR and CVSR Chinook salmon would be identified using the Delta Model Length-at-Date-of-Capture Table. Listed species would be processed first and released. A subsample of wild juvenile SRWR and CVSR Chinook salmon sized captures would be tissue sampled for genetic analysis, and a subsample of hatchery

juvenile SRWR and CVSR Chinook salmon sized captures would be sacrificed (*i.e.*, intentional directed mortality) in order to collect coded wire tag data for management purposes and for stock confirmation. To reduce handling mortality, investigators would conduct water to water transfers, use fish-friendly nets, avoid handling when possible, and would not release fish from a vessel under way.

Permit 13675–2R

The Fishery Foundation of California is seeking to renew permit 13675 to annually take juvenile CVSR Chinook salmon, SRWR Chinook salmon, CCV steelhead, and sDPS green sturgeon while conducting research designed to monitor the use of the Fremont Landing Conservation Bank (FLCB) at the confluence of the Sacramento and Feather rivers in California's Central Valley. The requested permit would authorize take for a period of five years. FLCB is a restored area that provides mitigation for impacts to listed salmonid species in the Central Valley. The proposed monitoring would evaluate the use of the FLCB by listed fish, provide data directly related to success criteria described in the FLCB management plan, and benefit listed fish by informing adaptive management strategies being conducted at the FLCB. The researchers would use beach seines and fyke nets to capture listed fish. Once captured, all listed fish would be identified to species and released. A subsample would be measured for fork length. No anesthesia would be used, and no additional handling procedures would be implemented. Captured fish would remain completely wetted at all times to minimize stress. Any fish exhibiting signs of physiological stress would be immediately released. The researchers are not proposing to kill any of the fish they capture, but some may die as an unintended result of the research.

Permit 13791–2R

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Stockton Fish and Wildlife Office (SFWO), has requested to renew Permit 13791 for a period of four years. The permit would authorize SFWO to annually take juvenile and smolt CVSR Chinook salmon, SRWR Chinook salmon, CCV steelhead, and juvenile and larval sDPS green sturgeon while conducting seven research studies. The purpose of the studies is to evaluate/monitor the: (1) Abundance, temporal and spatial distribution, and survival of salmonids and other fishes in the lower Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers and the San Francisco

Estuary (SFE); (2) occurrence and habitat use of fishes, especially early life history stages, within the Liberty Island and Cache Slough Complex; (3) relative gear efficiencies for all IEP fish survey nets, and also the distribution of delta smelt; (4) littoral habitat use of juvenile Chinook salmon within the Delta; (5) the effect of projected water operations on delta smelt; (6) length at date race criteria of SRWR Chinook salmon sized juvenile Chinook salmon; and (7) SRWR and CVSR Chinook salmon floodplain usage in the Yolo bypass. These studies would result in capture/handle/release take, tissue sampling, and/or intentional directed mortality. Intentional directed mortality would apply to only juvenile hatchery adipose clipped salmonids and larval green sturgeon. Capture methods would include Kodiak trawl, midwater trawl, beach seine, zooplankton net, larval net, gill net, fyke net, purse seine, and boat electrofishing. All listed fish except adipose fin clipped SRWR and CVSR Chinook salmon would be immediately collected from the sampling gears, placed in containers filled with river water collected at the location being sampled, processed, held in a recovery container filled with aerated river water, and subsequently released at the sampled location. A fin tissue sample would be collected from a subset of natural origin SRWR and CVSR Chinook salmon for stock determination. The purpose of intentional mortality of hatchery origin (adipose clipped) SRWR and CVSR Chinook salmon would be to collect coded wire tags (CWT), and up ten green sturgeon larvae would be killed during larval fish collections in order to identify the contents of the larval trawl net, which can only be achieved in the lab. The data provided by these studies would provide natural resource managers real-time biological and population data on fishes to evaluate the effect of water operations and fish management practices within the SFE, thereby benefiting listed fish.

Permit 14516–2R

Dr. Jerry Smith, Associate Professor in the Department of Biological Sciences at San Jose State University, is requesting to renew permit 14516 for a period of five years. The permit would authorize Dr. Smith to annually take multiple life stages of CCC coho salmon and CCC steelhead while conducting two studies: (1) Stream and lagoon surveys in Gazos Creek, Waddell Creek, and Scott Creek; and (2) lagoon surveys in Pescadero Creek Lagoon and San Gregorio Lagoon. The purpose of the studies is to: (1) Provide an annual index of relative abundance for juvenile listed salmonids,

provide data on lagoon and upstream habitat utilization and growth, and provide an assessment of trends and year to year response to variations in habitat conditions; and (2) determine juvenile listed salmonid abundance and growth, and provide adult life history information in the lagoons. Capture methods would include backpack electrofishing, and beach seine. Captured salmonids would be measured, and a subset of juvenile captures and all adults would have scale samples taken, before being released at the capture location. A subsample of juvenile steelhead would also be marked via caudal fin clip to perform a mark-recapture analysis. Scale and fin tissue samples would be taken from adult fish carcasses. Captured live fish would be held in flow-through live cars, covered with a towel to provide shade and cover to calm fish. Adult fish would be processed and released first. In lagoons, live cars would be kept in deeper water with cooler temperatures and less turbidity to prevent warming above ambient temperatures or a decrease in dissolved oxygen. The researchers are not proposing to kill any of the fish they capture, but a small number may die as an unintended result of the activities.

Permit 15215

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), Fisheries Branch, Fish Health Laboratory, is applying for a permit to take endangered SRWR Chinook salmon, CCC coho salmon and SC steelhead for a period of five years. The purpose of the proposed research is to investigate wild fish kills/disease outbreaks that could occur in California that involve federally listed endangered species. The research would benefit the listed species by providing fisheries managers with the necessary information to help alleviate future outbreaks of fish disease through proper management of fishery and water resources. The proposed research would only be conducted in the event of elevated and unexplained endangered species mortality or the presence of clinically diseased animals. Given such a triggering event, endangered fish would be collected in any of the state waters of California in which a disease outbreak/fish die-off occurred. Adult and juvenile endangered fish would be collected by hand or dip-net, as only dead and/or moribund fish, or fish displaying clinical signs of disease, would be collected. Moribund or clinically diseased fish would be euthanized (*i.e.*, intentional directed mortality). Trained CDFW pathologists and veterinarians would assess

moribund or diseased fish prior to euthanasia, and only fish that would likely die regardless of the actions proposed by CDFW would be euthanized. Necropsies would be performed on dead and euthanized captured fish either in the laboratory or in the field, fish would be examined for signs of parasitic and bacterial infections, and fin and/or internal tissues would be collected for virology, histopathology, immunological testing and/or DNA testing.

Permit 16274

The Mendocino Redwood Company (MRC) is seeking to renew Permit 1181-Modification 1 for a period of five years. The permit would authorize MRC to take CC Chinook salmon, SONCC coho salmon, CCC coho salmon, NC steelhead, and CCC steelhead while conducting research and monitoring to assess juvenile and adult populations of salmonids and their distribution in streams within MRC's property. Research would be conducted in several watersheds within Mendocino and northern Sonoma counties. The data gathered would benefit listed fish by informing a better understanding of salmonid distribution, abundance, and habitat utilization in these areas. Juvenile salmonids would be captured by backpack electrofishing, anesthetized, weighed, measured to fork length, and released. A subsample of juvenile salmonids would be fin clipped to mark and to collect tissue samples for genetic analysis. Live adults and/or juveniles would be observed via snorkel surveys and spawning surveys. Carcasses would be measured and then marked to ensure duplicate measurements were not made. Outmigrant trapping would be conducted using a rotary screw trap or weir/pipe trap; captured outmigrants would be anesthetized, measured, and released. A subsample of outmigrants would be marked (dye, elastomer, or fin clip) or Passive Integrated Transponder (PIT) tagged. All anesthetized fish would be allowed to recover in a bucket containing aerated natal water prior to being released back into the stream from which they were taken. The researchers are not proposing to kill any of the fish they capture, but a small number may die as an unintended result of the activities.

Permit 17063

The United States Forest Service (USFS), Redwood Sciences Laboratory is requesting to renew permit 1071 for a period of five years to perform eight studies that together would take CC Chinook salmon, SONCC coho salmon,

CCC coho salmon, NC steelhead, CC steelhead, and SC steelhead. The purposes of the eight studies are: (1) To investigate the invasion history of non-listed speckled dace in the Van Duzen River and the Eel River, (2) to investigate the invasion history of non-listed California roach in the Van Duzen River and the Eel River, (3) to develop an Individual Based Modeling (IBM) approach to predict the effects of management practices on salmonid population in Northern California, (4) to link abiotic factors (e.g., distance to spawning ground) to the expression of an anadromous or resident life history for *O. mykiss* in the Eel River, (5) to link the distribution and movement of watershed products (e.g., wood, sediment, and water) in tributaries and mainstem channels to fish diversity and abundance in Northern California rivers, (6) to provide managers with insights into the status and relatedness of Sacramento sucker populations in northern California, (7) to document the speckled dace invasion of the Mad River, and (8) to provide managers with a tool to predict the effects of management decisions on Santa Ana suckers in the Santa Ana River. Listed adult and juvenile salmonids would be observed via snorkel surveys. Listed juvenile salmonids would be captured via backpack and/or boat electrofishing for all eight studies, and also via beach seine and/or fyke net for Study 6 (i.e., Sacramento sucker relatedness and distribution). For most studies, listed salmonids that are captured would be anesthetized, measured and/or weighed, and released. Captured fishes would be held in multiple live cars to prevent overcrowding and to maintain acceptable water quality conditions. In addition to capturing, handling and releasing fish, Study 4 (i.e. factors affecting the expression of an anadromous versus resident life history in *O. mykiss*) would also include intentional directed mortality for otolith microchemical analyses. A maximum of four *O. mykiss* would be sacrificed from each of seventy sample streams distributed throughout the Eel River, which would include both anadromous (listed as threatened) and resident (non-listed) life history forms.

Permit 17077-2R

Dr. Peter Moyle, with the University of California at Davis, Department of Wildlife, Fish and Conservation Biology, has applied for a five year renewal of Permit 17077 to take listed species while conducting research designed to develop a better understanding of how physical habitat, flow and other factors interact to

maintain assemblages of native and non-native aquatic species in the upper SFE. This study would provide knowledge about food web and habitat support for native fishes, including listed anadromous fish, which are suspected of utilizing such habitats during development. While listed fish are not the target species for this study, the study would benefit listed fish by improving management decisions regarding creating additional habitat, and helping to anticipate the effects of drought and climate change on food and habitat availability. Sampling would be conducted in three distinct regions of the SFE: (1) The Cache-Lindsey complex, (2) the Sherman Lake complex and (3) Suisun Marsh, and would take juvenile and adult CVSR Chinook salmon, SRWR Chinook Salmon, CCV steelhead, and sDPS green sturgeon. Capture methods would be similar for each of these regions, and would include otter trawling, beach seining and boat electrofishing, however electrofishing would be suspended immediately upon encountering a listed species. All sampled fish would be placed in a bucket with ambient water and an aerator, examined for responsiveness and returned to the water as soon as possible with a minimum of handling, after identification and length estimates were made. Juvenile SRWR and CVSR Chinook salmon would be identified using published size-at-date criteria. Only adult green sturgeon captures would receive additional processing beyond identification and measuring for length. Adult green sturgeon would be scanned for the presence of a PIT tag, and a soft pelvic fin tissue sample would be collected. The researchers are not proposing to kill any of the fish they capture, but a small number may die as an unintended result of the activities.

Permit 17219

The NMFS Southwest Fisheries Science Center, Fishery Ecology Division (FED), requests a five-year renewal of permit 1044-Modification 4 for research throughout California that would include take of SRWR Chinook salmon, CVSR Chinook salmon, SONCC coho salmon, CCC coho salmon, NC steelhead, CCC steelhead, CCV steelhead, S-CCC steelhead, SC steelhead, and juvenile sDPS green sturgeon. The proposed research would benefit listed fish by supporting conservation and management of listed anadromous salmonids and green sturgeon in California by directly addressing information needs identified by NMFS and other agencies. FED studies address priority topics identified

in NMFS technical recovery team reports, NMFS recovery plans, joint programs such as the California Coastal Monitoring Program developed by NMFS and CDFW, and state programs such as the Fisheries Restoration Grant Program. Research objectives of specific proposed studies include: (1) Estimating population abundance and dynamics; (2) evaluating factors affecting growth, survival, and life-history; (3) assessing life-stage specific habitat use and movement; (4) collecting data necessary to construct various types of models (e.g., population, life-cycle, bioenergetics, and habitat-use models); (5) determining genetic structure of populations; (6) evaluating the effects of activities such as water management and habitat restoration on populations; and (7) developing improved sampling and monitoring methods.

Research and take would involve various life stages (juvenile, smolt, adult, and carcass). Listed fish would be observed during spawning surveys, and captured by electrofishing, beach seine, rotary screw trap, and/or hook-and-line. The majority of captured fish would be anesthetized, measured to fork length, and released. A subsample of captured fish would be further sampled by collection of scales, fin clips, gill clips or stomach contents; and/or marking or tagging including fin tissue clips, PIT tags, elastomer tags, acoustic tags, or radio tags. Species care after capture would include use of aerated buckets or live cars for holding and recovery, and minimization of handling time. The majority of fish captured would be released alive at their point of capture following recovery from handling. However, in limited cases some fish would be: (1) Retained in enclosures in streams for short-term growth and survival experiments and then released, or (2) euthanized for analysis of otoliths and/or parasitological/pathological studies of parasites and diseases of wild juvenile steelhead.

Permit 17272

The USFWS, Arcata Fish and Wildlife Office Fisheries Program (AFWO) is seeking to renew permit 1068-Modification 2 for a period of five years. The requested permit would authorize AFWO to take multiple life stages of hatchery and wild SONCC coho salmon via monitoring and research activities in Northwest California. Five studies are proposed, the purposes of which are to monitor: (1) Chinook salmon fry production and disease incidence in the Klamath River below Iron Gate dam, (2) Chinook salmon escapement in the mainstem Klamath River below the Shasta River confluence, (3) Chinook

salmon escapement in the mainstem Klamath River from Iron Gate dam to the Shasta River confluence, (4) coho salmon escapement between Iron Gate Dam and the Indian Creek confluence, and (5) long-term salmonid disease incidence in the lower Klamath River. Trained AFWO crews would conduct redd surveys, on foot and from rafts, which could observe/harass spawning SONCC coho salmon. Crews would spend minimal time around redds and avoid walking on redds. Trained AFWO crews would also capture juvenile SONCC coho salmon using rotary-screw traps, frame nets, and beach seines. Traps would be thoroughly cleaned at least once a day. Juvenile coho salmon would be held in aerated holding buckets filled with fresh river water then anesthetized, measured for fork length, weighed, and released back into the river. There would be some intentional mortality of hatchery juvenile coho salmon for disease analysis. Aside from these hatchery fish, the researchers are not proposing to kill any of the fish they capture, but a small number may die as an unintended result of the activities. The proposed studies would benefit listed coho salmon by informing the AFWO goal to develop conservation strategies for aquatic resources and to evaluate the success of aquatic habitat restoration efforts that will lead to the recovery and conservation of fish populations and fisheries in northern California.

Permit 17351

The Green Diamond Resource Company (GDRC) has applied for a five year renewal of research permit 1060-Modification 1 to take listed salmonids while conducting research and monitoring under an existing Aquatic Habitat Conservation Plan (AHCP). The AHCP, which was approved in 2007 and is valid until 2057, identifies potential threats to three listed fish species that may result from GDRC's timber harvest activities and describes minimization and mitigation measures and effectiveness monitoring to address potential threats. The requested take limits would allow for implementation of monitoring and research activities in several northern California watersheds including the Winchuk River, Smith River, Lower Klamath basin tributaries, Mad River, Little River, several Humboldt Bay tributaries, and Eel River. The three species identified which would be taken as a direct result of this monitoring are CC Chinook salmon, SONCC coho salmon, and NC steelhead. Research and take would involve various life stages (fry, juvenile, smolt, adult, and carcass). Trained GDRC

crews would observe listed salmonids during snorkel surveys and spawning surveys. Crews would avoid walking in suitable spawning habitats (e.g., riffle crests). Listed salmonids would be captured by various capture methods including backpack electrofishing, kick net sampling, rotary screw trapping, v-notch weir outmigrant trapping, and minnow trapping. Most captured fish would be measured and released. A subsample of captured fish would be anesthetized, then marked via dorsal fin clip, fin tissue sampled, scale sampled, and/or PIT tagged. Anesthetized individuals would be allowed to recover in mesh containers placed in the stream channel prior to release. Data collected would be used to document long-term population trends and better understand the potential impacts on the covered species and their habitats that may result from AHCP covered activities. The researchers are not proposing to kill any of the fish they capture, but a small number may die as an unintended result of the activities.

Permit 17396

The USFWS, Anadromous Fish Restoration Program (AFRP) has applied for a five year permit to take listed fish while conducting research designed to: (1) Provide data necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of AFRP restoration projects, including appraisal of spawning gravel augmentation, in-channel and floodplain habitat enhancement actions, and water allocation/flow regime alteration actions; and (2) provide reconnaissance-level population and biological data on contemporary anadromous fish population patterns within the Central Valley of California, in order to prioritize and select future restoration projects to benefit anadromous salmonids. All AFRP restoration monitoring projects would serve to benefit anadromous salmonids by providing data on restoration project effectiveness, and providing valuable information relating to adaptive management procedures. Take of listed species including various life stages of CVSR Chinook salmon, CCV steelhead, and sDPS green sturgeon would result from activities in the following five proposed projects: (1) Bobcat flat restoration effectiveness monitoring in the lower Tuolumne River; (2) adult sturgeon acoustic telemetry in the lower San Joaquin basin; (3) San Joaquin River sturgeon spawning habitat assessment; (4) steelhead sampling and acoustic tracking in the lower Stanislaus, Tuolumne and Merced Rivers; and (5) fish reconnaissance in the San Joaquin River system. Observe/harass take

would result from snorkel surveys. Capture methods would include beach seine, trammel nets, gill nets, fyke nets, hook-and-line, egg mats, benthic d-nets, and boat and backpack electrofishing. The majority of captured listed fish would be handled and released; a subsample of captures would be anesthetized, scale sampled, fin clipped (to mark and to collect fin tissue for genetic analysis), acoustic tagged, and/or subject to intentional directed mortality. Green sturgeon eggs ($n = 100$) and larvae ($n = 5$) would be intentionally sacrificed, which would be necessary to provide voucher tissue specimens, and would benefit the species by providing critical information on green sturgeon spawning habitat. To minimize physiological stress, all sturgeon would be held in a net pen submerged in river or with flowing water through their gills while waiting to be handled. All listed salmonids would be immediately collected from the sampling gears, placed in five gallon buckets filled with fresh river water from the location being sampled, processed, held in another container filled with fresh river water for recovery, and subsequently released in the sampled location. The new information on these species generated by these projects would help prioritize future restoration projects, thus benefiting listed species.

Permit 17867

The Humboldt Redwood Company (HRC) is seeking to renew permit 1074-Modification 1 for a period of five years. The permit would authorize HRC to take juvenile and adult CC Chinook salmon, SONCC coho salmon and NC steelhead while conducting research and monitoring that satisfies two objectives: (1) To comply with CDFW's Restorable Class I policy by sampling reaches through snorkel and electrofishing methods to identify Class I habitat within proposed timber harvest plans, and (2) to monitor fish occupancy trends at the reach, sub basin, watershed and HRC property level over time by repeated snorkel surveys at index and randomly selected reaches. Adult and juvenile salmonids would be observed during snorkel surveys, and juvenile salmonids would be captured by backpack electrofishing. Snorkel surveys would be the preferred method of detecting presence/absence of fish species. Captured fish would be identified, and transported upstream of the project area. All captured specimens would be kept in aerated buckets, observed closely, and not released until fully recovered. The proposed monitoring would help to achieve

HRC's fisheries program's general goal, which is to determine the occurrence, distribution, population and habitat conditions of anadromous fishes on HRC lands as well as to monitor, protect, restore and enhance the anadromous fishery resources in watersheds owned by HRC. The researchers are not proposing to kill any of the fish they capture, but a small number may die as an unintended result of the activities.

Permit 17877

The United States Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) is requesting to renew Permit 1072—Modification 2 for a period of five years. BOR is applying for this permit as a contingent of the Trinity River Restoration Program (TRRP), an inter-agency partnership of the BOR, USFWS, Hoopa Valley Tribe, Yurok Tribe, CDFW, Trinity County, USFS, NMFS, and the California Department of Water Resources. The TRRP benefits listed species by conducting large-scale channel restoration and habitat restoration activities in the Trinity River mainstem and watershed as a means of restoring declining fishery resources. The following six specific studies are proposed: (1) Trinity River juvenile salmonid outmigrant monitoring, (2) juvenile Chinook salmon density monitoring, (3) Trinity River Chinook salmon redd and carcass survey, (4) Trinity River invasive brown trout predation on coho investigation, (5) Trinity River juvenile coho salmon ecology study, and (6) watershed rehabilitation/research. The requested permit would authorize BOR to take juvenile, smolt, adult and carcasses of SONCC coho salmon via: (1) Observation/harassment by way of snorkel surveys, hand netting that specifically targets other species, and spawning surveys; and (2) capture by rotary screw trap, boat electrofishing, hook-and-line, beach seine, fyke net, or minnow trapping. Fin tissue samples would be collected from carcasses. The majority of captured juvenile coho salmon would be anesthetized, measured to fork length and released, but a subsample would also be PIT tagged. Tagged fish would be held in recovery pens post tagging to monitor and enhance post-tagging health. The researchers are not proposing to kill any of the fish they capture, but a small number may die as an unintended result of the activities.

Permit 17916

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Arcata Field Office, is seeking to renew permit 1088-Modificaiton 1 for a

period of five years to monitor the effects of current management actions related to the Northwest Forest Plan's Aquatic Conservation Strategy on anadromous salmonids and their habitats. In order to monitor land management actions and implement the Northwest Forest Plan in northern California, BLM needs to obtain updated information on fish distribution and habitat. Sampling would occur in various watersheds, including the Mattole River, Eel River, Lost Coast region tributaries to the Pacific Ocean, and Humboldt Bay tributaries. Take of CC Chinook salmon, SONCC coho salmon, and NC steelhead would result from this monitoring and research. The preponderance of requested take would result from spawning surveys, snorkel surveys, and presence/absence surveys from the bank, all of which would result in observe/harass take of juvenile and/or adult salmonids. Capture methods that would take juvenile salmonids include backpack electrofishing and beach seine. A small number of salmonid fry may also be captured during kick net activities intended to sample invertebrates. Electrofishing would be used only when stream conditions prohibit less invasive sampling methods, and electrofishing activities would follow the NMFS 2000 Electrofishing Guidelines. Personnel handling fish would have wet hands and experience in fish handling. After length measurements were complete, fish would be placed in a bucket of freshwater for longer than 30 minutes to allow for recovery prior to being released. Recovering fish would be kept in cool, shaded, aerated water and would not be overcrowded. This research would benefit listed fish by informing adaptive management strategies intended to aid in the recovery of at-risk anadromous salmonids. The researchers are not proposing to kill any of the fish they capture, but a small number may die as an unintended result of the activities.

Permit 18012

The CDFW, Bay Delta Region (Region III), requests a five year renewal of permit 10094 to authorize take related to two research projects, the Watershed Restoration Project (WRP) and the Fisheries Management Project (FMP), designed to assess and restore the productivity of CC Chinook salmon, CCC coho salmon, NC steelhead, CCC steelhead, and S-CCC steelhead in Sonoma, Mendocino, Napa, Marin, San Mateo, Santa Cruz and Monterey counties in north central California. Program staff would accomplish this goal by conducting habitat and

salmonid surveys to determine potential limiting factors and stock status in order to identify the specific measures and actions needed to protect and increase production of listed salmonids. Proposed studies include: (1) Juvenile salmonid occurrence, distribution and habitat monitoring; (2) adult salmonid occurrence, passage, and distribution; (3) spawning ground surveys; (4) life cycle station monitoring; and (5) juvenile steelhead lagoon beach seining. Listed fish would be observed/harassed during snorkel surveys, spawning surveys, carcass surveys, and by the use of electronic counting stations (*i.e.*, DIDSON camera, Vaki Riverwatcher and/or video weir). Listed salmonids would be captured using backpack electrofishing, beach seining, rotary screw traps, fyke/pipe traps, and potentially adults may be captured using a resistance board weir. When electrofishing, the avoidance and impact minimization measures outlined in the NMFS 2000 electrofishing guidelines would be followed. The majority of juvenile captures would be handled (measured for fork length and weighed), and released. A subset of juvenile salmonid captures would be anesthetized, fin tissue sampled to collect tissue for genetic analysis, scale sampled, marked with an upper caudal fin clip, and/or PIT tagged. Only healthy fish with no signs of stress or injury would be subjected to marking or tagging. All fish would be allowed to recover fully and would be observed carefully for injury prior to release. Captured adult salmonids would be handled (*i.e.*, identified, measured, weighed, and scale and tissue samples taken), tagged (bi-colored Floy tags and/or opercular-hole-punched) and released upstream of the weir. All fish handled would be held in clean and decontaminated containers that are supplied with cool, aerated water and would be released back into the stream reach from which they were collected after recovery. Implementation of these activities under the WRP and the FMP would benefit listed species by informing recommendations on proposed habitat restoration projects and by determining the impacts of various management actions. The researchers are not proposing to kill any of the fish they capture, but a small number may die as an unintended result of the activities.

Permit 18712

H.T. Harvey & Associates has requested a permit to complete a project that is intended to meet three Marine Protected Area (MPA) monitoring goals set by the MPA Monitoring Enterprise:

(1) To assess trends in the condition of ecosystems inside and outside of MPA's, (2) to evaluate the effects of specific MPA design criteria such as MPA size and distance between MPAs, and (3) to evaluate the effect of visitors on MPAs. The project would contribute to the goals of the monitoring enterprise by describing the baseline biological community in four northern California estuaries: (1) Mad River Estuary in Humboldt County, (2) South Humboldt Bay State Marine Recreational Management Area in Humboldt County, (3) Ten Mile Estuary State Marine Conservation Area (SMCA) in Mendocino County, and (4) Big River Estuary SMCA in Mendocino County. Sampling related to this project may take juvenile and smolt CC Chinook salmon, SONCC coho salmon, CCC coho salmon, NC steelhead, and adult sDPS eulachon. Beach seines and fyke nets would be used to capture fish whereby take (*i.e.*, capture/handle/release) of listed salmonids would occur. Handling would consist of identifying and measuring fish to fork length. To ensure that handled fish would experience minimal adverse effects as a result of the sampling process, fish would be allowed to recover briefly either in live wells or in shaded, aerated buckets. The researchers are not proposing to kill any of the fish they capture, but a small number may die as an unintended result of the activities.

Permit 18937

The Scripps Institution of Oceanography, University of California, San Diego, California Sea Grant (CSG) College Program is seeking a five year permit to annually take listed CC Chinook salmon, CCC coho salmon, and CCC steelhead while monitoring the status and trends of listed salmonids in the Russian River watershed. CSG is proposing to collect data to estimate population metrics such as abundance, survival, growth, and spatial distribution of multiple life stages of salmonids, and relate them to different recovery actions including hatchery releases, habitat enhancement projects, and stream flow improvement projects. Data collection would be designed to meet four specific study objectives: (1) Evaluation of the Russian River Coho Salmon Captive Broodstock Program, (2) implementation of the California Coastal Salmonid Monitoring Plan, (3) comparing juvenile coho salmon oversummer survival with stream flow, and (4) evaluation of habitat enhancement projects. The four proposed studies would provide resource agencies with valuable information that would help guide

future decisions regarding recovery actions. Fish populations would be monitored in many tributaries of the Russian River watershed and several methods that could observe/harass and/or capture fish would be employed, including: Snorkel surveys, spawning surveys, redd surveys, downstream migrant trapping (pipe/funnel trap), minnow trapping, operation of PIT tag detection systems (*i.e.*, PIT tag arrays and PIT tag wand surveys), and backpack electrofishing. Handling of live fish captured in traps or during electrofishing surveys would include anesthetization, measuring for fork length, scanning for CWT and PIT tags, fin tissue sampling, scale sampling, PIT tagging, and/or gastric lavage. Adult salmonid carcasses encountered during spawning surveys would be scanned for PIT tags, measured, fin clipped, scale sampled, and otoliths would be extracted. All live fish would be released back into the stream following recovery in aerated buckets of cold water. Specific measures that would be taken to reduce the risk of injury or mortality to fish include following the NMFS 2000 Electrofishing Guidelines, minimizing the time that fish are handled, placing potential predators in separate holding buckets, running aerators in buckets, avoiding overcrowding in buckets, changing water in the anesthesia bucket frequently, placing a thermometer in holding buckets and replacing water frequently if the temperatures are rising, wetting measuring boards and weigh pans, processing listed species first, checking traps at least once per day and more frequently in high flow or windy conditions, and placing flow deflectors inside the trap box to provide refugia for fish. The researchers are not proposing to kill any of the fish they capture, but a small number may die as an unintended result of the activities.

Permit 19121

The United States Geological Survey, California Water Survey has applied for a five year permit for take associated with completing two main objectives: (1) To examine research applications of the SmeltCam that have been developed and coordinated with the IEP, and (2) to provide fisheries science support for the BOR's compliance with Biological Opinions. The studies are intended to: (1) Provide new quantitative data addressing the potential benefits of habitat restoration to the SFE and Delta ecosystem and its native fish populations, and (2) determine the vertical and lateral distribution of delta smelt, and the continued evaluation and application of SmeltCam technology for

studies of delta smelt and other fishes. The results of these studies are expected to provide net benefits to listed species by improving our understanding of their ecology and habitat use, and by informing the development of new research tools that can guide management decisions and habitat restoration actions. Sampling would be conducted in Suisun Bay, and would take multiple life stages of CVSR Chinook salmon, SRWR Chinook salmon, CCV steelhead, and sDPS green sturgeon. Capture methods would include beach seine, fyke trap, larval net, otter trawl, midwater trawl, boat electrofishing, set line, and gill net. All sampling would follow methods and protocols designed to minimize take of listed species while conducting research and monitoring. For example, sampling gear such as gill nets would be watched closely to monitor the status of any fishes entangled in the net. Set times would be short (approximately one hour), and nets would be set in habitats that listed fish are unlikely to inhabit. Listed salmonids captured in the course of sampling would be identified, carefully measured for length and released. Green sturgeon would be anesthetized using MS-222, scanned for a presence of a PIT tag, PIT tagged if no PIT tag is present, tissue sampled, and allowed to recover prior to release. All fishes collected in any sampling gear would be handled as gently as possible to facilitate safe release back to the water. The researchers are not proposing to kill any of the fish they capture, but a small number may die as an unintended result of the activities.

Permit 19400

ICF consulting has requested a five year permit to take juvenile CVSR Chinook salmon and SRWR Chinook salmon while conducting a study to investigate if longfin smelt in San Pablo Bay shift their vertical distribution under different environmental and biological conditions. Although this study principally targets longfin smelt, ESA listed Chinook salmon would be encountered during sampling. ICF proposes to collect data that would be useful to local researchers on captured and/or photographed listed Chinook salmon, including abundance, length, and potentially tissue samples. Fish would be sampled using a midwater trawl, however the majority of tows would be conducted with only a video device (*i.e.*, SmeltCam) acting as the codend. Therefore, the majority of take would be observe/harass. The fish camera image program would be able to determine the length, and thereby an estimate of the race/run/listing status, of

salmon that pass through the net. In order to verify the results of the SmeltCam, some tows would be conducted with both the video device and a traditional codend. Physically captured juvenile salmonids would be placed in a bucket with aerated water, handled (*i.e.*, measured to fork length and possibly fin tissue sampled for genetic analysis), and released. The researchers are not proposing to kill any of the fish they capture.

This notice is provided pursuant to section 10(c) of the ESA. NMFS will evaluate the applications, associated documents, and comments submitted to determine whether the applications meet the requirements of section 10(a) of the ESA and Federal regulations. The final permit decisions will not be made until after the end of the 30-day comment period. NMFS will publish notice of its final action in the **Federal Register**.

Dated: July 22, 2015.

Angela Somma,

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

[FR Doc. 2015-18600 Filed 7-28-15; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XE042

Endangered Species; File No. 18238

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

ACTION: Notice; receipt of application.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that NMFS Southwest Fisheries Science Center (SWFSC), 8901 La Jolla Shore Dr., La Jolla, CA 92037, [Responsible Party: Lisa Ballance, Ph.D.], has applied in due form for a permit to take green (*Chelonia mydas*), loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*), and olive ridley (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) sea turtles for purposes of scientific research.

DATES: Written, telefaxed, or email comments must be received on or before August 28, 2015.

ADDRESSES: The application and related documents are available for review by selecting "Records Open for Public Comment" from the *Features* box on the Applications and Permits for Protected Species (APPS) home page, <https://apps.nmfs.noaa.gov>, and then selecting File No. 18238 from the list of available applications.

These documents are also available upon written request or by appointment in the 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.

Written comments on this application should be submitted to the Chief, Permits and Conservation Division, at the address listed above. Comments may also be submitted by facsimile to (301) 713-0376, or by email to NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov. Please include the File No. in the subject line of the email comment.

Those individuals requesting a public hearing should submit a written request to the Chief, Permits and Conservation Division at the address listed above. The request should set forth the specific reasons why a hearing on this application would be appropriate.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Amy Hapeman or Brendan Hurley, (301) 427-8401.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The subject permit is requested under the authority of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA; 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) and the regulations governing the taking, importing, and exporting of endangered and threatened species (50 CFR parts 222-226).

The SWFSC requests a five-year research permit proposes to continue long-term monitoring of resident green sea turtles in southern California to characterize population structure, foraging ecology, and migration patterns. Up to 60 green, five olive ridley, and five loggerhead sea turtles would be captured annually using entanglement, seine, or dip net and have the following procedures performed before release: photography/video; temporary marking the carapace; flipper tagging and passive integrated transponder tagging; ultrasound; morphometrics; tetracycline injection; biological sampling; cloacal and oral swabbing; lavage; and up to two transmitter attachments. Animals with transmitters may be surveyed and tracked by vessel after release. The permit would be valid for five years from the date of issuance.

Dated: July 23, 2015.

Julia Harrison,

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

[FR Doc. 2015-18551 Filed 7-28-15; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-P