

Dated: September 9, 1996.

Donald L. Powers,

Federal Register Liaison Officer, Minority Business Development Agency.

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National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 090396A]

Incidental Take of Marine Mammals; Bottlenose Dolphins and Spotted Dolphins

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

ACTION: Notice of issuance of letters of authorization.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) as amended, and implementing regulations, notification is hereby given that two letters of authorization to take bottlenose and spotted dolphins incidental to oil and gas structure removal activities were issued on August 23 and 30, 1996, respectively, to the Amerada Hess Corporation and The Louisiana Land and Exploration Company, both of Houston, TX.

EFFECTIVE DATE: These letters of authorization are effective for 1 year from the date of issuance.

ADDRESSES: The applications and letters are available for review in the following offices: Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910 and the Southeast Region, NMFS, 9721 Executive Center Drive N, St. Petersburg, FL 33702.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Kenneth R. Hollingshead, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, (301) 713-2055 or Charles Oravetz, Southeast Region (813) 570-5312.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Section 101(a)(5)(A) of the MMPA (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*) directs NMFS to allow, on 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 geographical region, if certain findings are made and regulations are issued. Under the MMPA, the term "taking" means to harass, hunt, capture or kill or to attempt to harass, hunt, capture or kill marine mammals.

Permission may be granted for periods up to 5 years if NMFS finds, after notification and opportunity for public comment, that the taking will have a

negligible impact on the species or stock(s) of marine mammals and will not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of the species or stock(s) for subsistence uses. In addition, NMFS must prescribe regulations that include permissible methods of taking and other means effecting the least practicable adverse impact on the species and its habitat, and on the availability of the species for subsistence uses, paying particular attention to rookeries, mating grounds and areas of similar significance. The regulations must include requirements pertaining to the monitoring and reporting of such taking. Regulations governing the taking of bottlenose and spotted dolphins incidental to oil and gas structure removal activities in the Gulf of Mexico were published on October 12, 1995 (60 FR 53139), and remain in effect until November 13, 2000.

Summary of Request

NMFS received requests for letters of authorization on August 21, 1996, from the Amerada Hess Corporation, and August 28, 1996, from The Louisiana Land and Exploration Company. These letters requested a take by harassment of a small number of bottlenose and spotted dolphins incidental to the described activity. Issuance of these letters of authorization is based on a finding that the total takings will have a negligible impact on the bottlenose and spotted dolphin stocks of the Gulf of Mexico.

Dated: September 6, 1996.

Rennie S. Holt,

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

[FR Doc. 96-23403 Filed 9-11-96; 8:45 am]

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[I.D. 090696A]

Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team Meeting

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

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: The first meeting of the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team (TRT) will be held to address bycatch of large baleen whales, specifically the northern right whale (*Eubalaena glacialis*) and the humpback whale (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) in the following fisheries: The Gulf of Maine/U.S. mid-Atlantic lobster trap/pot fishery, the mid-Atlantic coastal gillnet

fishery, the southeastern U.S. Atlantic shark gillnet fishery, and the Gulf of Maine sink-gillnet fishery. The bycatch of minke whales (*Balaenoptera acutorostrata*), fin whales (*Balaenoptera physalus*), and other large whales in these fisheries will also be discussed.

DATES: The first meeting of the team will be held on September 16-17, 1996 from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at Tara's Ferncroft Conference Resort, 50 Ferncroft Road, Danvers, MA, 01923, (508) 777-2500.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Kathy Wang, Southeast Regional Office, NMFS, (813) 570-5312, or Dr. Sal Testaverde, Northeast Regional Office, NMFS, (508) 281-9368, or Michael Payne, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, (301) 713-2322.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On August 6, 1996, NMFS published notice of the establishment of the Atlantic Large Whale TRT (61 FR 40819). Section 118(f) of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) requires NMFS to establish a TRT to prepare a draft Take Reduction Plan designed to assist in the recovery or prevent the depletion of each strategic marine mammal stock that interacts with certain fisheries.

NMFS has scheduled the first meeting (see **DATES** and **ADDRESSES**). The TRT will be facilitated by Abby Dilley, The Keystone Center, Washington, DC. The TRT will hold at least four meetings to develop a TRP focusing on reducing bycatch in these fisheries.

TRTs are not subject to the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 App. U.S.C.). This meeting is open to the public and is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Kathy Wang at (813) 570-5312 by September 12, 1996.

Dated: September 6, 1996.

Rennie S. Holt,

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

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[I.D. 090496A]

Pacific Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

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

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: The Pacific Fishery Management Council's Groundfish