

For permits 1053 and 1178: Michelle Rogers, Silver Spring, MD (301-713-1401)

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Authority

Issuance of permits and permit modifications, as required by the 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. Permits and modifications are issued in accordance with and are subject to parts 217-222 of Title 50 CFR, the NMFS regulations governing listed species permits.

Species Covered in this Notice

The following species are covered in this notice: Green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), Hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), Kemp's ridley turtle (*Lepidochelys kempi*), Leatherback turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*), Loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*), and Shortnose sturgeon (*Acipenser brevirostrum*).

Permits and Modifications Issued

Notice was published on September 1, 1998 (63 FR 46416), that NEA had filed an application for a modification to permit 1053. Modification 1 was issued on November 19, 1998, and authorizes NEA to conduct direct in-water capture of 8 leatherback turtles, which will be satellite tagged, PIT tagged, blood sampled, weighed, measured, and photographed. The turtles will be captured using a breakaway hoop net, a method that has been used successfully to capture porpoise, pinnipeds, and small cetaceans. Modification 1 also authorizes a 2-year extension to permit 1053. Modification 1 is valid for the duration of the permit, which expires on December 31, 2000.

Notice was published on August 3, 1998 (63 FR 41229), that an application had been filed by ECRI. Permit 1174 was issued on October 22, 1998, and authorizes ECRI to sample for and collect shortnose sturgeon in the Delaware River and Estuary system and in the lower Susquehanna River/Chesapeake Bay Complex. The objectives of the study are to collect data on current distribution, abundance, length structure and movements of shortnose sturgeon in the Delaware River Estuary and in the low Susquehanna River and Chesapeake Bay. Emphasis will be placed on calculating reliable population estimates, determining aggregation

areas, and obtaining information on juvenile shortnose sturgeon. Information on population size and length distribution for the Delaware River population will be compared with that during the 1980s. Permit 1174 expires on August 31, 2003.

Notice was published on August 31, 1998 (63 FR 46218), that an application had been filed by COE. Permit 1176 was issued on November 9, 1998, and authorizes COE to use hatchery bred shortnose sturgeon to test the potential impacts of blasting to deepen Wilmington harbor in North Carolina. COE will place hatchery raised sturgeon in wire cages below the surface and subject them to a series of tests blasts to determine the effect that the harbor deepening will have on wild sturgeon in the harbor. As required by a September 13, 1996, biological opinion, additional protective measures will be taken during the test blasting to prevent wild sturgeon from being affected. These measures include relocation of any wild sturgeon found to be in the area prior to the blasts and air bubble curtains. Due to contract awards schedule, the test blast schedule would likely begin in November, 1998 and may continue through January, 1999. Permit 1176 expires on December 31, 1999.

Notice was published on September 15, 1998 (63 FR 49335), that an application had been filed by NEFSC. Permit 1178 was issued on October 29, 1998, and authorizes NEFSC to take listed sea turtles taken incidental to fisheries in the Northwest Atlantic Ocean. The work will be conducted by scientific observers aboard such vessels. The following species and take numbers have been authorized: 300 loggerhead, 85 leatherback, 10 Kemp's ridley, 10 hawksbill, and 10 green turtles. NEFSC is authorized to measure, photograph, flipper tag, scan for PIT tags, resuscitate (if necessary) and release turtles taken by foreign and domestic commercial fishing vessels operating in state waters and the Exclusive Economic Zone. Further, NEFSC is authorized to bring to shore, when feasible, dead sea turtles for necropsy. Necropsy will only be performed by personnel currently permitted to conduct such research. This research supports the NMFS mission of assessing the impacts of commercial fisheries on marine resources of interest to the United States. Permit 1178 expires on December 31, 2003.

Dated: November 12, 1998.

Margaret Lorenz,

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

[FR Doc. 98-30841 Filed 11-17-98; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 102998C]

Marine Mammals; Permit No. 1024 (P77-2#69)

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

ACTION: Issuance of scientific research permit amendment.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that a request for amendment of scientific research permit no. 1024 submitted by the Southwest Fisheries Science Center, National Marine Fisheries Service, 8604 La Jolla Shores Drive, La Jolla, CA 92038 [Co- Investigator: Dr. Rennie S. Holt] has been granted to increase the number of Antarctic fur seals to be taken annually.

ADDRESSES: The amendment and related documents are available for review upon written request or by appointment in the following office(s):

Permits and Documentation Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13130, Silver Spring, MD 20910 (301/713-2289).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On September 15, 1998, notice was published in the **Federal Register** (63 FR 49337) that an amendment of permit no. 1024, issued December 30, 1996 (62 FR 1875), had been requested by the above-named organization. The requested amendment has been granted under the authority of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*), the provisions of § 216.39 of the Regulations Governing the Taking and Importing of Marine Mammals (50 CFR part 216), and the Fur Seal Act of 1966, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1151 *et seq.*).

Dated: November 9, 1998.

Ann D. Terbush,

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

[FR Doc. 98-30831 Filed 11-17-98; 8:45 am]

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