

telephone (360) 753-6054; facsimile (360) 753-9517.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

**Background**

The Districts own and manage three hydroelectric dams and associated facilities on the Columbia River. These dams are used to supply power to the citizens of Chelan, Douglas, and Okanogan Counties, as well as other public and private utilities that serve over 7 million customers throughout the Pacific Northwest. Operation of the dams has the potential to impact species subject to protection under the Act. Section 10(a)(1)(B) of the Act contains provisions for issuing incidental take permits to non-federal landowners for the take of endangered and threatened species, provided the following criteria is met:

- (1) the taking will be incidental;
- (2) the applicant will, to the maximum extent practicable, minimize and mitigate the impact of such taking;
- (3) the applicant will ensure that adequate funding for the Plan will be provided;
- (4) the taking will not appreciably reduce the likelihood of the survival and recovery of the species in the wild; and
- (5) any other measures that the NMFS may require as being necessary or appropriate for the purposes of the Plan are met.

The Districts have initiated discussions with NMFS regarding the possibility of securing Permits for their hydroelectric project operations on the Mid-Columbia River, and they have prepared an HCP for each project. The Districts' intention in developing the HCPs was to establish a comprehensive approach to protect federally listed species and their habitats as affected by project operations. Activities proposed for coverage under the Permits include the following:

- (1) Operation and maintenance of the Rock Island Hydroelectric project, FERC No. 943, in accordance with its FERC license, and the Rock Island HCP.
- (2) Operation and maintenance of the Rocky Reach Hydroelectric project, FERC No. 2145, in accordance with its FERC license, and the Rocky Reach HCP.
- (3) Operation and maintenance of the Wells Hydroelectric project, FERC No. 2149, in accordance with its FERC license, and the Wells HCP.

NMFS will conduct an environmental review of the HCPs and prepare an EIS. The environmental review will analyze the proposals in the HCPs as well as a full range of reasonable alternatives and the associated impacts of each.

Comments and suggestions are invited from all interested parties to ensure that the full range of issues related to this proposed action is identified. The review of this project will be conducted according to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), National Environmental Policy Act Regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508), other appropriate Federal laws and regulations, and policies and procedures of NMFS for compliance with those regulations.

After the environmental review is completed, NMFS will publish a notice of availability and a request for comment on the draft EIS and the HCPs.

Dated: December 31, 1998.

**Kevin Collins,**

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

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**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

[I.D. 102998B]

**Marine Mammals; Scientific Research Permit (PHF# 895-1450)**

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

**ACTION:** Issuance of Permit.

**SUMMARY:** Notice is hereby given that Ms. Rachel Cartwright, 10 Greave, Romiley, Stockport, Cheshire SK6 4PU, England, has been issued a permit to take North Pacific humpback whales (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) for purposes of scientific research.

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

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

Regional Administrator, Southwest Region, 501 West Ocean Boulevard, Suite 4200, Long Beach, CA 90802-4213 (562/980-4001); and

Protected Species Program Manager, Pacific Islands Area Office, 2570 Dole Street, Room 106, Honolulu, HI 9682-2396 (808/973-2987).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Jeannie Drevenak, 301/713-2289.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** On April 15, 1998, notice was published in the

Federal Register (63 FR 18378) that a request for a scientific research permit to take North Pacific humpback whales had been submitted by the above-named individual. The requested permit 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 (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), and the regulations governing the taking, importing, and exporting of endangered fish and wildlife (50 CFR parts 217-227).

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

Dated: December 23, 1998.

**Ann D. Terbush,**

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

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**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE**

**Department of the Air Force**

**Agency Information Collection Activities: Proposed Collection**

**AGENCY:** Air Force Medical Operations Agency, DoD.

In compliance with Section 3506(c)(2)(A) of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, the Air Force Medical Operations Agency, Clinical Quality Management Division, AFMOA/SGOC, announces the proposed reinstatement and the initiation of a public information collection and seeks public comment on the provisions thereof. 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 of the proposed information collection; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the information collection on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.