

hereby given that NOAA's Office for Coastal Management approves a boundary expansion for the South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve in Charleston, Oregon to add 1,771 acres, which consist of 30 acres added as a correction to account for changes in GIS-mapping technologies since the reserve was established in 1974; 1,541 acres of parcels currently owned by the Oregon Division of State Lands outside the existing boundary; and 200 acres of state-owned South Slough waters located adjacent to the expansion parcels, resulting in a new total area for the reserve of 6,542 acres. Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act, NOAA prepared a draft environmental assessment (draft EA) to analyze the effects of the requested expansion and solicited public comment on the draft EA. NOAA determined that the boundary expansion would not have significant environmental effects. Therefore, after considering the comments it received, NOAA issued a final environmental assessment and finding of no significant impact (FONSI).

**ADDRESSES:** The final environmental assessment and FONSI can be downloaded or viewed at [coast.noaa.gov/czm/compliance/](https://coast.noaa.gov/czm/compliance/). The documents are also available by sending a written request to the point of contact identified below (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Erica Seiden of NOAA's Office for Coastal Management, by email at [Erica.Seiden@noaa.gov](mailto:Erica.Seiden@noaa.gov), phone at (240) 429-5166, or mail at 1305 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, 20910.

*Authority:* 16 U.S.C. 1451 *et seq.*; 42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*; 15 CFR 921.33.

**Keelin S. Kuipers,**

*Deputy Director, Office for Coastal Management, National Ocean Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648-XD949]

### New England Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

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

**ACTION:** Notice of a public meeting.

**SUMMARY:** The New England Fishery Management Council (Council) is scheduling a public meeting via webinar of its Habitat Advisory Panel to consider actions affecting New England fisheries in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ). This meeting will be held in-person with a webinar option. Recommendations from this group will be brought to the full Council for formal consideration and action, if appropriate.

**DATES:** This webinar will be held on Tuesday, May 28, 2024, at 9 a.m.

**ADDRESSES:** This meeting will be held via webinar. Webinar registration URL information: <https://nefmc-org.zoom.us/j/96szYknT2aHcWje6x06bA>.

*Council address:* New England Fishery Management Council, 50 Water Street, Mill 2, Newburyport, MA 01950.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Cate O'Keefe, Ph.D., Executive Director, New England Fishery Management Council; telephone: (978) 465-0492.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

#### Agenda

The Advisory Panel will review and discuss draft alternatives for the Northern Edge Habitat-Scallop Framework and recommend modifications to the draft alternatives and rationale to the Habitat Committee. They will also receive updates on the Council's Essential Fish Habitat Review. Also, they plan to review and discuss potential Council comments to the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management on the Proposed Sale Notice for offshore wind leases in the Gulf of Maine. Other business will be discussed, if necessary.

Although non-emergency issues not contained on the agenda may come before this Council for discussion, those issues may not be the subject of formal action during this meeting. Council 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 Act, provided the public has been notified of the Council's intent to take final action to address the emergency. The public also should be aware that the meeting will be recorded. Consistent with 16 U.S.C. 1852, a copy of the recording is available upon request.

#### Special Accommodations

This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Cate O'Keefe, Ph.D., Executive Director, at

(978) 465-0492, at least 5 days prior to the meeting date.

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

Dated: May 8, 2024.

**Rey Israel Marquez,**

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

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648-XD787]

### Taking and Importing Marine Mammals; Taking Marine Mammals Incidental to Geophysical Surveys Related to Oil and Gas Activities in the Gulf of Mexico

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

**ACTION:** Notice of modification to expiration date of letter of authorization.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), as amended, its implementing regulations, and NMFS' MMPA Regulations for Taking Marine Mammals Incidental to Geophysical Surveys Related to Oil and Gas Activities in the Gulf of Mexico (GOM), notification is hereby given that NMFS has modified the expiration date of a Letter of Authorization (LOA) issued to Anadarko Petroleum Corporation (Anadarko) for the take of marine mammals incidental to geophysical survey activity in the GOM.

**DATES:** This LOA is effective through July 15, 2024.

**ADDRESSES:** The LOA, LOA request, and supporting documentation are available online at: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/marine-mammal-protection/issued-letters-authorization-oil-and-gas-industry-geophysical-survey>. In case of problems accessing these documents, please call the contact listed below (**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Rachel Wachtendonk, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, (301) 427-8401.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

#### Background

Sections 101(a)(5)(A) and (D) of the MMPA (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*) direct the Secretary of Commerce to allow, upon 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 either regulations are issued or, if the taking is limited to harassment, a notice of a proposed authorization is provided to the public for review.

An authorization for incidental takings shall be granted if NMFS finds that the taking will have a negligible impact on the species or stock(s), will not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of the species or stock(s) for subsistence uses (where relevant), and if the permissible methods of taking and requirements pertaining to the mitigation, monitoring and reporting of such takings are set forth. NMFS has defined “negligible impact” in 50 CFR 216.103 as an impact resulting from the specified activity that cannot be reasonably expected to, and is not reasonably likely to, adversely affect the species or stock through effects on annual rates of recruitment or survival.

Except with respect to certain activities not pertinent here, the MMPA defines “harassment” as: any act of pursuit, torment, or annoyance which: (i) has the potential to injure a marine mammal or marine mammal stock in the wild (Level A harassment); or (ii) has the potential to disturb a marine mammal or marine mammal stock in the wild by causing disruption of behavioral patterns, including, but not limited to, migration, breathing, nursing, breeding, feeding, or sheltering (Level B harassment).

On January 19, 2021, we issued a final rule with regulations to govern the unintentional taking of marine mammals incidental to geophysical survey activities conducted by oil and gas industry operators, and those persons authorized to conduct activities on their behalf (collectively “industry operators”), in U.S. waters of the GOM over the course of 5 years (86 FR 5322, January 19, 2021). The rule was based on our findings that the total taking from the specified activities over the 5-year period will have a negligible impact on the affected species or stock(s) of marine mammals and will not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of those species or stocks for subsistence uses. The rule became effective on April 19, 2021.

Our regulations at 50 CFR 217.180 *et seq.* allow for the issuance of LOAs to industry operators for the incidental take of marine mammals during geophysical survey activities and prescribe the permissible methods of taking and other means of effecting the least practicable adverse impact on

marine mammal species or stocks and their habitat (often referred to as mitigation), as well as requirements pertaining to the monitoring and reporting of such taking. Under 50 CFR 217.186(e), issuance of an LOA shall be based on a determination that the level of taking will be consistent with the findings made for the total taking allowable under these regulations and a determination that the amount of take authorized under the LOA is of no more than small numbers.

NMFS issued an LOA to Anadarko on January 4, 2024, for the take of marine mammals incidental a one-dimensional vertical seismic profile (VSP) within Mississippi Canyon Block MC-40, effective January 15, 2024 through May 15, 2024. Please see the **Federal Register** notice of issuance (89 FR 1550, January 10, 2024) for additional detail regarding the LOA and the survey activity.

Anadarko initially anticipated that the activity would occur at some point between January 15 and May 15, 2024. Anadarko subsequently conveyed to NMFS that the survey would occur later than previously expected. Anadarko has requested modification to the expiration date of the LOA (from May 15, 2024 to July 15, 2024) to accommodate the survey delays. Since issuance of the LOA, no survey work has occurred. There are no other changes to the LOA as described in the January 10, 2024, **Federal Register** notice of issuance (89 FR 1550): the specified survey activity; estimated take by incidental harassment; and small numbers analysis and determination remain unchanged and are incorporated here by reference.

#### Authorization

NMFS has changed the expiration date of the LOA from May 15, 2024, to July 15, 2024.

Dated: May 6, 2024.

**Kimberly Damon-Randall,**

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

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**BILLING CODE 3510-22-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

#### Agency Information Collection Activities; Submission to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for Review and Approval; Comment Request; Protocol for Access to Tissue Specimen Samples From the National Marine Mammal Tissue Bank

The Department of Commerce will submit the following information collection request to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review and clearance in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, on or after the date of publication of this notice. We invite the general public and other Federal agencies to comment on proposed, and continuing information collections, which helps us assess the impact of our information collection requirements and minimize the public's reporting burden. Public comments were previously requested via the **Federal Register** on January 30, 2024, during a 60-day comment period. This notice allows for an additional 30 days for public comments.

*Agency:* National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Commerce.

*Title:* Protocol for Access to Tissue Specimen Samples from the National Marine Mammal Tissue Bank.

*OMB Control Number:* 0648-0468.

*Form Number(s):* None.

*Type of Request:* Regular submission (extension of a current information collection).

*Number of Respondents:* 25.

*Average Hours per Response:* 3 hours for tissue request form and 45 minutes for tissue bank form.

*Total Annual Burden Hours:* 105 hours.

*Needs and Uses:* The purpose of this collection of information is to enable the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to allow the scientific community the opportunity to request tissue specimen samples from the National Marine Mammal Tissue Bank (NMMTB), as well as for tissue samples to be submitted. This information collection is being renewed to enable the Marine Mammal Health and Stranding Response Program (MMHSRP) of NOAA to assemble information on all specimens submitted to the National Institute of Standards and Technology's National Biomonitoring Specimen Bank (Bank), which includes the NMMTB.

*Affected Public:* Not-for-profit institutions.