

animals taken is up to, but not greater than, one-third of the best available abundance estimate, NMFS will determine that the numbers of marine mammals taken of a species or stock are small (see 89 FR 31535, May 24, 2024). For more information please see NMFS' discussion of small numbers in the 2021 final rule (86 FR 5438, January 19, 2021).

The take numbers for authorization are determined as described above. Subsequently, the total incidents of harassment for each species are multiplied by scalar ratios to produce a derived product that better reflects the

number of individuals likely to be taken within a survey (as compared to the total number of instances of take), accounting for the likelihood that some individual marine mammals may be taken on more than 1 day (see 86 FR 5404, January 19, 2021). The output of this scaling, where appropriate, is incorporated into adjusted total take estimates that are the basis for NMFS' small numbers determinations, as depicted in table 1.

This product is used by NMFS in making the necessary small numbers determinations through comparison with the best available abundance

estimates (see discussion at 86 FR 5391, January 19, 2021). For this comparison, NMFS' approach is to use the maximum theoretical population, determined through review of current stock assessment reports (SAR; <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/marine-mammal-protection/marine-mammal-stock-assessments>) and model-predicted abundance information (<https://seamap.env.duke.edu/models/Duke/GOM/>). Information supporting the small numbers determinations is provided in table 1.

TABLE 1—TAKE ANALYSIS

Species	Authorized take	Scaled take ¹	Abundance ²	Percent abundance
Rice's whale	0	n/a	51	0
Sperm whale	543	230	3,007	7.6
<i>Kogia spp.</i>	³ 172	52	980	6.2
Beaked whales	1,882	190	803	23.7
Rough-toothed dolphin	1,399	401	4,853	8.3
Bottlenose dolphin	1,684	483	165,125	0.3
Clymene dolphin	869	168	4,619	3.6
Atlantic spotted dolphin	496	142	21,506	0.7
Pantropical spotted dolphin	11,845	3,400	67,225	5.1
Spinner dolphin	258	74	5,548	1.3
Striped dolphin	2,441	701	5,634	12.4
Fraser's dolphin	512	98	1,665	5.9
Risso's dolphin	421	124	1,974	6.3
Blackfish ⁴	3,012	888	6,113	14.5
Short-finned pilot whale	698	206	2,741	7.5

¹ Scalar ratios were applied to "Authorized Take" values as described at 86 FR 5322 and 86 FR 5404 (January 19, 2021) to derive scaled take numbers shown here.

² Best abundance estimate. For most taxa, the best abundance estimate for purposes of comparison with take estimates is considered here to be the model-predicted abundance (Garrison *et al.*, 2023). For Rice's whale, Atlantic spotted dolphin, and Risso's dolphin, the larger SAR abundance estimate is used.

³ Includes 9 takes by Level A harassment and 163 takes by Level B harassment. Scalar ratio is applied to takes by Level B harassment only; small numbers determination made on basis of scaled Level B harassment take plus authorized Level A harassment take.

⁴ The "blackfish" guild includes melon-headed whales, false killer whales, pygmy killer whales, and killer whales.

Authorization

NMFS has changed the expiration date of the LOA from June 30, 2025, to October 31, 2025 and updated authorized take numbers based on the corrected information in the updated rule. There are no other changes to the LOA as described in the April 11, 2024, **Federal Register** notice of issuance (89 FR 25577); the specified survey activity, and small numbers analysis and determination remain unchanged and are incorporated here by reference.

Dated: November 27, 2024.

Kimberly Damon-Randall,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XE452

Taking and Importing Marine Mammals; Taking Marine Mammals Incidental to Rocky Intertidal Monitoring Surveys Along the Oregon and California Coasts

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

ACTION: Notice; receipt of application for letter of authorization; request for comments and information.

SUMMARY: NMFS has received a request from the University of California Santa Cruz for authorization to take small numbers of marine mammals incidental to rocky intertidal monitoring along the

coasts of Oregon and California over the course of 5 years from the date of issuance. Pursuant to regulations implementing the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), NMFS is announcing receipt of the University of California Santa Cruz's request for the development and implementation of regulations governing the incidental taking of marine mammals. NMFS invites the public to provide information, suggestions, and comments on the University of California Santa Cruz's application and request.

DATES: Comments and information must be received no later than January 6, 2025.

ADDRESSES: Comments on the applications should be addressed to Jolie Harrison, Chief, Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service. Comments should be

submitted electronically to ITP.gatzke@noaa.gov.

Instructions: NMFS is not responsible for comments sent by any other method, to any other address or individual, or received after the end of the comment period. Comments received electronically, including all attachments, must not exceed a 25-megabyte file size. Attachments to electronic comments will be accepted in Microsoft Word or Excel or Adobe PDF file formats only. All comments received are a part of the public record and will generally be posted online at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/node/23111> without change. All personal identifying information (e.g., name, address) voluntarily submitted by the commenter may be publicly accessible. Do not submit confidential business information or otherwise sensitive or protected information.

An electronic copy of the University of California Santa Cruz's application may be obtained online at: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/marine-mammal-protection/incidental-take-authorizations-research-and-other-activities>. In case of problems accessing these documents, please call the contact listed below.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jennifer Gatzke, 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 (as delegated to NMFS) 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 incidental take authorization 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.

The MMPA states that the term "take" means to harass, hunt, capture, kill or attempt to harass, hunt, capture, or kill any marine mammal.

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).

Summary of Request

On September 6, 2024, NMFS received an application from the University of California Santa Cruz requesting authorization for take of marine mammals incidental to research activities related to rocky intertidal monitoring along the coasts of Oregon and California. Following receipt of additional information from the applicant, we determined the application was adequate and complete on November 22, 2024. The requested regulations would be valid for 5 years, from 2025 through 2030. The University of California Santa Cruz plans to conduct necessary work, including research surveys, to monitor rocky intertidal communities. The proposed action may result in incidental disturbance of pinnipeds caused by researcher presence and research activities in the vicinity, including visual stimulus, noise, and use of unmanned aerial systems, thereby resulting in incidental take, by Level B harassment only. Therefore, the University of California Santa Cruz requests authorization to incidentally take marine mammals.

The requested incidental take regulations would be the second such regulations issued on request to the University of California Santa Cruz, following regulations effective from 2020–2025 (<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/action/incidental-take-authorization-university-california-santa-cruz-rocky-intertidal-monitoring-0>).

Specified Activities

The Multi-Agency Rocky Intertidal Network (MARINe, <https://marine.ucsc.edu/>), administered by the University of California Santa Cruz, conducts monitoring at rocky intertidal sites in California and Oregon. They

have been conducting similar research since 2013. Information from MARINe's research is used to inform marine policy and is made available to the public through outreach and educational programs. The University of California Santa Cruz anticipates approximately 300 survey days over the course of the 5-year period. They expect to take California sea lions, northern elephant seals, Steller sea lions, and California and Oregon/Washington stocks of harbor seals.

Information Solicited

Interested persons may submit information, suggestions, and comments concerning the University of California Santa Cruz's request (see **ADDRESSES**). NMFS will consider all information, suggestions, and comments related to the request during the development of proposed regulations governing the incidental taking of marine mammals by the University of California Santa Cruz, if appropriate.

Dated: November 29, 2024.

Kimberly Damon-Randall,

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

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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; Recreational Angler Survey of Sea Turtle Interactions

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 July 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.