

teleconference must register by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Thursday, August 9, 2018, to attend. Please submit your full name, email address, and phone number to Melissa Banner at Melissa.Banner@nist.gov; her phone number is (301) 975-8912. Non-U.S. citizens must submit additional information; please contact Ms. Banner. For participants attending in person, please note that federal agencies, including NIST, can only accept a state-issued driver's license or identification card for access to federal facilities if such license or identification card is issued by a state that is compliant with the REAL ID Act of 2005 (Pub. L. 109-13), or by a state that has an extension for REAL ID compliance. NIST currently accepts other forms of federal-issued identification in lieu of a state-issued driver's license. For detailed information, please contact Ms. Banner or visit: http://www.nist.gov/public_affairs/visitor/.

Kevin A. Kimball,
Chief of Staff.

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BILLING CODE 3510-13-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XG301

Endangered and Threatened Species; Take of Anadromous Fish

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

ACTION: Applications for one scientific research permit modification and three new permits.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that NMFS has received four scientific research permit application requests relating to Pacific salmon and steelhead. The proposed research is intended to increase knowledge of species listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and to help guide management and conservation efforts. The applications may be viewed online at: https://apps.nmfs.noaa.gov/preview/preview_open_for_comment.cfm.

DATES: Comments or requests for a public hearing on the applications must be received at the appropriate address or fax number (see **ADDRESSES**) no later than 5 p.m. Pacific standard time on August 6, 2018.

ADDRESSES: Written comments on the applications should be sent to the

Protected Resources Division, NMFS, 1201 NE Lloyd Blvd., Suite 1100, Portland, OR 97232-1274. Comments may also be sent via fax to 503-230-5441 or by email to nmfs.nwr.apps@noaa.gov (include the permit number in the subject line of the fax or email).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Rob Clapp, Portland, OR (ph.: 503-231-2314), Fax: 503-230-5441, email: Robert.Clapp@noaa.gov. Permit application instructions are available from the address above, or online at <https://apps.nmfs.noaa.gov>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Species Covered in This Notice

The following listed species are covered in this notice:

Chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*): Threatened Puget Sound (PS).

Steelhead (*O. mykiss*): Threatened PS.

Chum salmon (*O. keta*): Threatened Hood Canal Summer-run (HCS).

Authority

Scientific research permits are issued in accordance with section 10(a)(1)(A) of the ESA (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) and regulations governing listed fish and wildlife permits (50 CFR 222-226). NMFS issues permits based on findings that such permits: (1) Are applied for in good faith; (2) if granted and exercised, would not operate to the disadvantage of the listed species that are the subject of the permit; and (3) are consistent with the purposes and policy of section 2 of the ESA. The authority to take listed species is subject to conditions set forth in the permits.

Anyone requesting a hearing on an application listed in this notice should set out the specific reasons why a hearing on that application would be appropriate (see **ADDRESSES**). Such hearings are held at the discretion of the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NMFS.

Applications Received

Permit 21330-2M

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) is seeking to modify a five-year research permit that allows them to annually take juvenile PS Chinook salmon and PS steelhead in Jim Creek (South Fork Stillaguamish River watershed—Snohomish County, Washington). The purpose of the FWS study is to document ESA-listed fish presence, distribution, and abundance in Jim Creek within the boundaries of the Naval Radio Station Jim Creek facility. The research would benefit the listed species by helping refine the facility's Integrated Natural Resources

Management plan—the information would help guide decisions regarding habitat restoration and fill data gaps regarding the distribution and abundance of ESA-listed PS Chinook, PS steelhead, and bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*). The FWS proposes to capture fish using backpack electrofishing equipment. The captured fish would be removed from the water using a dip net, placed in aerated buckets, anesthetized with MS-222, identified to species, weighed, measured, and returned to their capture locations when recovered. In recent years, the researchers have seen more PS steelhead than expected, so they are seeking to modify the permit by increasing the number of PS steelhead they are allowed to take. The researchers do not intend to kill any listed fish, but some may die as an inadvertent result of the research.

Permit 21870

The Oregon State University (OSU) is seeking a five-year research permit to annually take juvenile PS Chinook salmon, HCS chum salmon, and PS steelhead in the South Fork of the Skokomish River (Mason County, Washington state). The purpose of the OSU study is to research the trophic pathways that support salmonids in the Skokomish River and to determine how invasive plants mediate terrestrial subsidies to streams throughout the year. The researchers would target PS steelhead, PS/Strait of Georgia coho salmon (*O. kisutch*), and sculpin species. This research would benefit the affected species by filling the knowledge gaps that have limited effective restoration of local food webs. The OSU proposes to use seine nets and minnow traps to capture the fish. Captured fish would be identified to species and temporarily held in aerated buckets. Juvenile PS steelhead (and all other target species) would be anesthetized with MS-222, measured for length, tissue sampled (scales and caudal fin clip), gastric lavaged, and released. All other fish (including PS Chinook and HCS chum salmon) would be released after all the fish have been identified. The researchers do not intend to kill any listed fish, but some may die as an inadvertent result of the research.

Permit 22093

The Snoqualmie Valley Watershed Improvement District (SVWID) is seeking a five-year research permit to annually take juvenile and adult PS Chinook salmon and PS steelhead throughout the Snoqualmie River watershed (Snohomish County, Washington state). The purpose of the

SVWID study is to assess fish passage barriers, habitat conditions, water quality, and fish presence/absence. This research would benefit the affected species by better informing plans to improve drainage, minimize flooding, and restore salmon habitat. Further, this research would benefit listed species by providing data about the status of these species in agricultural drainage ditches and small streams that may not otherwise be studied. The SVWID proposes to capture fish using seine nets, minnow traps, and backpack electrofishing equipment. Captured fish would be held in aerated buckets, identified to species, measured to length, and released. The researchers do not intend to kill any listed fish, but some may die as an inadvertent result of the research.

Permit 22127

The FWS is seeking a five-year research permit to annually take juvenile and adult PS Chinook salmon and PS steelhead throughout the Puyallup River watershed (Pierce and King Counties, Washington state). The purpose of the FWS study is to research ESA-listed bull trout life history diversity and gather information about their temporal and spatial use of the watershed at multiple life stages. Other target species include brook trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*), cutthroat trout (*O. clarkii*), and non-migratory sculpin species (Shorthead, Torrent, and Riffle). PS Chinook salmon and PS steelhead would be incidentally during this study because their ranges overlap the target species. This research would benefit the listed species by providing fine scale information about their movement timing and upstream residency. Those data, in turn, would be used to inform management and recovery actions. The FWS proposes to capture fish using electro-fykes, backpack electrofishing equipment, gill nets, hook-and-line, and minnow traps. Bull trout would be anesthetized, PIT tagged, weighed, measured for length, tissue sampled (fin rays), and released. Other target species would be euthanized for otolith and fin ray analysis. All PS steelhead and PS Chinook salmon would be captured, handled, and immediately released. The researchers do not propose to kill any of the listed fish, but some may die as an unintended result of the activities.

This notice is provided pursuant to section 10(c) of the ESA. NMFS will evaluate the applications, associated documents, and comments submitted to determine whether the applications meet the requirements of section 10(a) of the ESA and Federal regulations. The final permit decisions will not be made

until after the end of the 30-day comment period. NMFS will publish notice of its final action in the **Federal Register**.

Dated: June 28, 2018.

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

[FR Doc. 2018-14341 Filed 7-3-18; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XG066

Takes of Marine Mammals Incidental to Specified Activities; Taking Marine Mammals Incidental to Seabird Research Activities in Central California

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

ACTION: Notice; Issuance of an Incidental Harassment Authorization.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the regulations implementing the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) as amended, notification is hereby given that NMFS has issued an incidental harassment authorization (IHA) to Point Blue Conservation Science (Point Blue) to incidentally harass, by Level B harassment only, marine mammals during seabird research activities in central California.

DATES: This Authorization is effective from July 7, 2018 through July 6, 2019.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Rob Pauline, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, (301) 427-8401. Electronic copies of the application and supporting documents, as well as a list of the references cited in this document, 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 above.

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 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.

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 January 4, 2018, NMFS received a request from Point Blue for an IHA to take marine mammals incidental to seabird research monitoring conducted at three locations in central California. Point Blue’s request is for take of California sea lions (*Zalophus californianus*), harbor seals (*Phoca vitulina*), northern elephant seals (*Mirounga angustirostris*), and Steller sea lions (*Eumetopias jubatus*) by Level B harassment only. Neither Point Blue nor NMFS expect serious injury or mortality to result from this activity and, therefore, an IHA is appropriate.

NMFS previously issued eight IHAs to Point Blue for similar work from 2006 through 2017 (72 FR 71121; December 14, 2007, 73 FR 77011; December 18, 2008, 75 FR 8677; February 19, 2010, 77 FR 73989; December 7, 2012, 78 FR 66686; November 6, 2013, 80 FR 80321; December 24, 2015, 81 FR 34978; June