

§216.161

Subpart O—Taking of Marine Mammals Incidental to Shock Testing the USS MESA VERDE (LPD 19) by Detonation of Conventional Explosives in the Offshore Waters of the U.S. Atlantic Coast

SOURCE: 73 FR 43136, July 24, 2007, unless otherwise noted.

EFFECTIVE DATE NOTE: At 73 FR 43136, July 24, 2008, subpart O, consisting of §§216.161 through 216.166 was added, effective July 18, 2008 through July 18, 2013.

§216.161 Specified activity and incidental take levels by species.

(a) Regulations in this subpart apply only to the incidental taking of marine mammals specified in paragraph (b) of this section by persons engaged in the detonation of up to four 4,536 kg (10,000 lb) conventional explosive charges within the waters of the U.S. Atlantic Coast offshore Mayport, FL, for the purpose of conducting one full ship-shock trial (FSST) of the USS MESA VERDE (LPD 19) during the time period between July 23 and September 20, 2008, and May 1 and September 20, 2009 through 2013.

(b) The incidental take of marine mammals under the activity identified in paragraph (a) of this section is limited to the following species: Minke whale (*Balaenoptera acutorostrata*), dwarf sperm whale (*Kogia simus*); pygmy sperm whale (*K. breviceps*); pilot whale (*Globicephala macrorhynchus*); Atlantic spotted dolphin (*Stenella frontalis*); spinner dolphin (*S. longirostris*); bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*); Risso's dolphin (*Grampus griseus*); rough-toothed dolphin (*Steno bredanensis*); common dolphin (*Delphinus delphis*), false killer whale (*Pseudorca crassidens*); Cuvier's beaked whale (*Ziphius cavirostris*), Blainville's beaked whale (*Mesoplodon densirostris*); Gervais' beaked whale (*M. europaeus*); and True's beaked whale (*M. mirus*).

(c) The incidental take of marine mammals identified in paragraph (b) of this section is limited to a total, across all species, of no more than 1 mortality or serious injury, 2 takings by Level A harassment (injuries), and 282 takings by Level B behavioral harassment

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(through temporary threshold shift). The incidental taking of any species listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act is prohibited.

§216.162 Effective dates.

Regulations in this subpart are effective July 18, 2008 through July 18, 2013.

§216.163 Mitigation.

(a) Under a Letter of Authorization issued pursuant to §216.106, the U.S. Navy may incidentally, but not intentionally, take marine mammals in the course of the activity described in §216.161(a) provided all requirements of these regulations and such Letter of Authorization are met.

(b) The activity identified in paragraph §216.161(a) of this section must be conducted in a manner that minimizes, to the greatest extent practicable, adverse impacts on marine mammals and their habitat. When detonating explosives, the following mitigation measures must be implemented:

(1) Except as provided under the following paragraph (2), if any marine mammals are visually detected within the designated 3.5 nm (6.5 km) Safety Range surrounding the USS MESA VERDE, detonation must be delayed until the marine mammals are positively resighted outside the Safety Range either due to the animal(s) swimming out of the Safety Range or due to the Safety Range moving beyond the mammal's last verified location.

(2) If a North Atlantic right whale or other marine mammal listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) is seen within the Safety Range, detonation must not occur until the animal is positively resighted outside the Safety Range and at least one additional aerial monitoring of the Safety Range shows that no other right whales or other ESA-listed marine mammals are present;

(3) If the sea state exceeds 3 on the Beaufort scale (i.e., whitecaps on 33 to 50 percent of surface; 2 ft (0.6 m) to 3 ft (0.9 m) waves), the visibility is equal to or less than 3 nm (5.6 km), or the aircraft ceiling (i.e., vertical visibility) is equal to or less than 1,000 ft (305 m),