

Subpart L—Taking and Importing Marine Mammals; U.S. Navy’s Mariana Islands Training Range Complex (MIRC)

SOURCE: 75 FR 45547, Aug. 3, 2010, unless otherwise noted.

EFFECTIVE DATE NOTE: At 75 FR 45547, Aug. 3, 2010, Subpart L was added, effective Aug. 3, 2010 through Aug. 3, 2015.

§218.100 Specified activity and specified geographical area.

(a) Regulations in this subpart apply only to the U.S. Navy for the taking of marine mammals that occurs in the area outlined in paragraph (b) of this section and that occur incidental to the activities described in paragraph (c) of this section.

(b) The taking of marine mammals by the Navy may be authorized in a Letter of Authorization (LOA) if it occurs within the Mariana Islands Range Complex (MIRC) Study Area (as depicted in Figure 1–1 in the Navy’s application for MIRC), which is bounded by a pentagon with the following five corners: 16°46’29.3376” N. lat., 138°00’59.835” E. long.; 20°02’24.8094” N. lat., 140°10’13.8642” E. long.; 20°3’27.5538” N. lat., 149°17’41.0388” E. long.; 7°0’30.0702” N. lat., 149°16’14.8542” E. long; and 6°59’24.633” N. lat, 138°1’29.7228” E. long.

(c) The taking of marine mammals by the Navy is only authorized if it occurs incidental to the following activities:

(1) The use of the following mid-frequency active sonar (MFAS) and high frequency active sonar (HFAS) sources, or similar sources, for Navy training, maintenance, or research, development, testing, and evaluation (RDT&E) (estimated amounts below):

- (i) AN/SQS-53 (hull-mounted active sonar)—up to 10865 hours over the course of 5 years (an average of 2173 hours per year);
- (ii) AN/SQS-56 (hull-mounted active sonar)—up to 705 hours over the course of 5 years (an average of 141 hours per year);
- (iii) AN/SSQ-62 (Directional Command Activated Sonobuoy System (DICASS) sonobuoys)—up to 8270

sonobuoys over the course of 5 years (an average of 1654 sonobuoys per year);

- (iv) AN/AQS-22 (helicopter dipping sonar)—up to 2,960 dips over the course of 5 years (an average of 592 dips per year);
 - (v) AN/BQQ-10 (submarine hull-mounted sonar)—up to 60 hours over the course of 5 years (an average of 12 hours per year);
 - (vi) MK-48, MK-46, or MK-54 (torpedoes)—up to 200 torpedoes over the course of 5 years (an average of 40 torpedoes per year);
 - (vii) AN/SSQ-110 (IEER)—up to 530 buoys deployed over the course of 5 years (an average of 106 per year);
 - (viii) AN/SSQ-125 (AEER)—up to 530 buoys deployed over the course of 5 years (an average of 106 per year);
 - (ix) Range Pingers—up to 1,400 hours over the course of 5 years (an average of 280 hours per year); and
 - (x) PUTR Transponder—up to 1,400 hours over the course of 5 years (an average of 280 hours per year).
- (2) The detonation of the underwater explosives indicated in paragraph (c)(2)(i) of this section, or similar explosives, conducted as part of the training exercises indicated in paragraph (c)(2)(ii) of this section:
- (i) Underwater Explosives (Net Explosive Weight (NEW)):
 - (A) 5” Naval Gunfire (9.5 lbs NEW);
 - (B) 76 mm rounds (1.6 lbs NEW);
 - (C) Maverick (78.5 lbs NEW);
 - (D) Harpoon (448 lbs NEW);
 - (E) MK-82 (238 lbs NEW);
 - (F) MK-83 (574 lbs NEW);
 - (G) MK-84 (945 lbs NEW);
 - (H) MK-48 (851 lbs NEW);
 - (I) Demolition Charges (10 lbs NEW);
 - (J) AN/SSQ-110A (IEER explosive sonobuoy—5 lbs NEW);
 - (K) Hellfire (16.5 lbs NEW);
 - (L) GBU 38/32/31.
 - (ii) Training Events:
 - (A) Gunnery Exercises (S-S GUNEX)—up to 60 exercises over the course of 5 years (an average of 12 per year);
 - (B) Bombing Exercises (BOMBEX)—up to 20 exercises over the course of 5 years (an average of 4 per year);
 - (C) Sinking Exercises (SINKEX)—up to 10 exercises over the course of 5 years (an average of 2 per year);

(D) Extended Echo Ranging and Improved Extended Echo Ranging (EER/IEER) Systems—up to 530 deployments over the course of 5 years (an average of 106 per year);

(E) Demolitions—up to 250 over the course of 5 years (an average of 50 per year); and

(F) Missile exercises (A–S MISSILEX)—up to 10 exercises over the course of 5 years (an average of 2 per year).

(d) The taking of marine mammals may also be authorized in an LOA for the activities and sources listed in § 218.100(c) should the amounts (*i.e.*, hours, dips, number of exercises) vary from those estimated in § 218.100(c), provided that the variation does not result in exceeding the amount of take indicated in § 218.102.

[75 FR 45547, Aug. 3, 2010, as amended at 77 FR 4924, Feb. 1, 2012]

§ 218.101 Effective dates.

Amended regulations are effective February 1, 2012, through August 3, 2015.

[77 FR 4924, Feb. 1, 2012]

§ 218.102 Permissible methods of taking.

(a) Under Letters of Authorization issued pursuant to §§ 216.106 and 218.107 of this chapter, the Holder of the Letter of Authorization (hereinafter “Navy”) may incidentally, but not intentionally, take marine mammals within the area described in § 218.100(b), provided the activity is in compliance with all terms, conditions, and requirements of these regulations and the appropriate Letter of Authorization.

(b) The activities identified in § 218.100(c) must be conducted in a manner that minimizes, to the greatest extent practicable, any adverse impacts on marine mammals and their habitat.

(c) The incidental take of marine mammals under the activities identified in § 218.100(c) is limited to the species listed in this paragraph (4), (5), and (6) of this section (c) by the indicated method of take and the indicated number of times (estimated based on the authorized amounts of sound source operation), but with the following allow-

ances for annual variation in activities:

(1) In any given year, annual take, by harassment, of any species of marine mammal may not exceed the amount identified in paragraphs (b)(4) and (b)(5) of this section, for that species by more than 25% (a post-calculation/estimation of which must be provided in the annual LOA application);

(2) In any given year, annual take by harassment of all marine mammal species combined may not exceed the estimated total of all species combined, indicated in paragraphs (b)(4) and (b)(5) of this section, by more than 10%; and

(3) Over the course of the effective period of this subpart, total take, by harassment, of any species may not exceed the 5-year amounts indicated in paragraphs (b)(4) and (b)(5) of this section by more than 10%. A running calculation/estimation of takes of each species over the course of the years covered by the rule must be maintained.

(4) Level B Harassment:

(i) Mysticetes:

(A) Humpback whale (*Megaptera novaeangliae*)—4,025 (an average of 805 annually);

(B) Fin whale (*Balaenoptera physalus*)—910 (an average of 182 annually);

(C) Blue whale (*Balaenoptera musculus*)—650 (an average of 130 annually);

(D) Sei whale (*Balaenoptera borealis*)—1,625 (an average of 325 annually);

(E) Minke whale (*Balaenoptera acutorostrata*)—2,225 (an average of 445 annually);

(F) Bryde’s whale (*Balaenoptera edeni*)—2,285 (an average of 457 annually); and

(G) Unidentified Baleanopterid whales—360 (an average of 72 annually).

(ii) Odontocetes:

(A) Sperm whales (*Physeter macrocephalus*)—4,120 (an average of 824 annually);

(B) Killer whale (*Orcinus orca*)—1,150 (an average of 230 annually);

(C) Pygmy or dwarf sperm whales (*Kogia breviceps* or *Kogia sima*)—33,530 (an average of 6,706 annually);

(D) Blainville’s beaked whales (*Mesoplodon densirostris*)—3,850 (an average of 770 annually);