

## §218.115

(J) Mammal monitoring shall continue until out of own-aircraft sensor range.

(b) [Reserved]

### §218.115 Requirements for monitoring and reporting.

(a) *General Notification of Injured or Dead Marine Mammals*—Navy personnel shall ensure that NMFS is notified immediately ((see Communication Plan) or as soon as clearance procedures allow) if an injured, stranded, or dead marine mammal is found during or shortly after, and in the vicinity of, any Navy training exercise utilizing MFAS, HFAS, or underwater explosive detonations. The Navy will provide NMFS with the name of species or description of the animal(s), the condition of the animal(s) (including carcass condition if the animal is dead), location, time of first discovery, observed behaviors (if alive), and photo or video (if available). In the event that an injured, stranded, or dead marine mammal is found by the Navy that is not in the vicinity of, or during or shortly after, MFAS, HFAS, or underwater explosive detonations, the Navy will report the same information as listed above as soon as operationally feasible and clearance procedures allow.

(b) *General Notification of Ship Strike*—In the event of a ship strike by any Navy vessel, at any time or place, the Navy shall do the following:

(1) Immediately report to NMFS the species identification (if known), location (lat/long) of the animal (or the strike if the animal has disappeared), and whether the animal is alive or dead (or unknown).

(2) Report to NMFS as soon as operationally feasible the size and length of animal, an estimate of the injury status (ex., dead, injured but alive, injured and moving, unknown, etc.), vessel class/type and operational status.

(3) Report to NMFS the vessel length, speed, and heading as soon as feasible.

(4) Provide NMFS a photo or video, if equipment is available.

(c) *Event Communication Plan*—The Navy shall develop a communication plan that will include all of the communication protocols (phone trees, etc.) and associated contact information required for NMFS and the Navy

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to carry out the necessary expeditious communication required in the event of a stranding or ship strike, including as described in the proposed notification measures above.

(d) The Navy must conduct all monitoring and/or research required under the Letter of Authorization, including abiding by the annual NWTRC Monitoring Plan. (<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/permits/incidental.htm#applications>)

(e) The Navy shall comply with the 2009 Integrated Comprehensive Monitoring Program (ICMP) Plan and continue to improve the program in consultation with NMFS. Changes and improvements to the program made during 2010 (as prescribed in the 2009 ICMP and otherwise deemed appropriate by the Navy and NMFS) will be described in an updated 2010 ICMP and submitted to NMFS by October 31, 2010 for review. An updated 2010 ICMP will be finalized by December 31, 2010.

(f) *Report on Monitoring required in paragraph (e) of this section*—The Navy shall submit a report annually describing the implementation and results of the monitoring required in paragraph (d) of this section. The required submission date will be identified each year in the LOA. The Navy will standardize data collection methods across ranges to allow for comparison in different geographic locations.

(g) *Annual NWTRC Report*—The Navy will submit an Annual NWTRC Report every year. The required submission date will be identified each year in the LOA. This report shall contain the subsections and information indicated below.

(1) *ASW Summary*—This section shall include the following information as summarized from non-major training exercises (unit-level exercises, such as TRACKEXs and MIW):

(i) *Total Hours*—Total annual hours of each type of sonar source (along with explanation of how hours are calculated for sources typically quantified in alternate way (buoys, torpedoes, etc.))

(ii) *Cumulative Impacts*—To the extent practicable, the Navy, in coordination with NMFS, shall develop and implement a method of annually reporting non-major training (i.e., ULT) utilizing hull-mounted sonar. The report shall

present an annual (and seasonal, where practicable) depiction of non-major training exercises geographically across NWTRC. The Navy shall include (in the NWTRC annual report) a brief annual progress update on the status of the development of an effective and unclassified method to report this information until an agreed-upon (with NMFS) method has been developed and implemented.

(2) [Reserved]

(h) *Sinking Exercises (SINKEEs)*—This section shall include the following information for each SINKEE completed that year:

(1) Exercise Info:

(i) Location;

(ii) Date and time exercise began and ended;

(iii) Total hours of observation by watchstanders before, during, and after exercise;

(iv) Total number and types of rounds expended/explosives detonated;

(v) Number and types of passive acoustic sources used in exercise;

(vi) Total hours of passive acoustic search time;

(vii) Number and types of vessels, aircraft, etc., participating in exercise;

(viii) Wave height in feet (high, low and average during exercise); and

(ix) Narrative description of sensors and platforms utilized for marine mammal detection and timeline illustrating how marine mammal detection was conducted.

(2) Individual marine mammal observation during SINKEE (by Navy look-outs) information:

(i) Location of sighting;

(ii) Species (if not possible—indication of whale/dolphin/pinniped);

(iii) Number of individuals;

(iv) Calves observed (y/n);

(v) Initial detection sensor;

(vi) Length of time observers maintained visual contact with marine mammal;

(vii) Wave height;

(viii) Visibility;

(ix) Whether sighting was before, during, or after detonations/exercise, and how many minutes before or after;

(x) Distance of marine mammal from actual detonations (or target spot if not yet detonated)—use four categories to define distance:

(A) the modeled injury threshold radius for the largest explosive used in that exercise type in that OPAREA (662 m for SINKEE in NWTRC);

(B) the required exclusion zone (1 nm for SINKEE in NWTRC);

(C) the required observation distance (if different than the exclusion zone (2 nm for SINKEE in NWTRC)); and

(D) greater than the required observed distance. For example, in this case, the observer would indicate if <662 m, from 738 m–1 nm, from 1 nm–2 nm, and >2 nm.

(xi) Observed behavior—Watchstanders will report, in plain language and without trying to categorize in any way, the observed behavior of the animals (such as animal closing to bow ride, paralleling course/speed, floating on surface and not swimming etc.), including speed and direction.

(xii) Resulting mitigation implementation—Indicate whether explosive detonations were delayed, ceased, modified, or not modified due to marine mammal presence and for how long.

(xiii) If observation occurs while explosives are detonating in the water, indicate munitions type in use at time of marine mammal detection.

(i) Improved Extended Echo-Ranging System (IEER) Summary

(1) Total number of IEER events conducted in NWTRC;

(2) Total expended/detonated rounds (buoys); and

(3) Total number of self-scuttled IEER rounds.

(j) *Explosives Summary*—The Navy is in the process of improving the methods used to track explosive use to provide increased granularity. To the extent practicable, the Navy shall provide the information described below for all of their explosive exercises. Until the Navy is able to report in full the information below, they will provide an annual update on the Navy's explosive tracking methods, including improvements from the previous year.

(k) Total annual number of each type of explosive exercise (of those identified as part of the "specified activity" in this final rule) conducted in NWTRC; and

(2) Total annual expended/detonated rounds (missiles, bombs, etc.) for each explosive type.

## §218.116

(1) *NWTRC 5-Yr Comprehensive Report*—The Navy shall submit to NMFS a draft report that analyzes and summarizes all of the multi-year marine mammal information gathered during ASW and explosive exercises for which annual reports are required (Annual NWTRC Exercise Reports and NWTRC Monitoring Plan Reports). This report will be submitted at the end of the fourth year of the rule (July 2014), covering activities that have occurred through February 1, 2014.

(m) *Comprehensive National ASW Report*—By June, 2014, the Navy shall submit a draft National Report that analyzes, compares, and summarizes the active sonar data gathered (through January 1, 2014) from the watchstanders and pursuant to the implementation of the Monitoring Plans for the Northwest Training Range Complex, the Southern California Range Complex, the Atlantic Fleet Active Sonar Training, the Hawaii Range Complex, the Marianas Islands Range Complex, and the Gulf of Alaska.

(n) The Navy shall respond to NMFS comments and requests for additional information or clarification on the NWTRC Comprehensive Report, the Comprehensive National ASW report, the Annual NWTRC Exercise Report, or the Annual NWTRC Monitoring Plan Report (or the multi-Range Complex Annual Monitoring Plan Report, if that is how the Navy chooses to submit the information) if submitted within 3 months of receipt. These reports will be considered final after the Navy has addressed NMFS' comments or provided the requested information, or three months after the submittal of the draft if NMFS does not comment by then.

(o) In 2011, the Navy shall convene a Monitoring Workshop in which the Monitoring Workshop participants will be asked to review the Navy's Monitoring Plans and monitoring results and make individual recommendations (to the Navy and NMFS) of ways of improving the Monitoring Plans. The recommendations shall be reviewed by the Navy, in consultation with NMFS, and modifications to the Monitoring Plan shall be made, as appropriate.

EDITORIAL NOTE: At 75 FR 69319, Nov. 10, 2010, subpart M was added; at that time,

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§218.115 was added without a paragraph (k)(1) designation.

### §218.116 Applications for Letters of Authorization.

To incidentally take marine mammals pursuant to these regulations, the U.S. Citizen (as defined by §216.103) conducting the activity identified in §218.110(c) (*i.e.*, the Navy) must apply for and obtain either an initial Letter of Authorization in accordance with §218.117 or a renewal under §218.118.

### §218.117 Letters of Authorization.

(a) A Letter of Authorization, unless suspended or revoked, will be valid for a period of time not to exceed the periods of validity of this subpart, but may be renewed or modified sooner subject to the renewal conditions in §218.118 and the modification conditions in §218.119.

(b) Each Letter of Authorization shall set forth:

(1) Permissible methods of incidental taking;

(2) Means of effecting the least practicable adverse impact on the species, its habitat, and on the availability of the species for subsistence uses (*i.e.*, mitigation); and

(3) Requirements for mitigation, monitoring and reporting.

(c) Issuance and renewal of the Letter of Authorization shall be based on a determination that the total number of marine mammals taken by the activity as a whole will have no more than a negligible impact on the affected species or stock of marine mammal(s).

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

### §218.118 Renewal of Letters of Authorization and adaptive management.

(a) A Letter of Authorization issued under §§216.106 of this chapter and 218.117 for the activity identified in §218.110(c) will be renewed upon:

(1) Notification to NMFS that the activity described in the application submitted under §218.116 will be undertaken and that there will not be a substantial modification to the desired work, mitigation, or monitoring undertaken during the upcoming period of validity;