

§217.86

sighting to NMFS and the Marine Mammal Stranding Network.

§217.86 Applications for Letters of Authorization.

(a) To incidentally take marine mammals pursuant to these regulations, the U.S. citizen (as defined by §216.103) conducting the activity identified in §217.80(a) must apply for and obtain either an initial Letter of Authorization in accordance with §217.87 or a renewal under §217.88.

(b) The application must be submitted to NMFS at least 30 days before the activity is scheduled to begin.

(c) Application for a Letter of Authorization and for renewals of Letters of Authorization must include the following:

(1) Name of the U.S. citizen requesting the authorization;

(2) A description of the activity, the dates of the activity, and the specific location of the activity; and

(3) Plans to monitor the behavior and effects of the activity on marine mammals.

(d) A copy of the Letter of Authorization must be in the possession of the persons conducting activities that may involve incidental takings of marine mammals.

(e) [Reserved]

§217.87 Letters of Authorization.

(a) A Letter of Authorization, unless suspended or revoked, shall be valid for a period of time not to exceed the period of validity of this subpart.

(b) The 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 shall have no more than a negligible impact on the affected species or stock of marine mammal(s).

50 CFR Ch. II (10–1–14 Edition)

§217.88 Renewal of Letters of Authorization and adaptive management.

(a) A Letter of Authorization issued under §216.106 of this chapter and §217.87 for the activity identified in §217.80(a) shall be renewed upon a request by the applicant or determination by NMFS and the applicant that modifications are appropriate pursuant to the adaptive management component of these regulations, provided that:

(1) NMFS is notified that the activity described in the application submitted under §217.86 shall be undertaken and there shall not be a substantial modification to the described work, mitigation or monitoring undertaken during the upcoming 12 months;

(2) NMFS has received, reviewed, and accepted the monitoring reports required under §217.85(d) and (e) and the Letter of Authorization issued under §217.87;

(3) NMFS determines that the mitigation, monitoring, and reporting measures required under §§217.84 and 217.85 and the Letter of Authorization issued under §§216.106 and 217.87 of this chapter, were undertaken and shall be undertaken during the upcoming annual period of validity of a renewed Letter of Authorization; and

(4) NMFS makes the determination required by §217.87(c).

(b) If either a request for a renewal of a Letter of Authorization issued under §216.106 of this chapter and §217.88, or a determination by NMFS and the applicant that modifications are appropriate pursuant to the adaptive management component of these regulations indicates that a substantial modification, as determined by NMFS, to the described work, mitigation or monitoring undertaken during the upcoming season shall occur, NMFS shall publish a proposed modification to the Letter of Authorization in the FEDERAL REGISTER and provide the public a period of 30 days for review and comment. Review and comment on renewals or modifications of Letters of Authorization are restricted to:

(1) New cited information and data indicating that the determinations made in this document are in need of reconsideration, and

(2) Proposed substantive changes to the mitigation and monitoring requirements contained in these regulations or in the current Letter of Authorization.

(c) A notice of issuance or denial of a renewal of a Letter of Authorization shall be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER.

(d) Adaptive Management—NMFS may modify or augment the existing mitigation or monitoring measures (after consulting with the U.S. Air Force regarding the practicability of the modifications) if doing so creates a reasonable likelihood of more effectively accomplishing the goals of mitigation and monitoring set forth in the preamble of these regulations. Below are some of the possible sources of new data that could contribute to the decision to modify the mitigation or monitoring measures:

(1) Results from the U.S. Air Force's monitoring from the previous year;

(2) Results from marine mammal and sound research; or

(3) Any information which reveals that marine mammals may have been taken in a manner, extent or number not authorized by these regulations or subsequent Letters of Authorization.

§217.89 Modifications of Letters of Authorization.

(a) Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section, no substantive modification (including withdrawal or suspension) to the Letter of Authorization by NMFS issued pursuant to §216.106 of this chapter and §217.87 of this chapter and subject to the provisions of this subpart shall be made until after notification and an opportunity for public comment has been provided. For purposes of this paragraph, a renewal of a Letter of Authorization under §217.88, without modification (except for the period of validity), is not considered a substantive modification.

(b) If the Assistant Administrator determines that an emergency exists that poses a significant risk to the well-being of the species or stocks of marine mammals specified in §217.80(b), a Letter of Authorization issued pursuant to §216.106 of this chapter and §217.87 of this chapter may be substantively

modified without prior notification and an opportunity for public comment. Notification shall be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER within 30 days subsequent to the action.

Subparts J–K [Reserved]

Subpart L—Taking Marine Mammals Incidental to Conducting Precision Strike Weapon and Air-to-Surface Gunnery Missions at Eglin Gulf Test and Training Range (EGTTR) in the Gulf of Mexico

SOURCE: 79 FR 13588, Mar. 11, 2014, unless otherwise noted.

§217.110 Specified activity and specified geographical region.

(a) Regulations in this subpart apply only to the U.S. Air Force for the incidental 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 Air Force is only authorized if it occurs within the Eglin Air Force Base Gulf Test and Training Range (as depicted in Figure 1–9 of the Air Force's Request for a Letter of Authorization). The EGTTR is the airspace over the Gulf of Mexico beyond 3 nm from shore that is controlled by Eglin Air Force Base. The specified activities will take place within the boundaries of Warning Area W–151. The inshore and offshore boundaries of W–151 are roughly parallel to the shoreline contour. The shoreward boundary is 3 nm from shore, while the seaward boundary extends approximately 85 to 100 nm offshore, depending on the specific location. W–151 has a surface area of approximately 10,247 nm² (35,145 km²), and includes water depths ranging from approximately 20 to 700 m.

(c) The taking of marine mammals by the Air Force is only authorized if it occurs incidental to the following activities within the designated amounts of use: