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the species involved. Any determination or finding required by this part to be made by the “Service” must be made by the Director of the FWS or by the Assistant Administrator of the NMFS, or their delegates, as appropriate.

§ 403.03 Review and approval of State request for management authority.

(a) Any state may request the transfer of management authority for a species of marine mammals by submitting a written request to the Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service (“Director”) for species of marine mammals under the jurisdiction of the FWS, or to the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries of the National Marine Fisheries Service (“Assistant Administrator”) for species of marine mammals under the jurisdiction of the NMFS. The request must include:

(1) Copies of existing and proposed statutes, regulations, policies and other authorities of state law which comprise those aspects of the state management program outlined in paragraph (b) of this section, and, in the case of Alaska, paragraphs (d) (1) through (3) of this section;

(2) A narrative discussion of the statutes, regulations, policies and other authorities which comprise those aspects of the state management program outlined in paragraph (b) of this section, and, in the case of Alaska, paragraph (d) of this section, which explains the program in terms of the requirements of the Act and the regulations of this part; and

(3) Supplementary information as required by paragraph (c) of this section.

(b) A request for transfer of marine mammal management authority will not be approved unless it contains the following:

(1) The scientific and common names and estimated range of the species of marine mammals subject to the state management program.

(2) Provisions of state law concerning the take of marine mammals that—

(i) Require that the taking of marine mammals be humane as defined by section 3(4) of the Act;

(ii) Do not permit the taking of marine mammals until the following have occurred:

(A) The state, pursuant to the requirements of § 403.04 of this part, has determined that the species is at its Optimum Sustainable Population (OSP) and determined the maximum number of animals that may be taken without reducing the species below its OSP, and, in the case of Alaska, when a species is below OSP, the maximum numbers that can be taken for subsistence uses while allowing the species to increase toward its OSP;

(B) The determination as to OSP and maximum take are final and implemented under state law; and

(C) A cooperative allocation agreement, if required under § 403.05(a) of this part, is implemented;

(iii) Do not permit take in excess of the maximum number of animals that may be taken as determined pursuant to § 403.04 of this part; provided that for Alaska, subsistence take may be allowed in accordance with paragraph (d) of this section, and if the species is below OSP, any level of take allowed for subsistence use shall permit the species to increase toward OSP;

(iv) Do not permit take that is for scientific research or public display purposes except such take by or on behalf of the state, or pursuant to a Federal permit issued under § 18.31 or § 216.31 of this title; and

(v) Regulate the incidental taking of the species in a manner consistent with section 101(a) (2), (4) and (5) of the Act.

(3) Provisions for annually acquiring and evaluating data and other new evidence relating to OSP of the species and the maximum allowable take, and if warranted on the basis of such evaluation, for requiring reevaluations of OSP and maximum allowable take determinations pursuant to § 403.04.

(4) Procedures for the resolution of differences between the state and the appropriate Service that might arise during the development of a cooperative allocation agreement pursuant to § 403.05(a) of this part.

(5) Procedures for the submission of an annual report meeting the requirements of § 403.06(b) of this part to the appropriate Service regarding the administration of the state management program during the reporting period.

(6) A description of—

(i) The organization of state offices involved in the administration and enforcement of the state management program;

(ii) Any permit system relating to the marine mammals, the laws that apply to such permits, and the procedures to be used in granting or withholding such permits;

(iii) State laws relating to judicial review of administrative decisions as they relate to the state management program;

(iv) State laws relating to administrative rulemaking as they relate to the state management program;

(c) In addition to the aspects of the state management program required to be submitted by paragraph (b) of this section, the state shall submit information, in summary form, relating to:

(1) The anticipated staffing and funding of state offices involved in the administration and enforcement of the state management program;

(2) Anticipated research and enforcement activities relating to conservation of the species for which management authority is sought; and

(3) Such other materials and information as the Service may request or which the state may deem necessary or advisable to demonstrate the compatibility of the state management program with the policy and purposes of the Act and the rules and regulations issued under the Act.

(d) In addition to the requirements contained in paragraphs (b) and (c) of this section, a request for the transfer of marine mammal management authority by the State of Alaska must contain the following concerning subsistence use of the species—

(1) A statute and regulations concerning the take of marine mammals that ensure that

(i) The taking of marine mammals species for subsistence uses will be the priority consumptive uses of the species;

(ii) If restrictions on subsistence uses of the species are required, such restrictions shall be based upon the customary and direct dependence upon the species as the mainstay of livelihood, local residency, and the availability of alternative resources; and

(iii) The taking of marine mammal species for subsistence uses is accomplished in a non-wasteful manner;

(2) Statutes or regulations that ensure that the appropriate state agency will—

(i) Authorize nonsubsistence consumptive uses of a marine mammal species only if such uses will have no significant adverse impact on subsistence uses of the species;

(ii) Regulate nonsubsistence consumptive uses in a manner which, to the maximum extent practicable, provides economic opportunities, including, but not limited to, licensing of marine mammal hunting guides and the assignment of guiding areas, for residents of rural coastal villages of Alaska who engage in subsistence uses of the species; and

(iii) Make written findings supporting the authorizations and regulations described in this paragraph based solely on the administrative record before the agency;

(3) A narrative discussion of the statutes or regulations required under paragraph (d)(2) of this section, and any additional policies or procedures concerning the regulation of non-subsistence consumptive uses of marine mammals. This discussion must explain how the State's program satisfies the requirements of section 109(f) of the Act, namely that the regulation of nonsubsistence consumptive uses of marine mammals provides, to the maximum extent practicable, economic opportunities for the residents of rural coastal villages of Alaska who engage in subsistence uses of the species.

(e) To assist states in preparing the state management program for submission, the Service will also, at the written request of any state, make a preliminary review of any aspects of the state management program. This review will be advisory in nature and shall not be binding upon the Services. Notwithstanding preliminary review by the Service, once any proposed aspect of the state management program has been prepared and submitted in final form, it shall be subject to final review and approval under paragraphs (f) through (h) of this section.

(f)(1) After receiving the state's request, for management authority, the

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Service shall make an initial determination on whether the state's management program meets the requirements of the Act and these regulations.

(2) Within 45 days after receiving the state's request, unless the state and the Service agree to another time period, the Service shall publish a general notice of its initial determination in the FEDERAL REGISTER together with, in the case of a positive determination, the text of a proposed rule to transfer management authority to the state. The general notice shall contain a summary of the major components of the state's management program and shall indicate where the full text of the management program may be inspected or copied. The public shall be allowed to submit written comments and to request an informal public hearing on the Service's initial determination and the state's management program within 60 days of publication of the general notice.

(g) If requested, the Service may conduct an informal public hearing after publishing 30 days' advance notice of the date, location, and time of such hearing in the FEDERAL REGISTER.

(h) After considering all comments and other relevant information, the Service shall publish in the FEDERAL REGISTER its final determination on whether the state has developed and will implement a management program that meets the requirement of the Act and these regulations. In the case of a positive final determination, the Service shall publish with the notice a final regulation transferring management authority for the species to the state after the following requirements are satisfied:

(1) The state's determinations pursuant to § 403.04 of this part are final and implemented under state law;

(2) Any cooperative allocation agreement required under § 403.05(a) of this part is implemented; and

(3) The state has enacted and submitted to the Service laws and policies that are substantially the same as those provided pursuant to § 403.03(a) in proposed form in the state's management program.

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§ 403.04 Determinations and hearings under section 109(c) of the MMPA.

(a) *Introduction.* In order to gain approval of its marine mammal management program the state must provide for a process, consistent with section 109(c) of the Act, to determine the optimum sustainable population of the species and the maximum number of animals that may be taken from populations it manages without reducing the species below OSP. The state process must be completed before the state may exercise any management authority over the subject marine mammals, and it must include the elements set forth below.

(b) *Basis, purpose, and scope.* The process set forth in this section is applicable to and required for only the determination of the OSP of the species and maximum number that may be taken without reducing it below its OSP and, in the case of Alaska if the species is below OSP, the maximum number of animals that may be taken, if any, for subsistence uses without preventing the species from increasing toward its OSP. The state need not allow the maximum take, as determined in accordance with this process, that is biologically permissible. The state may change regulations establishing bag limits, quotas, seasons, areas, manner of take, etc. within the maximum biologically permissible take pursuant to its other rulemaking criteria, authority, and procedures. Compliance with the process set forth in this section would not be required again unless the state proposes to modify its determinations of the status of the species with respect to its OSP or the maximum permissible take from that species.

(c) *Initial determination by the State.* The state agency with responsibility for managing the species in the event management authority is transferred to the state shall make initial determinations on the basis of the best scientific evidence available of:

(1) Whether or not it is at its OSP; (2) if so, the maximum number of that species that may be taken without reducing it below its OSP; and (3) if not, in the case of Alaska, the maximum number of animals that may be taken, if