providing e-mail comments is *NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov*. Include in the subject line of the e-mail comment the following document identifier: File No. 14249.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Patrick Opay or Kate Swails, (301)713–2289.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The subject permit is requested under the authority of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA; 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) and the regulations governing the taking, importing, and exporting of endangered and threatened species (50 CFR 222–226).

The applicant proposes to evaluate modifications to scallop dredge gear that may reduce the probability of turtle injuries due to interactions with gear. The applicant also proposes to study sea turtle behavior so that behavior can be factored into bycatch reduction strategies and collect biological and animal health information to improve NMFS' ability to assess stocks and the impact of anthropogenic activities. Up to 17 loggerhead and 6 leatherback, hawksbill, olive ridley, green, or Kemp's ridley in any combination, would be taken during the dredge gear study annually. All of these takes could result in injury or mortality. Up to 100 loggerheads would be followed by a remotely operated vehicle annually during the behavior study. Up to 10 loggerheads would be captured annually by hoop net and have a satellite transmitter or Crittercam attached to their carapace. All animals that are handled in these studies would be measured, flipper and passive integrated transponder tagged, tissue sampled, cloacal swabbed, nasal swabbed, photographed, weighed, and released. Dead animals could be salvaged for scientific purposes. The applicant requests a 5 year permit and research activities would occur in the Atlantic Ocean off the coast of the northeastern United States.

Dated: February 17, 2009.

P. Michael Payne,

Chief, Permits, Conservation and Education Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. E9–3935 Filed 2–23–09; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–22–S

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Draft Management Plan and Environmental Assessment for Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary: Notice of Public Availability and Meetings

AGENCY: Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS), National Ocean Service (NOS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce (DOC).

ACTION: Notice of public availability and meetings.

SUMMARY: In accordance with section 304(e) of the National Marine Sanctuaries Act (NMSA), as amended, NOAA is soliciting public comment on the draft management plan and draft environmental assessment for Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary.

DATES: *Comments:* Comments on the draft management plan and draft environmental assessment will be considered if received on or before April 10, 2009.

Public meetings: See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section below for the dates and locations for the public meetings.

ADDRESSES: *To obtain a copy:* For a copy of the draft management plan and draft environmental assessment, contact the Management Plan Review Coordinator, Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary, 500 W. Fletcher Street, Alpena, MI 49707. Copies can also be downloaded from the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary (TBNMS) website at *http://www.thunderbay.noaa.gov*.

To submit comments: Comments on the draft management plan and draft environmental assessment may be submitted by one of the following methods:

1. In writing to the Thunder Bay NMS Management Plan Review Coordinator (see *to obtain a copy* section above);
2. By e-mail to *TBMPR@noaa.gov*; or
3. By providing comments (oral or written) at one of the public meetings (see public meetings section below).

Instructions: All comments received are a part of the public record and will be generally posted to *http://www.regulations.gov* without change. All Personal Identifying Information (for example, name, address, etc.) voluntarily submitted by the commenter may be publicly accessible. Do not submit confidential business information or otherwise sensitive or protected information. NOAA will accept anonymous comments (enter N/A in the required fields if you wish to remain anonymous). Attachments to electronic comments will be accepted in Microsoft Word, Excel, WordPerfect, or Adobe PDF file formats only.

Public meetings: See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section for the dates and locations for the public meetings.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Tera Panknin at (989) 356–8805 ext. 38 or via e-mail at *TBMPR@noaa.gov*.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background Information

On October 7, 2000, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) designated TBNMS as the nation's thirteenth national marine sanctuary (NMS). At that time, NOAA prepared and released a management plan for the new sanctuary. TBNMS is jointly managed by NOAA and the State of Michigan. The sanctuary's mission is to preserve nationally significant shipwrecks and regional maritime landscape through resource protection, education, and research. The sanctuary also promotes appreciation and responsible use of Thunder Bay, the Great Lakes, and the oceans.

NOAA is now undergoing the first review of the 1999 TBNMS management plan pursuant to section 304(e) of the NMSA. The draft revised management plan (2009) was prepared by NOAA and the State of Michigan's Department of History, Arts and Libraries in cooperation with the Thunder Bay Sanctuary Advisory Council and with input from the public, local governments, State and Federal agencies, and other stakeholders. The draft revised plan is comprised of four action plans (resource protection, education and outreach, research, and operations). It sets priorities to guide sanctuary programs and operations and provides the public with a better understanding of the sanctuary's strategies to protect Thunder Bay's resources.

The draft environmental assessment analyzes the environmental impacts of the revised management plan pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. In doing so, it analyzes two alternatives: the status quo (no change to the 1999 management plan) and the preferred alternative (revising the 1999 management plan).

Public Meetings

Public meetings will be held at the following locations and dates:

March 18, 6:30 p.m	Rogers City, MI	Presque Isle District Library, 181 East Erie Street, Rogers City, MI 49779.
March 19, 6:30 p.m	Harrisville, MI	Harrisville Courthouse, 106 North 5th Street, Harrisville, MI 48740.
March 20, 2 p.m	Lansing, MI	Michigan Historical Center, 702 West Kalamazoo Street, Lansing, MI 48909.
March 24, 6:30 p.m	Alpena, MI	Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center, 500 West Fletcher Street, Alpena, MI 49707.

Dated: February 17, 2009.

Daniel J. Basta,

Director, Office of National Marine Sanctuaries.

[FR Doc. E9–3720 Filed 2–23–09; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–NK–P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648–XE37

Marine Mammals; File No. 473–1700–02

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice; issuance of permit amendment.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that Janice Straley, University of Alaska, 1332 Seward Ave, Sitka, AK 99835, has been issued an amendment to Permit No. 473–1700–01 to conduct research on marine mammals.

ADDRESSES: The permit and related documents are available for review upon written request or by appointment in the following office(s):

Permits, Conservation and Education Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13705, Silver Spring, MD 20910; phone (301)713–2289; fax (301)427–2521; and

Alaska Region, NMFS, P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802–1668; phone (907)586–7221; fax (907)586–7249.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jaclyn Daly or Amy Sloan, (301)713–2289.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On December 26, 2007, notice was published in the **Federal Register** (72 FR 72997) that a request for a scientific research permit amendment to take sperm whales and killer whales had been submitted by the above-named individual. The requested permit has been issued under the authority of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*), the regulations governing the taking and importing of marine mammals (50 CFR part 216), the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA; 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), and the regulations governing the taking, importing, and exporting of endangered and threatened species (50 CFR parts 222–226).

The researchers previous permit, 473–1700–01, authorized research on humpback whales (*Megaptera novaeangliae*), gray whales (*Eschrichtius robustus*) , minke whales (*Balaenoptera acustorostrata*), sperm whales (*Physeter macrocephalus*) , fin whales (*Balaenoptera physalus*), and killer whales (*Orcinus orca*). Incidental harassment of harbor porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*), Dall's porpoise (*P. dalli*), Atlantic white-sided dolphins (*Lagenorhynchus obliquidens*), Steller sea lions (*Eumetopias jubatus*), harbor seals (*Phoca vitulina*) and Northern fur seals (*Callorhinus ursinus*) is also authorized. Research methods include photo-identification, passive acoustic recording, behavioral observations, suction-cup tagging (including Crittercam), and biopsy. The permit amendment includes those activities and the following: an increase in the number of sperm whales that may be suction-cup tagged to 50 (an increase of 25 animals); attachment of satellite tags to 20 sperm whales and 20 killer whales; and modification to operations of fishing vessel methods, which could result in the taking of 40 sperm whales by Level B harassment, annually. All research will be conducted in the Gulf of Alaska. The permit amendment also extends the expiration date by one year, to June 30, 2010.

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), a supplemental environmental assessment was prepared analyzing the effects of the permitted activities. After a Finding of No Significant Impact, the determination was made that it was not necessary to prepare an environmental impact statement.

Issuance of this permit, as required by the ESA, was based on a finding that such permit: (1) was applied for in good faith; (2) will not operate to the disadvantage of such endangered species; and (3) is consistent with the purposes and policies set forth in section 2 of the ESA.

Dated: February 18, 2009.

P. Michael Payne,

Chief, Permits, Conservation and Education Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. E9–3923 Filed 2–23–09; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–22–S

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648–XN28

Pacific Halibut Fishery; Guideline Harvest Levels for the Charter Vessel Fishery for Halibut

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of guideline harvest level.

SUMMARY: NMFS provides notice of Pacific halibut guideline harvest levels (GHLs) for the guided sport charter vessel fishery in the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) regulatory areas 2C and 3A. The GHLs are benchmark harvest levels for participants in the charter vessel fishery for halibut in each area. This notice is necessary to meet the management and regulatory requirements for the GHLs and to inform the public about the 2009 GHLs for the charter halibut fishery.

DATES: The GHLs are effective beginning February 1, 2009, through December 31, 2009. This period is specified by the IPHC as the sport fishing season in all waters of Alaska.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Peggy Murphy, (907) 586–7228, or email at *peggy.murphy@noaa.gov*.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: NMFS implemented a final rule to establish GHLs in IPHC regulatory areas 2C and 3A for the harvest of Pacific halibut (*Hippoglossus stenolepis*) by the charter vessel fishery on August 8, 2003 (68 FR 47256). A correcting amendment was published May 28, 2008 (73 FR 30504) to correct the GHL table at 50 CFR 300.65(c)(1) that lists GHLs corresponding to different levels of the total constant exploitation yield (CEY) because of non–substantive errors in