subsistence communities and will implement during its planned 2015/2016 ice overflight surveys to minimize any adverse effects on the availability of marine mammals for subsistence uses. In addition, the POC details Shell's communications and consultations with local subsistence communities concerning its planned 2015/2016 program, potential conflicts with subsistence activities, and means of resolving any such conflicts (50 CFR 216.104(a) (12) (i), (ii), and (iv)). The POC identifies and documents potential conflicts and associated measures that will be taken to minimize any adverse effects on the availability of marine mammals for subsistence use.

Meetings between Shell and villages were held in Barrow and Point Lay in early November 2014 and in other villages in early 2015. Throughout 2015 and 2016 Shell anticipates continued engagement with the marine mammal commissions and committees active in the subsistence harvests and marine mammal research.

Following the 2015/2016 season, Shell intends to have a post-season co-management meeting with the commissioners and committee heads to discuss results of mitigation measures and outcomes of the preceding season. The goal of the post-season meeting is to build upon the knowledge base, discuss successful or unsuccessful outcomes of mitigation measures, and possibly refine plans or mitigation measures if necessary.

In addition to the POC, the following subsistence mitigation measures will be implemented for Shell's ice overflight surveys and are required in the IHA issued to Shell.

(1) Communications

- Shell has developed a Communication Plan and will implement this plan before initiating ice overflight survey operations to coordinate activities with local subsistence users, as well as Village Whaling Captains' Associations, to minimize the risk of interfering with subsistence hunting activities, and keep current as to the timing and status of the bowhead whale hunt and other subsistence hunts.
- Shell will employ local CLOs and/or SAs from the Chukchi Sea villages that are potentially impacted by Shell's ice overflight surveys. The CLOs and SAs will provide consultation and guidance regarding the whale migration and subsistence activities. There will be one per village. The CLO and/or SA will use local knowledge (Traditional Knowledge) to gather data on the subsistence lifestyle within the community and provide advice on ways to minimize and mitigate potential negative impacts to subsistence resources during the survey season. Responsibilities include reporting any subsistence concerns or conflicts; coordinating with subsistence users; reporting subsistence-related comments, concerns, and information; and advising how to avoid subsistence conflicts.

(2) Aircraft Travel

- The aircraft will maintain a 1 mi (1.6 km) radius when flying over areas where seals appear to be concentrated in groups of ≥ 5 individuals.
- The aircraft will not land on ice within 1,400 m of hauled out pinnipeds.
- The aircraft will avoid flying over polynyas and along adjacent ice margins as much as possible to minimize potential disturbance to cetaceans.
- Aircraft shall not operate below 1,500 ft (457 m) in areas of active whale hunting; such areas to be identified through communications with the Com Centers and SAs.
- Shell will routinely engage with local communities and subsistence groups to ensure no disturbance of whaling or other subsistence activities.

Unmitigable Adverse Impact Analysis and Determination

Based on the description of the specified activity, the measures described to minimize adverse effects on the availability of marine mammals for subsistence purposes, and the mitigation and monitoring measures, NMFS has determined that there will not be an unmitigable adverse impact on subsistence uses from Shell's proposed activities.

Endangered Species Act (ESA)

There are two marine mammal species listed as endangered under the ESA with confirmed or possible occurrence in the proposed project area: the bowhead whale and ringed seal. NMFS' Permits and Conservation Division initiated consultation with NMFS' Endangered Species Division under section 7 of the ESA on the issuance of an IHA to Shell under section 101(a)(5)(D) of the MMPA for this activity. On May 20, 2015, NMFS issued a Biological Opinion, and concluded that the issuance of the IHA associated with Shell's 2015/2016 ice overflight surveys in the Beaufort and Chukchi Seas are not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the threatened ringed seal and will have no effect on bowhead whale. No critical habitat has been designated for this species, therefore it will be affected.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

NMFS prepared an EA that includes an analysis of potential environmental effects associated with NMFS' issuance of an IHA to Shell to take marine mammals incidental to conducting ice overflight surveys in the Beaufort and Chukchi Seas, Alaska. NMFS has finalized the EA and prepared a FONSI for this action. Therefore, preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is not necessary. NMFS' draft EA was available to the public for a 30-day comment period before it was finalized.

Authorization

As a result of these determinations, NMFS has issued an IHA to Shell for the take of marine mammals, by Level B harassment, incidental to conducting ice overflight surveys in the Beaufort and Chukchi Seas in 2015/2016, provided the previously mentioned mitigation, monitoring, and reporting requirements are incorporated.

Dated: June 10, 2015.

Donna S. Wieting,

Director, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 2015–14702 Filed 6–15–15; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–22–P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648–XV92

Marine Mammals; File No. 14610

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 the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG), Division of Wildlife Conservation, Juneau, AK (Principal Investigator: Lori Quakenbush) has been issued a minor amendment to Scientific Research Permit No. 14610–03.

ADDRESSES: The amendment and related documents are available for review upon written request or by appointment in the Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13705, Silver Spring, MD 20910; phone: (301) 427–8401; fax: (301) 713–0376.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Courtney Smith or Brendan Hurley; phone: (301) 427–8401.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The requested amendment has been granted under the authority of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*) and the regulations governing the taking and importing of marine mammals (50 CFR part 216).

The current permit (No. 14610–03), issued on August 11, 2014 (75 FR 30383) authorized vessel and aerial surveys, photo-identification, remote biopsy and instrument attachment research activities on beluga (*Delphinapterus leucas*), endangered bowhead (*Balaena mysticetus*), gray (*Eschrictius robustus*), and endangered humpback whales (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) through May 31, 2015. The minor amendment (No. 14610–04) extends the duration of the permit by one year through May 31, 2016, but does not change any other terms or conditions of the permit.

Dated: June 10, 2015.

Julia Harrison,

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

[FR Doc. 2015–14753 Filed 6–15–15; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–22–P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648–XD814

Takes of Marine Mammals Incidental to Specified Activities; Land Survey Activities Within the Eastern Aleutian Islands Archipelago, Alaska, 2015

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

ACTION: Notice; issuance of an incidental harassment authorization.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) regulations, we, NMFS, hereby give notification that the National Marine Fisheries Service has issued an Incidental Harassment Authorization (IHA) to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to take marine mammals, by harassment incidental to conducting a one-day field-based land survey of cultural sites located on a small island within the eastern Aleutian Islands archipelago, Alaska, June through July, 2015.

DATES: Effective June 12, 2015 through July 31, 2015.

ADDRESSES: The public may obtain an electronic copy of Glacier Bay NP's application, supporting documentation, the authorization, and a list of the references cited in this document by visiting: *http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/permits/incidental/research.htm.*

The Environmental Assessment and associated Finding of No Significant Impact, prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, are also available at the same site.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jeannine Cody, NMFS, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS (301) 427–8401.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Section 101(a)(5)(D) of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (MMPA; 16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*) directs the Secretary of Commerce to allow, upon request, the incidental, but not intentional, taking of small numbers of marine mammals of a species or population stock, by U.S. citizens who engage in a specified activity (other than commercial fishing) within a specified geographical region if, after NMFS provides a notice of a proposed authorization to the public for review and comment: (1) NMFS makes certain findings; and (2) the taking is limited to harassment.

An Authorization shall be granted for the incidental taking of small numbers of marine mammals if NMFS finds that the taking will have a negligible impact on the species or stock(s), and will not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of the species or stock(s) for subsistence uses (where relevant). The Authorization must also set forth the permissible methods of taking; other means of effecting the least practicable adverse impact on the species or stock and its habitat; and requirements pertaining to the monitoring and reporting of such taking. NMFS has defined ''negligible impact'' in 50 CFR 216.103 as ''an impact resulting from the specified activity that cannot be reasonably expected to, and is not reasonably likely to, adversely affect the species or stock through effects on annual rates of recruitment or survival.''

Except with respect to certain activities not pertinent here, the MMPA defines ''harassment'' as: Any act of pursuit, torment, or annoyance which (i) has the potential to injure a marine mammal or marine mammal stock in the wild [Level A harassment]; or (ii) has the potential to disturb a marine mammal or marine mammal stock in the wild by causing disruption of behavioral patterns, including, but not limited to, migration, breathing, nursing, breeding, feeding, or sheltering [Level B harassment].

Summary of Request

On September 8, 2014, NMFS received an application from BLM requesting that we issue an Authorization for the take of marine mammals, incidental to conducting one field-based land survey for a land claim of cultural sites located on a small island in the eastern Aleutian Islands archipelago, AK. NMFS determined the application complete and adequate on February 17, 2015.

BLM would conduct the proposed activity within the vicinity of a major Steller sea lion haulout site identified in the regulations at 50 CFR 226.202 and the following aspects of the proposed activity would likely to result in the take of marine mammals: Noise generated by vessel approaches and departures; noise generated by personnel while conducting the land survey; and human presence during the proposed activity. Thus, NMFS anticipates that take, by Level B harassment only of one species of marine mammal could result from the specified activity. NMFS anticipates that take by Level B Harassment only, of 20 Steller sea lions would result from the specified activity.

Description of the Specified Activity

Overview

BLM must conduct the land survey to support conveyance of existing cemetery sites and historical places to an Alaska Native Regional Corporation as required under the ANCSA. Once BLM concludes the survey no additional visits would be necessary for the proposed action.

Dates and Duration

BLM would complete the survey within one day (approximately 6–10 hours) between June 1 and July 31, 2015. Thus, the proposed Authorization, if issued, would be effective from June 1, 2015 through July 31, 2015. NMFS refers the reader to the Detailed Description of Activities section later in this notice for more information on the scope of the proposed activities.

Specified Geographic Region

BLM's application contains information on sensitive archaeological site locations prohibited from disclosure to the public under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended. The island is small (less than 5 acres), extremely rugged, and uninhabited by people. This notice will describe the specified geographic region as cultural sites located on a small island in the eastern Aleutian Islands archipelago.