

**[I.D. 081996A]****Marine Mammals; Pinniped Removal Authority**

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

**ACTION:** Public Meeting.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS announces a public meeting of the Pinniped-Fishery Interaction Task Force (Task Force) on the sea lion/steelhead conflict at the Ballard Locks. The Task Force is meeting to review the available information from the 1996 winter steelhead run and evaluate the effectiveness of the permitted intentional lethal taking of individually identified pinnipeds or alternative actions that were implemented.

Following its evaluation, the Task Force may recommend additional actions that it believes to be necessary for the elimination of the problem interaction.

**DATES:** The public meeting of the Task Force is scheduled for September 16-17, 1996, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day.

**ADDRESSES:** The Task Force meeting will be held in the Snoqualmie Room at the Marriott Hotel, 3201 S. 176th St., Seattle, WA.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Joe Scordino, 206-526-6140.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** A Task Force was formed pursuant to section 120 of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) in 1994 to provide recommendations to NMFS on an application from the State of Washington for the lethal removal of California sea lions that have a significant negative impact on the wild run of winter steelhead that migrate through the Ballard Locks. A complete description of the State's application and the formation of the Task Force was published in the Federal Register on August 2, 1994 (59 FR 39325), and September 27, 1994 (59 FR 49234). After several public meetings in 1994, the Task Force submitted its report to NMFS recommending approval of the State's application for lethal removal of California sea lions at the Ballard Locks, and NMFS issued a 3-year Letter of Authorization to the State (see 60 FR 3841, January 19, 1995). In the fall of 1995, the Task Force was reconvened to evaluate the effectiveness of the lethal removal authorization and alternative actions that were implemented in 1995 in accordance with section 120 of the MMPA. The report and recommendations from the fall 1995 meetings of the Task Force were considered by NMFS, and NMFS

modified the conditions for lethal removal in the Letter of Authorization to Washington for 1996 (61 FR 13153, March 26, 1996).

The Task Force will meet again on September 16 and 17, 1996, to evaluate the effectiveness of actions taken in 1996 under the modified Letter of Authorization. The meeting is open to the public; however, the public will not be allowed to discuss or debate the issues with members of the Task Force at the meetings. There will be an opportunity for the public to provide comments to the Task Force at 4 p.m. on the first day of the meeting. The meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Joe Scordino at (206)526-6140 at least 5 days prior to the meeting date.

Dated: August 20, 1996.

John F. Witzig,

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

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**BILLING CODE 3510-22-F**

**[I.D. 082096C]****Marine Mammals; Scientific Research Permits (P619 and P532C)**

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

**ACTION:** Receipt of application.

**SUMMARY:** Notice is hereby given that Dr. Catherine Schaeff, Department of Biology, American University, 4400 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington, D.C. 20016 (P619), and Texas A&M University, P.O. Box 1675, Galveston, TX 77551 [Principal Investigators: Dr. Randall Davis, *et al.*] (P532C) have applied in due form for individual permits to take marine mammals for purposes of scientific research.

**DATES:** Written comments must be received on or before September 25, 1996.

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

Permits Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13130, Silver Spring, MD 20910 (301/713-2289);

P619 - Northeast Region, NMFS, One Blackburn Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930-2298 (508/281-9250); and

P532C - Southeast Region, NMFS, 9721 Executive Center Drive, North, St.

Petersburg, FL 33702-2532 (813/570-5301).

Written data or views, or requests for a public hearing on this request, should be submitted to the Director, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13130, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Those individuals requesting a hearing should set forth the specific reasons why a hearing on this particular request would be appropriate.

Concurrent with the publication of this notice in the *Federal Register*, NMFS is forwarding copies of this application to the Marine Mammal Commission and its Committee of Scientific Advisors.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The subject permit is requested 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 (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), and the regulations governing the taking, importing, and exporting of endangered fish and wildlife (50 CFR part 220-222.23).

Dr. Catherine Schaeff (P617) requests a permit to import approximately 1067 skin samples collected from gray whales (*Eschrichtius robustus*). Up to 507 skin samples are requested to be imported from Canada and 560 skin samples imported from Mexico for DNA analysis.

Texas A&M University (532C), Principal Investigator Dr. Randall W. Davis, *et al.*, requests a permit to take a variety of marine mammals and marine turtles in three proposed projects: (1) Study of the Effects of Low Frequency Sound on Sperm Whales in the Gulf of Mexico - up to 225 sperm whales (*Physeter macrocephalus*) may be taken by harassment from 30 exposure trails of low frequency sound (LFS) experiments and approached for photo-identification over a 3-year period. Potentially each individual could be taken up to 30 times. A variety of cetacea and marine turtle species will be inadvertently harassed due to the LFS experiments (a list will be provided upon request); (2) Study on the Behavior and Tracking of Cetaceans in the Gulf of Mexico - a variety of 28 cetacean species found in the Gulf of Mexico (list provided upon request) will be taken during (a) censusing and behavioral observations, (b) photo-identification of sperm, killer and Bryde's whales, (c) skin/blubber biopsies of all cetacean species, (d) attachment of video camera/data logger package and satellite-linked time-depth recorders to sperm whales, and (e)