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**[RESERVED]**

**SUBCHAPTER C—MARINE MAMMALS**

**PART 216—REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE TAKING AND IMPORTING OF MARINE MAMMALS**

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NOTE TO PART 216: See also 50 CFR parts 228 and 229 for regulations governing certain incidental takings of marine mammals.

AUTHORITY: 16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*, unless otherwise noted.

SOURCE: 39 FR 1852, Jan. 15, 1974, unless otherwise noted.

EDITORIAL NOTE: At 56 FR 21096, May 7, 1991, 56 FR 41308, Aug. 20, 1991, and 56 FR 48115, Sept. 24, 1991, findings of nonconformance, embargo and revocation were published in the FEDERAL REGISTER.

**Subpart A—Introduction**

**§ 216.1 Purpose of regulations.**

The regulations in this part implement the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, 86 Stat. 1027, 16 U.S.C. 1361–1407, Pub. L. 92–522, which, among other things, restricts the taking, possession, transportation, selling, offering for sale, and importing of marine mammals.

**§ 216.2 Scope of regulations.**

This part 216 applies solely to marine mammals and marine mammal products as defined in § 216.3. For regulations under the MMPA, with respect to other marine mammals and marine mammal products, see 50 CFR part 18.

[39 FR 1852, Jan. 15, 1974, as amended at 59 FR 50375, Oct. 3, 1994]

**§ 216.3 Definitions.**

In addition to definitions contained in the MMPA, and unless the context otherwise requires, in this part 216:

*ABI* means Automated Broker Interface, the electronic product-entry filing system under the control of the U.S. Customs Service, Department of the Treasury.

*Acts* means, collectively, the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*, the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*, and the Fur Seal Act of 1966, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 1151 *et seq.*

*Active sportfishing* means paying passengers have their terminal fishing gear (lures, hooks, etc.) in the water in an attempt to catch fish or, in the case of fishing involving chumming, fishing is considered to be in progress from the instant fish have been sighted taking bait (boiling) during that chumming process.

*Alaskan Native* means a person defined in the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1602(b)) (85 Stat. 588) as a citizen of the United States who is of one-fourth degree or more Alaska Indian (including Tsimishian Indians enrolled or not enrolled in the Metlaktla Indian Community), Eskimo, or Aleut blood or combination thereof. The term includes any Native, as so defined, either or both of whose

adoptive parents are not Natives. It also includes, in the absence of proof of a minimum blood quantum, any citizen of the United States who is regarded as an Alaska Native by the Native village or group, of which he claims to be a member and whose father or mother is (or, if deceased, was) regarded as Native by any Native village or Native group. Any such citizen enrolled by the Secretary of the Interior pursuant to section 5 of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act shall be conclusively presumed to be an Alaskan Native for purposes of this part.

*Article of handicraft* means items made by an Indian, Aleut or Eskimo from the nonedible byproducts of fur seals taken for personal or family consumption which—

(1) Were commonly produced by Alaskan Natives on or before October 14, 1983;

(2) Are composed wholly or in some significant respect of natural materials, and;

(3) Are significantly altered from their natural form and which are produced, decorated, or fashioned in the exercise of traditional native handicrafts without the use of pantographs, multiple carvers, or similar mass copying devices. Improved methods of production utilizing modern implements such as sewing machines or modern tanning techniques at a tannery registered pursuant to §216.23(c) may be used so long as no large scale mass production industry results. Traditional native handicrafts include, but are not limited to, weaving, carving, stitching, sewing, lacing, beading, drawing, and painting. The formation of traditional native groups, such as a cooperative, is permitted so long as no large scale mass production results.

*Assistant Administrator* means the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Silver Spring, MD 20910, or his/her designee.

*Authentic native articles of handicrafts and clothing* means items made by an Indian, Aleut or Eskimo which (a) were commonly produced on or before December 21, 1972, and (b) are composed wholly or in some significant respect of natural materials, and (c) are signifi-

cantly altered from their natural form and which are produced, decorated, or fashioned in the exercise of traditional native handicrafts without the use of pantographs, multiple carvers, or similar mass copying devices. Improved methods of production utilizing modern implements such as sewing machines or modern tanning techniques at a tannery registered pursuant to §216.23(c) may be used so long as no large scale mass production industry results. Traditional native handicrafts include, but are not limited to, weaving, carving, stitching, sewing, lacing, beading, drawing, and painting. The formation of traditional native groups, such as a cooperative, is permitted so long as no large scale mass production results.

*Bona fide scientific research:* (1) Means scientific research on marine mammals conducted by qualified personnel, the results of which:

(i) Likely would be accepted for publication in a refereed scientific journal;

(ii) Are likely to contribute to the basic knowledge of marine mammal biology or ecology. (Note: This includes, for example, marine mammal parts in a properly curated, professionally accredited scientific collection); or

(iii) Are likely to identify, evaluate, or resolve conservation problems.

(2) Research that is not on marine mammals, but that may incidentally take marine mammals, is not included in this definition (see sections 101(a)(3)(A), 101(a)(5)(A), and 101(a)(5)(D) of the MMPA, and sections 7(b)(4) and 10(a)(1)(B) of the ESA).

*Carrying capacity* means the Regional Director's determination of the maximum amount of fish that a vessel can carry in short tons based on the greater of the amount indicated by the builder of the vessel, a marine surveyor's report, or the highest amount reported landed from any one trip.

*Certified charter vessel* means a fishing vessel of a non-U.S. flag nation, which is operating under the jurisdiction of the marine mammal laws and regulations of another, harvesting, nation by a formal declaration entered into by mutual agreement of the nations.

*Co-investigator* means the on-site representative of a principal investigator.

*Commercial fishing operation* means the lawful harvesting of fish from the marine environment for profit as part of an ongoing business enterprise. Such terms may include licensed commercial passenger fishing vessel (as defined) activities, but no other sport-fishing activities, whether or not the fish so caught are subsequently sold.

*Commercial passenger fishing vessel* means any vessel licensed for commercial passenger fishing purposes within the State out of which it is operating and from which, while under charter or hire, persons are legally permitted to conduct sportfishing activities.

*Custody* means holding a live marine mammal pursuant to the conditional authority granted under the MMPA, and the responsibility therein for captive maintenance of the marine mammal.

*Director, Office of Protected Resources* means Director, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910.

*Director, Southwest Region* means the Director, Southwest Region, NMFS, 501 W. Ocean Blvd., Long Beach, CA 90802, or his/her designee.

*Dolphin Mortality Limit (DML)* means the maximum allowable number of incidental dolphin mortalities per calendar year assigned to a vessel, unless a shorter time period is specified.

*Endangered Species* means a species or subspecies of marine mammal listed as “endangered” pursuant to the Endangered Species Act of 1973, 87 Stat. 884, Pub. L. 93-205 (see part 17 of this title).

*ESA* means the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*

*ETP* means the eastern tropical Pacific Ocean which includes the Pacific Ocean area bounded by 40° N. latitude, 40° S. latitude, 160° W. longitude and the coastlines of North, Central and South America.

*ETP Fishing Area 1* means the northern coastal portion of the ETP east of 117° W. longitude, north of 5° N. latitude, and west of 86° W. longitude.

*ETP Fishing Area 2* means the offshore area south of 14° N. latitude, north of 6° N. latitude, east of 150° W. longitude, and west of 123° W. longitude.

*ETP Fishing Area 3* means all other areas within the ETP not included in Fishing Areas 1 and 2.

*Facility* means, in the context specific to captive marine mammals: (1) One or more permanent primary enclosures used to hold marine mammals captive (i.e., pools, lagoons) and associated infrastructure (i.e., equipment and supplies necessary for the care and maintenance of marine mammals) where these enclosures are either located within the boundaries of a single contiguous parcel of land and water, or are grouped together within the same general area within which enclosure-to-enclosure transport is expected to be completed in less than one hour; or

(2) A traveling display/exhibit, where the enclosure(s) and associated infrastructure is transported together with the marine mammals.

*Feeding* is offering, giving, or attempting to give food or non-food items to marine mammals in the wild. It includes operating a vessel or providing other platforms from which feeding is conducted or supported. It does not include the routine discard of bycatch during fishing operations or the routine discharge of waste or fish byproducts from fish processing plants or other platforms if the discharge is otherwise legal and is incidental to operation of the activity.

*First exporter* means the person or company that first exports the fish or fish product, or, in the case of shipments that are subject to the labeling requirements of 50 CFR part 247 and that only contain fish harvested by vessels of the United States, the first seller of the fish or fish product.

*Fisheries Certificate of Origin* means NOAA Form 370, as described in 50 CFR 216.24(e)(3)(iii).

*Fishing season* means, for the purposes of §216.24(e), those sets made on trips that are completed between October 1 and September 30 of the following calendar year.

*FSA* means the Fur Seal Act of 1966, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 1151 *et seq.*

*Fur seal* means North Pacific fur seal, scientifically known as *Callorhinus ursinus*.

*Hard part* means any bone, tooth, baleen, treated pelt, or other part of a marine mammal that is relatively solid or durable.

*Harvesting nation* means the country under whose flag one or more fishing vessels are documented, or which has by formal declaration agreed to assert

jurisdiction over one or more certified charter vessels, from which vessel(s) fish are caught that are a part of any cargo or shipment of fish to be imported into the United States, regardless of any intervening transshipments.

*Humane* means the method of taking, import, export, or other activity which involves the least possible degree of pain and suffering practicable to the animal involved.

*Import* means to land on, bring into, or introduce into, or attempt to land on, bring into, or introduce into, any place subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, whether or not such landing, bringing, or introduction constitutes an importation within the Customs laws of the United States; except that, for the purpose of any ban issued under 16 U.S.C. 1371(a)(2) on the importation of fish or fish products, the definition of "import" in § 216.24(e)(1)(ii) shall apply.

*Incidental catch* means the taking of a marine mammal (1) because it is directly interfering with commercial fishing operations, or (2) as a consequence of the steps used to secure the fish in connection with commercial fishing operations: *Provided*, That a marine mammal so taken must immediately be returned to the sea with a minimum of injury and further, that the taking of a marine mammal, which otherwise meets the requirements of this definition shall not be considered an incidental catch of that mammal if it is used subsequently to assist in commercial fishing operations.

*Intentional purse seine set* means that a tuna purse seine vessel or associated vessels chase marine mammals and subsequently make a purse seine set.

*Intrusive research* means a procedure conducted for bona fide scientific research involving: A break in or cutting of the skin or equivalent, insertion of an instrument or material into an orifice, introduction of a substance or object into the animal's immediate environment that is likely either to be ingested or to contact and directly affect animal tissues (i.e., chemical substances), or a stimulus directed at animals that may involve a risk to health or welfare or that may have an impact on normal function or behavior (i.e., audio broadcasts directed at animals

that may affect behavior). For captive animals, this definition does not include:

(1) A procedure conducted by the professional staff of the holding facility or an attending veterinarian for purposes of animal husbandry, care, maintenance, or treatment, or a routine medical procedure that, in the reasonable judgment of the attending veterinarian, would not constitute a risk to the health or welfare of the captive animal; or

(2) A procedure involving either the introduction of a substance or object (i.e., as described in this definition) or a stimulus directed at animals that, in the reasonable judgment of the attending veterinarian, would not involve a risk to the health or welfare of the captive animal.

*Kill-per-set* means the number of small, toothed cetaceans (marine mammals) killed per purse seine set made involving marine mammals.

*Kill-per-ton* means the number of small toothed cetacean marine mammals killed per ton of yellowfin tuna caught in sets made on marine mammals.

*Label* means a display of written, printed, or graphic matter on or affixed to the immediate container of any article.

*Land* or *landing* means to begin offloading any fish, to arrive in port with the intention of offloading fish, or to cause any fish to be offloaded.

*Large-scale driftnet* means a gillnet that is composed of a panel or panels of webbing, or a series of such gillnets, with a total length of 2.5 kilometers or more that is used on the high seas and allowed to drift with the currents and winds for the purpose of harvesting fish by entangling the fish in the webbing of the net.

*Level A Harassment* means any act of pursuit, torment, or annoyance which has the potential to injure a marine mammal or marine mammal stock in the wild.

*Level B Harassment* means any act of pursuit, torment, or annoyance which 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 but which does not have the potential to injure a marine mammal or marine mammal stock in the wild.

*Marine environment* means the oceans and the seas, including estuarine and brackish waters.

*Marine mammal* means those specimens of the following orders, which are morphologically adapted to the marine environment, whether alive or dead, and any part thereof, including but not limited to, any raw, dressed or dyed fur or skin: Cetacea (whales and porpoises), Pinnipedia, other than walrus (seals and sea lions).

*MMPA* means the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*

*Native village or town* means any community, association, tribe, band, clan or group.

*Optimum sustainable population* is a population size which falls within a range from the population level of a given species or stock which is the largest supportable within the ecosystem to the population level that results in maximum net productivity. Maximum net productivity is the greatest net annual increment in population numbers or biomass resulting from additions to the population due to reproduction and/or growth less losses due to natural mortality.

*Pregnant* means pregnant near term.

*Pribilovians* means Indians, Aleuts, and Eskimos who live on the Pribilof Islands.

*Principal investigator* means the individual primarily responsible for the taking, importation, export, and any related activities conducted under a permit issued for scientific research or enhancement purposes.

*Public display* means an activity that provides opportunities for the public to view living marine mammals at a facility holding marine mammals captive.

*Purse seine set on common dolphins* means a purse seine set in which more than 50 percent of the marine mammals killed are common dolphins or, in sets with no dolphins killed, more than 50 percent of the dolphins captured are common dolphins.

*Regional Director* means the Director, Southwest Region, NMFS, 501 W. Ocean

Blvd., Long Beach, CA 90802, or his/her designee.

*Rehabilitation* means treatment of beached and stranded marine mammals taken under section 109(h)(1) of the MMPA or imported under section 109(h)(2) of the MMPA, with the intent of restoring the marine mammal's health and, if necessary, behavioral patterns.

*Secretary* shall mean the Secretary of Commerce or his authorized representative.

*Sexual harassment* means any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favors, or other verbal and physical conduct of a sexual nature which has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

*Soft part* means any marine mammal part that is not a hard part. Soft parts do not include urine or fecal material.

*South Pacific Ocean* means any waters of the Pacific Ocean that lie south of the equator.

*Stranded or stranded marine mammal* means a marine mammal specimen under the jurisdiction of the Secretary:

(1) If the specimen is dead, and is on a beach or shore, or is in the water within the Exclusive Economic Zone of the United States; or

(2) If the specimen is alive, and is on a beach or shore and is unable to return to the water, or is in the water within the Exclusive Economic Zone of the United States where the water is so shallow that the specimen is unable to return to its natural habitat under its own power.

*Subsistence* means the use of marine mammals taken by Alaskan Natives for food, clothing, shelter, heating, transportation, and other uses necessary to maintain the life of the taker or those who depend upon the taker to provide them with such subsistence.

*Subsistence uses* means the customary and traditional uses of fur seals taken by Pribilovians for direct personal or family consumption as food, shelter, fuel, clothing, tools or transportation; for the making and selling of handicraft articles out of nonedible byproducts of fur seals taken for personal or family consumption; and for barter, or

sharing for personal or family consumption. As used in this definition—

(1) *Family* means all persons related by blood, marriage, or adoption, or any person living within a household on a permanent basis.

(2) *Barter* means the exchange of fur seals or their parts, taken for subsistence uses—

(i) For other wildlife or fish or their parts, or

(ii) For other food or for nonedible items other than money if the exchange is of a limited and noncommercial nature.

*Take* means to harass, hunt, capture, collect, or kill, or attempt to harass, hunt, capture, collect, or kill any marine mammal. This includes, without limitation, any of the following: The collection of dead animals, or parts thereof; the restraint or detention of a marine mammal, no matter how temporary; tagging a marine mammal; the negligent or intentional operation of an aircraft or vessel, or the doing of any other negligent or intentional act which results in disturbing or molesting a marine mammal; and feeding or attempting to feed a marine mammal in the wild.

*Threatened species* means a species of marine mammal listed as “threatened” pursuant to the Endangered Species Act of 1973, 87 Stat. 884, Pub. L. 93-205.

*Trip* means a voyage starting when a vessel leaves port with all fish wells empty of fish and ending when a vessel unloads all of its fish.

*Tuna product* means any food product processed for retail sale and intended for human or animal consumption that contains an item listed in §216.24(e)(2)(i) or (ii), but does not include perishable items with a shelf life of less than 3 days.

*Wasteful manner* means any taking or method of taking which is likely to result in the killing of marine mammals beyond those needed for subsistence, subsistence uses, or for the making of authentic native articles of handicrafts and clothing, or which results in the waste of a substantial portion of the marine mammal and includes, without limitation, the employment of a method of taking which is not likely to assure the capture or killing of a marine mammal, or which is not immediately

followed by a reasonable effort to retrieve the marine mammal.

EDITORIAL NOTE: For FEDERAL REGISTER citations affecting §216.3, see the List of Sections Affected in the Finding Aids section of this volume.

#### §216.4 Other laws and regulations.

(a) *Federal*. Nothing in this part, nor any permit issued under authority of this part, shall be construed to relieve a person from any other requirements imposed by a statute or regulation of the United States, including any applicable statutes or regulations relating to wildlife and fisheries, health, quarantine, agriculture, or customs.

(b) *State laws or regulations*. See part 403 of this chapter.

[39 FR 1852, Jan. 15, 1974, as amended at 41 FR 36662, Aug. 31, 1976; 58 FR 65134, Dec. 13, 1993]

#### §216.5 Payment of penalty.

The respondent shall have 30 days from receipt of the final assessment decision within which to pay the penalty assessed. Upon a failure to pay the penalty, the Secretary may request the Attorney General to institute a civil action in the appropriate United States District Court to collect the penalty.

[39 FR 1852, Jan. 15, 1974. Redesignated at 46 FR 61652, Dec. 18, 1981]

#### §216.6 Forfeiture and return of seized property.

(a) Whenever any cargo or marine mammal or marine mammal product has been seized pursuant to section 107 of the MMPA, the Secretary shall expedite any proceedings commenced under these regulations.

(b) Whenever a civil penalty has been assessed by the Secretary under these regulations, any cargo, marine mammal, or marine mammal product seized pursuant to section 107 of the MMPA shall be subject to forfeiture. If respondent voluntarily forfeits any such seized property or the monetary value thereof without court proceedings, the Secretary may apply the value thereof, if any, as determined by the Secretary, toward payment of the civil penalty.

(c) Whenever a civil penalty has been assessed under these regulations, and whether or not such penalty has been

paid, the Secretary may request the Attorney General to institute a civil action in an appropriate United States District Court to compel forfeiture of such seized property or the monetary value thereof to the Secretary for disposition by him in such manner as he deems appropriate. If no judicial action to compel forfeiture is commenced within 30 days after final decision-making assessment of a civil penalty, pursuant to §216.60, such seized property shall immediately be returned to the respondent.

(d) If the final decision of the Secretary under these regulations is that respondent has committed no violation of the MMPA or of any permit or regulations issued thereunder, any marine mammal, marine mammal product, or other cargo seized from respondent in connection with the proceedings under these regulations, or the bond or other monetary value substituted therefor, shall immediately be returned to the respondent.

(e) If the Attorney General commences criminal proceedings pursuant to section 105(b) of the MMPA, and such proceedings result in a finding that the person accused is not guilty of a criminal violation of the MMPA, the Secretary may institute proceedings for the assessment of a civil penalty under this part: *Provided*, That if no such civil penalty proceedings have been commenced by the Secretary within 30 days following the final disposition of the criminal case, any property seized pursuant to section 107 of the MMPA shall be returned to the respondent.

(f) If any seized property is to be returned to the respondent, the Regional Director shall issue a letter authorizing such return. This letter shall be dispatched to the respondent by registered mail, return receipt requested, and shall identify the respondent, the seized property, and, if appropriate, the bailee of the seized property. It shall also provide that upon presentation of the letter and proper identification, the seized property is authorized to be released. All charges for storage, care, or handling of the seized property accruing 5 days or more after the date of the return receipt shall be for the account of the respondent: *Provided*, That

if it is the final decision of the Secretary under these regulations that the respondent has committed the alleged violation, all charges which have accrued for the storage, care, or handling of the seized property shall be for the account of the respondent.

[39 FR 1852, Jan. 15, 1974. Redesignated at 46 FR 61652, Dec. 18, 1981, and amended at 59 FR 50375, Oct. 3, 1994]

#### **§216.7 Holding and bonding.**

(a) Any marine mammal, marine mammal product, or other cargo seized pursuant to section 107 of the MMPA shall be delivered to the appropriate Regional Director of the National Marine Fisheries Service (see §201.2 of this title) or his designee, who shall either hold such seized property or arrange for the proper handling and care of such seized property.

(b) Any arrangement for the handling and care of seized property shall be in writing and shall state the compensation to be paid. Subpart F of 15 CFR part 904 contains additional procedures that govern seized property that is subject to forfeiture or has been forfeited under the MMPA.

[39 FR 1852, Jan. 15, 1974. Redesignated at 46 FR 61652, Dec. 18, 1981, and amended at 50 FR 12785, Apr. 1, 1985; 59 FR 50375, Oct. 3, 1994]

#### **§216.8 Enforcement officers.**

Enforcement Agents of the National Marine Fisheries Service shall enforce the provisions of the MMPA and may take any actions authorized by the MMPA with respect to enforcement. In addition, the Secretary may utilize, by agreement, the personnel, services, and facilities of any other Federal Agency for the purposes of enforcing this MMPA. Pursuant to the terms of section 107(b) of the MMPA, the Secretary may also designate officers and employees of any State or of any possession of the United States to enforce the provisions of this MMPA.

[39 FR 1852, Jan. 15, 1974. Redesignated at 46 FR 61652, Dec. 18, 1981, and amended at 59 FR 50375, Oct. 3, 1994]



**Subpart B—Prohibitions****§ 216.11 Prohibited taking.**

Except as otherwise provided in subparts C, D, and I of this part 216 or in part 228 or 229, it is unlawful for:

(a) Any person, vessel, or conveyance subject to the jurisdiction of the United States to take any marine mammal on the high seas, or

(b) Any person, vessel, or conveyance to take any marine mammal in waters or on lands under the jurisdiction of the United States, or

(c) Any person subject to the jurisdiction of the United States to take any marine mammal during the moratorium.

[39 FR 1852, Jan. 15, 1974, as amended at 47 FR 21254, May 18, 1982; 54 FR 21921, May 19, 1989]

**§ 216.12 Prohibited importation.**

(a) Except as otherwise provided in subparts C and D of this part 216, it is unlawful for any person to import any marine mammal or marine mammal product into the United States.

(b) Regardless of whether an importation is otherwise authorized pursuant to subparts C and D of this part 216, it is unlawful for any person to import into the United States any:

(1) Marine mammal:

(i) Taken in violation of the MMPA, or

(ii) Taken in another country in violation to the laws of that country;

(2) Any marine mammal product if

(i) The importation into the United States of the marine mammal from which such product is made would be unlawful under paragraph (b)(1) of this section, or

(ii) The sale in commerce of such product in the country of origin if the product is illegal.

(c) Except in accordance with an exception referred to in subpart C and §§ 216.31 (regarding scientific research permits only) and 216.32 of this part 216, it is unlawful to import into the United States any:

(1) Marine mammal which was pregnant at the time of taking.

(2) Marine mammal which was nursing at the time of taking, or less than 8 months old, whichever occurs later.

(3) Specimen of an endangered or threatened species of marine mammal.

(4) Specimen taken from a depleted species or stock of marine mammals, or

(5) Marine mammal taken in an inhumane manner.

(d) It is unlawful to import into the United States any fish, whether fresh, frozen, or otherwise prepared, if such fish was caught in a manner proscribed by the Secretary of Commerce for persons subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, whether or not any marine mammals were in fact taken incident to the catching of the fish.

[39 FR 1852, Jan. 15, 1974, as amended at 59 FR 50375, Oct. 3, 1994]

**§ 216.13 Prohibited uses, possession, transportation, sales, and permits.**

It is unlawful for:

(a) Any person to use any port, harbor or other place under the jurisdiction of the United States for any purpose in any way connected with a prohibited taking or an unlawful importation of any marine mammal or marine mammal product; or

(b) Any person subject to the jurisdiction of the United States to possess any marine mammal taken in violation of the MMPA or these regulations, or to transport, sell, or offer for sale any such marine mammal or any marine mammal product made from any such mammal.

(c) Any person subject to the jurisdiction of the United States to use in a commercial fishery, any means or method of fishing in contravention of regulations and limitations issued by the Secretary of Commerce for that fishery to achieve the purposes of this MMPA.

(d) Any person to violate any term, condition, or restriction of any permit issued by the Secretary.

[39 FR 1852, Jan. 15, 1974, as amended at 59 FR 50375, 50376, Oct. 3, 1994; 61 FR 21933, May 10, 1996]

**§ 216.14 Marine mammals taken before the MMPA.**

(a) Section 102(e) of the MMPA provides, in effect, that the MMPA shall not apply to any marine mammal taken prior to December 21, 1972, or to

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any marine mammal product, consisting of or composed in whole or in part of, any marine mammal taken before that date. This prior status of any marine mammal or marine mammal product may be established by submitting to the Director, National Marine Fisheries Service prior to, or at the time of importation, an affidavit containing the following:

- (1) The Affiant's name and address;
- (2) Identification of the Affiant;
- (3) A description of the marine mammals or marine mammal products which the Affiant desires to import;
- (4) A statement by the Affiant that, to the best of his knowledge and belief, the marine mammals involved in the application were taken prior to December 21, 1972;
- (5) A statement by the Affiant in the following language:

The foregoing is principally based on the attached exhibits which, to the best of my knowledge and belief, are complete, true and correct. I understand that this affidavit is being submitted for the purpose of inducing the Federal Government to permit the importation of—under the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1361 through 1407) and regulations promulgated thereunder, and that any false statements may subject me to the criminal penalties of 13 U.S.C. 1001, or to penalties under the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972.

(b) Either one of two exhibits shall be attached to such affidavit, and will contain either:

(1) Records or other available evidence showing that the product consists of or is composed in whole or in part of marine mammals taken prior to the effective date of the MMPA. Such records or other evidentiary material must include information on how, when, where, and by whom the animals were taken, what processing has taken place since taking, and the date and location of such processing; or

(2) A statement from a government agency of the country of origin exercising jurisdiction over marine mammals that any and all such mammals from which the products sought to be imported were derived were taken prior to December 21, 1972.

(c) No pre-Act marine mammal or pre-Act marine mammal product may be imported unless the requirements of this section have been fulfilled.

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(d) This section has no application to any marine mammal or marine mammal product intended to be imported pursuant to §§216.21, 216.31 or §216.32.

[39 FR 1852, Jan. 15, 1974, as amended at 59 FR 50375, 50376, Oct. 3, 1994]

### §216.15 Depleted species.

The following species or population stocks have been designated by the Assistant Administrator as depleted under the provisions of the MMPA.

(a) Hawaiian monk seal (*Monachus schauinslandi*).

(b) Bowhead whale (*Balaena mysticetus*).

(c) North Pacific fur seal (*Callorhinus ursinus*). Pribilof Island population.

(d) Bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*), coastal-migratory stock along the U.S. mid-Atlantic coast.

(e) Eastern spinner dolphin (*Stenella longirostris orientalis*).

(f) Northeastern offshore spotted dolphin (*Stenella attenuata*).

[53 FR 17899, May 18, 1988, as amended at 58 FR 17791, Apr. 6, 1993; 58 FR 45074, Aug. 26, 1993; 58 FR 58297, Nov. 1, 1993; 59 FR 50376, Oct. 3, 1994]

### §216.16 Prohibitions under the General Authorization for Level B harassment for scientific research.

It shall be unlawful for any person to:

(a) Provide false information in a letter of intent submitted pursuant to §216.45(b);

(b) Violate any term or condition imposed pursuant to §216.45(d).

[59 FR 50376, Oct. 3, 1994]

## Subpart C—General Exceptions

### §216.21 Actions permitted by international treaty, convention, or agreement.

The MMPA and these regulations shall not apply to the extent that they are inconsistent with the provisions of any international treaty, convention or agreement, or any statute implementing the same relating to the taking or importation of marine mammals or marine mammal products, which was existing and in force prior to December 21, 1972, and to which the United States was a party. Specifically, the

regulations in subpart B of this part and the provisions of the MMPA shall not apply to activities carried out pursuant to the Interim Convention on the Conservation of North Pacific Fur Seals signed at Washington on February 9, 1957, and the Fur Seal Act of 1966, 16 U.S.C. 1151 through 1187, as in each case, from time to time amended.

[39 FR 1852, Jan. 15, 1974, as amended at 59 FR 50376, Oct. 3, 1994]

**§ 216.22 Taking by state or local government officials.**

(a) A State or local government official or employee may take a marine mammal in the normal course of his duties as an official or employee, and no permit shall be required, if such taking:

(1) Is accomplished in a humane manner;

(2) Is for the protection or welfare of such mammal or for the protection of the public health or welfare; and

(3) Includes steps designed to insure return of such mammal, if not killed in the course of such taking, to its natural habitat. In addition, any such official or employee may, incidental to such taking, possess and transport, but not sell or offer for sale, such mammal and use any port, harbor, or other place under the jurisdiction of the United States. All steps reasonably practicable under the circumstances shall be taken by any such employee or official to prevent injury or death to the marine mammal as the result of such taking. Where the marine mammal in question is injured or sick, it shall be permissible to place it in temporary captivity until such time as it is able to be returned to its natural habitat. It shall be permissible to dispose of a carcass of a marine mammal taken in accordance with this subsection whether the animal is dead at the time of taking or dies subsequent thereto.

(b) Each taking permitted under this section shall be included in a written report to be submitted to the Secretary every six months beginning December 31, 1973. Unless otherwise permitted by the Secretary, the report shall contain a description of:

(1) The animal involved;

(2) The circumstances requiring the taking;

(3) The method of taking;

(4) The name and official position of the State official or employee involved;

(5) The disposition of the animal, including in cases where the animal has been retained in captivity, a description of the place and means of confinement and the measures taken for its maintenance and care; and

(6) Such other information as the Secretary may require.

(c) Salvage of dead stranded marine mammals or parts therefrom and subsequent transfer.

(1) *Salvage.* In the performance of official duties, a state or local government employee; an employee of the National Marine Fisheries Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, or any other Federal agency with jurisdiction and conservation responsibilities in marine shoreline areas; or a person authorized under 16 U.S.C. 1382(c) may take and salvage a marine mammal specimen if it is stranded and dead or it was stranded or rescued and died during treatment, transport, captivity or other rehabilitation subsequent to that stranding or distress if salvage is for the purpose of utilization in scientific research or for the purpose of maintenance in a properly curated, professionally accredited scientific collection.

(2) *Registration.* A person salvaging a dead marine mammal specimen under this section must register the salvage of the specimen with the appropriate Regional Office of the National Marine Fisheries Service within 30 days after the taking or death occurs. The registration must include:

(i) The name, address, and any official position of the individual engaged in the taking and salvage;

(ii) A description of the marine mammal specimen salvaged including the scientific and common names of the species;

(iii) A description of the parts salvaged;

(iv) The date and the location of the taking;

(v) Such other information as deemed necessary by the Assistant Administrator.

(3) *Identification and curation.* The Regional Director will assign a single unique number to each carcass, and the

parts thereof, that are salvaged under the provisions of this section. The person who salvaged the specimen may designate the number to be assigned. After this number is assigned, the person who salvaged the specimen must permanently mark that number on each separate hard part of that specimen and must affix that number with tags or labels to each soft part of that specimen or the containers in which that soft part is kept. Each specimen salvaged under this section must be curated in accordance with professional standards.

(4) *No sale or commercial trade.* No person may sell or trade for commercial purposes any marine mammal specimen salvaged under this section.

(5) *Transfer without prior authorization.* A person who salvages a marine mammal specimen under this section may transfer that specimen to another person if:

(i) The person transferring the marine mammal specimen does not receive remuneration for the specimen;

(ii) The person receiving the marine mammal specimen is an employee of the National Marine Fisheries Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, or any other Federal agency with jurisdiction and conservation responsibilities in marine shoreline areas; is a person authorized under 16 U.S.C. 1382(c); or is a person who has received prior authorization under paragraph (c)(6) of this section;

(iii) The marine mammal specimen is transferred for the purpose of scientific research, for the purpose of maintenance in a properly curated, professionally accredited scientific collection, or for educational purposes;

(iv) The unique number assigned by the National Marine Fisheries Service is on, marked on, or affixed to the marine mammal specimen or container; and

(v) Except as provided under paragraph (c)(8) of this section, the person transferring the marine mammal specimen notifies the appropriate Regional Office of the National Marine Fisheries Service of the transfer, including notification of the number of the specimen transferred and the person to whom the specimen was transferred, within 30 days after the transfer occurs.

(6) *Other transfers within the United States.* Except as provided under paragraphs (c)(5) and (c)(8) of this section, a person who salvages a marine mammal specimen, or who has received a marine mammal specimen under the provisions of this section, may not transfer that specimen to another person within the United States unless the Regional Director of the appropriate Regional Office of the National Marine Fisheries Service grants prior written authorization for the transfer. The Regional Director may grant authorization for the transfer if there is evidence that the conditions listed under paragraphs (c)(5)(i), (c)(5)(iii), and (c)(5)(iv) of this section are met.

(7) *Transfers outside of the United States.* A person who salvages a marine mammal specimen, or a person who has received a marine mammal specimen under the provisions of this section, may not transfer that specimen to a person outside of the United States unless the Assistant Administrator grants prior written authorization for the transfer. The Assistant Administrator may grant authorization for the transfer if there is evidence that the conditions listed under paragraphs (c)(5)(i), (c)(5)(iii), and (c)(5)(iv) of this section are met.

(8) *Exceptions to requirements for notification or prior authorization.* A person may transfer a marine mammal specimen salvaged under this section without the notification required in paragraph (c)(5)(v) of this section or the prior authorization required in paragraph (c)(6) of this section if:

(i) The transfer is a temporary transfer to a laboratory or research facility within the United States so that analyses can be performed for the person salvaging the specimen; or

(ii) The transfer is a loan of not more than 1 year to another professionally accredited scientific collection within the United States.

[39 FR 1852, Jan. 15, 1974, as amended at 56 FR 41307, Aug. 20, 1991]

#### § 216.23 Native exceptions.

(a) *Taking.* Notwithstanding the prohibitions of subpart B of this part 216, but subject to the restrictions contained in this section, any Indian, Aleut, or Eskimo who resides on the

coast of the North Pacific Ocean or the Arctic Ocean may take any marine mammal without a permit, if such taking is:

(1) By Alaskan Natives who reside in Alaska for subsistence, or

(2) For purposes of creating and selling authentic native articles of handicraft and clothing, and

(3) In each case, not accomplished in a wasteful manner.

(b) *Restrictions.* (1) No marine mammal taken for subsistence may be sold or otherwise transferred to any person other than an Alaskan Native or delivered, carried, transported, or shipped in interstate or foreign commerce, unless:

(i) It is being sent by an Alaskan Native directly or through a registered agent to a tannery registered under paragraph (c) of this section for the purpose of processing, and will be returned directly or through a registered agent to the Alaskan Native; or

(ii) It is sold or transferred to a registered agent in Alaska for resale or transfer to an Alaskan Native; or

(iii) It is an edible portion and it is sold in an Alaskan Native village or town.

(2) No marine mammal taken for purposes of creating and selling authentic native articles of handicraft and clothing may be sold or otherwise transferred to any person other than an Indian, Aleut or Eskimo, or delivered, carried, transported or shipped in interstate or foreign commerce, unless:

(i) It is being sent by an Indian, Aleut or Eskimo directly or through a registered agent to a tannery registered under paragraph (c) of this section for the purpose of processing, and will be returned directly or through a registered agent to the Indian, Aleut or Eskimo; or

(ii) It is sold or transferred to a registered agent for resale or transfer to an Indian, Aleut, or Eskimo; or

(iii) It has first been transformed into an authentic native article of handicraft or clothing; or

(iv) It is an edible portion and sold (A) in an Alaskan Native village or town, or (B) to an Alaskan Native for his consumption.

(c) Any tannery, or person who wishes to act as an agent, within the jurisdiction of the United States may apply

to the Director, National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Department of Commerce, Washington, DC 20235, for registration as a tannery or an agent which may possess and process marine mammal products for Indians, Aleuts, or Eskimos. The application shall include the following information:

(i) The name and address of the applicant;

(ii) A description of the applicant's procedures for receiving, storing, processing, and shipping materials;

(iii) A proposal for a system of book-keeping and/or inventory segregation by which the applicant could maintain accurate records of marine mammals received from Indians, Aleuts, or Eskimos pursuant to this section;

(iv) Such other information as the Secretary may request;

(v) A certification in the following language:

I hereby certify that the foregoing information is complete, true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief. I understand that this information is submitted for the purpose of obtaining the benefit of an exception under the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1361 through 1407) and regulations promulgated thereunder, and that any false statement may subject me to the criminal penalties of 18 U.S.C. 1001, or to penalties under the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972.

(vi) The signature of the applicant.

The sufficiency of the application shall be determined by the Secretary, and in that connection, he may waive any requirement for information, or require any elaboration or further information deemed necessary. The registration of a tannery or other agent shall be subject to such conditions as the Secretary prescribes, which may include, but are not limited to, provisions regarding records, inventory segregation, reports, and inspection. The Secretary may charge a reasonable fee for processing such applications, including an appropriate apportionment of overhead and administrative expenses of the Department of Commerce.

(d) Notwithstanding the preceding provisions of this section, whenever, under the MMPA, the Secretary determines any species of stock of marine mammals to be depleted, he may prescribe regulations pursuant to section

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103 of the MMPA upon the taking of such marine animals by any Indian, Aleut, or Eskimo and, after promulgation of such regulations, all takings of such marine mammals shall conform to such regulations.

[39 FR 1852, Jan. 15, 1974, as amended at 59 FR 50376, Oct. 3, 1994]

### **§ 216.24 Taking and related acts incidental to commercial fishing operations.**

NOTE TO § 216.24: The provisions of 50 CFR part 229, rather than § 216.24, will govern the incidental taking of marine mammals in the course of commercial fishing operations by persons using vessels of the United States, other than vessels used in the eastern tropical Pacific yellowfin tuna purse seine fishery, and vessels which have valid fishing permits issued in accordance with section 204(b) of the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1824(b)). Other commercial fisheries remain subject to regulations under § 216.24.

(a)(1) No marine mammals may be taken in the course of a commercial fishing operation unless: The taking constitutes an incidental catch as defined in § 216.3, a general permit and certificate(s) of inclusion have been obtained in accordance with these regulations and such taking is not in violation of such permit, certificate(s), and regulations.

(2)(i) It is unlawful for any person using a Class I (400 short tons (362.8 metric tons) carrying capacity or less) or Class II (greater than 400 short tons (362.8 metric tons) carrying capacity, built before 1961) U.S. purse seine fishing vessel on a fishing involving the utilization of purse seines to capture yellowfin tuna, that is not operating under a Category 2 general permit and certificate(s) of inclusion, to carry more than two speedboats if any part of its fishing trip is in the Pacific Ocean area described in the General Permit for gear Category 2 operations.

(ii) It is unlawful for any person using a Class III (greater than 400 short tons (362.8 metric tons) carrying capacity, built after 1960) U.S. purse seine fishing vessel that does not have and operate under a valid operator and vessel certificate of inclusion, to catch, possess, or land tuna from a fishing trip that includes the Pacific Ocean

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area described in the General Permit for gear Category 2 operations.

(iii) It is unlawful for any person subject to the jurisdiction of the United States to receive, purchase, or possess tuna caught, possessed, or landed in violation of paragraph (a)(2)(ii) of this section.

(iv) It is unlawful for a person subject to the jurisdiction of the United States intentionally to deploy a purse seine net on, or to encircle, dolphins from a vessel operating in the ETP when the DML assigned to that vessel has been reached, or when there is not a DML assigned to that vessel.

(3) Upon written request in advance of entering the General Permit area, the limitation in (a)(2) may be waived by the Director, Southwest Region for the purpose of allowing transit through the General Permit area. The waiver will provide in writing the terms and conditions under which the vessel must operate, including a requirement to report by radio to the Director, Southwest Region the vessel's date of exit from or subsequent entry to the permit area, in order to transit the area with more than two speedboats.

(b) [Reserved]

(c) *Certificates of inclusion*—(1) *Vessel certificates of inclusion*. The owner or managing owner of a vessel that participates in commercial fishing operations under the ATA permit must hold a valid vessel certificate of inclusion. Such certificates are not transferable and must be renewed annually. If a vessel certificate holder surrenders his/her certificate to the Director, Southwest Region, the certificate shall not be returned nor shall a new certificate be issued before the end of the calendar year. This provision does not apply when a change of vessel ownership occurs.

(2) *Operator's certificate of inclusion*. The person in charge of and actually controlling fishing operations (hereinafter referred to as the operator) on a vessel engaged in commercial fishing operations under the ATA permit, must hold a valid operator's certificate of inclusion. Such certificates are not transferable, and must be renewed annually. In order to receive a certificate of inclusion, the operator must

have satisfactorily completed all required training.

(3) A vessel certificate issued pursuant to paragraph (c)(1) of this section must be on board the vessel while it is engaged in fishing operations and the operator's certificate issued pursuant to paragraph (c)(2) of this section must be in the possession of the operator to whom it was issued. Certificates must be shown upon request to an enforcement agent or other National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) designated agent. Vessels and operators at sea on a fishing trip on the expiration date of their certificate of inclusion, to whom or to which a certificate of inclusion for the next year has been issued, may take marine mammals under the terms of the new certificate. A vessel owner or operator is obligated to obtain or place the new certificate on board, as appropriate, when the vessel next returns to port.

(4) *Applications.* Owners or managing owners of purse seine vessels should make application for vessel certificates of inclusion to the Director, Southwest Region. Applications for vessel certificates of inclusion must contain:

- (i) The name of the vessel that is to appear on the certificate(s) of inclusion;
- (ii) The category of the general permit under which the applicant wishes to be included;
- (iii) The species of fish sought and general area of operations;
- (iv) The identity of state and local commercial fishing licenses, if applicable, under which vessel operations are conducted, and dates of expiration;
- (v) The name of the operator and date of training, if applicable; and
- (vi) The name and signature of the applicant, whether owner or managing owner, address, and if applicable, the organization acting on behalf of the vessel.

(5) *Fees.* (i) Applications for certificates of inclusion under paragraph (c)(1) of this section must include a fee of \$200.00 for each vessel named in the application, unless the applicant's income is below Federal poverty guidelines and the applicant shows in the application that his/her income is below such guidelines, in which case a fee of \$20.00 must be included.

(ii) The Assistant Administrator may change the amount of the fee required at any time a different fee is determined to be reasonable, and notification of such change shall be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER.

(6) The Director, Southwest Region shall determine the adequacy and completeness of applications, and upon said determination that such applications are adequate and complete, shall approve such applications and issue the certificate(s).

(7) Failure to comply with provisions of the ATA permit, certificates of inclusion, or these regulations may lead to suspension, revocation, modification, or denial of a certificate of inclusion. It may also subject the certificate holder, vessel, vessel owner, operator, or master to the penalties provided under the MMPA. Procedures governing permit sanctions and denials are found at subpart D of 15 CFR part 904.

(8) By using an operator or vessel certificate of inclusion under the ATA permit, the certificate holder authorizes the release to NMFS of all data collected by observers aboard purse seine vessels during fishing trips under the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission observer program or any other international observer program in which the United States may participate. The certificate holder must furnish the international observer program all release forms required to provide the observer data to NMFS. Data obtained under such releases will be used for the same purposes as data collected directly by observers placed by the NMFS and will be subject to the same standards of confidentiality.

(d) Terms and conditions of certificates under general permits shall include, but are not limited to the following:

(1) [Reserved]

(2) *Encircling gear, purse seining involving the intentional taking of marine mammals—(i) Quotas:*

(A) A certificated vessel may take marine mammals only if the taking is an incidental occurrence in the course of normal commercial tuna purse seine fishing operations, and the fishing operations are under the immediate direction of a person who is the holder of

a valid operator's certificate of inclusion, subject to the following conditions:

(1)-(2) [Reserved]

(3) No purse seine net may be deployed on or used to encircle any school of dolphins in which any eastern spinner dolphin (*Stenella longirostris*), coastal spotted dolphin (*Stenella attenuata*), or, in the area from 40° N. lat. to 5° N. lat. and from 120° W. long. to the coastline of Central and South America, any offshore spotted dolphin (*Stenella attenuata*), are observed in the school prior to the release of the net skiff.

(B) The incidental mortality of marine mammals permitted under the general permit for each category will be monitored according to the methodology published in the FEDERAL REGISTER. The Assistant Administrator shall determine on the basis of the evidence available to him the date upon which the allowable quotas will be reached or exceeded. Notice of the Assistant Administrator's determination shall be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER not less than seven days prior to the effective date.

(C) Except for the coastal spotted dolphin stock and the eastern spinner dolphin stock, if at the time the net skiff attached to the net is released from the vessel at the start of a set, and species or stocks that are prohibited from being taken are not reasonably observable, the fact that individuals of that species or stock are subsequently taken will not be cause for issuance of a notice of violation provided that all procedures required by the applicable regulations have been followed.

(D) The general permit is valid until surrendered by the permit holder or suspended or terminated by the Assistant Administrator provided the permittee and certificate holders under this part continue to use the best marine mammal safety techniques and equipment that are economically and technologically practicable. The Assistant Administrator may, upon receipt of new information which in his opinion is sufficient to require modification of the general permit or regulations, propose to modify such after consultation with the Marine Mammal Commission.

These modifications must be consistent with and necessary to carry out the purposes of the MMPA. Any modifications proposed by the Assistant Administrator involving changes in the quotas will include the statements required by section 103(d) of the MMPA. Modifications will be proposed in the FEDERAL REGISTER and a public comment period will be allowed. At the request of any interested person within 15 days after publication of the proposed modification in the FEDERAL REGISTER, the Assistant Administrator may hold a public hearing to receive and evaluate evidence in those circumstances where he has determined it to be consistent with and necessary to carry out the purposes of the MMPA. Such request may be for a formal hearing on the record before an Administrative Law Judge. Within 10 days after receipt of the request for a public hearing, the Assistant Administrator will provide the requesting party or parties with his decision. If a request is denied, the Assistant Administrator will state the reasons for the denial. Within 10 days after receipt of a decision denying a request for a formal hearing, the requesting person may file a written notice of appeal with the Administrator. Based upon the evidence presented in the notice, the Administrator will render a decision within 20 days from receipt of the notice.

(ii) *General conditions:* (A) Marine mammals incidentally taken must be immediately returned to the environment where captured without further injury. The operators of purse seine vessels must take every precaution to refrain from causing or permitting incidental mortality or serious injury of marine mammals. Live marine mammals must not be brailed or hoisted onto the deck during ortza retrieval.

(B) Operators may take such steps as are necessary to protect their gear or person from damage or threat of personal injury. However, all marine mammals taken in the course of commercial fishing operations shall be subject to the definition of "incidental catch" in §216.3 of this part and may not be retained except where a specific permit has been obtained authorizing the retention.



(C) The vessel certificate holder shall notify the Director, Southwest Region of any change of vessel operator within at least 48 hours prior to departing on the next scheduled trip.

(iii) *Reporting requirements:* In accordance with §216.24(f) of these regulations, the following specific reporting procedures shall be required:

(A) The vessel certificate holder of each certificated vessel, who has been notified via certified letter from NMFS that his/her vessel is required to carry an observer, shall notify the Director, Southwest Region at least 5 days in advance of the vessel's departure on a fishing voyage to allow for observer placement. After a fishing voyage is initiated, the vessel is obligated to carry an observer until the vessel returns to port and one of the following conditions is met:

(1) Unloads more than 400 tons of any species of tuna; or

(2) Unloads any amount of any species of tuna equivalent to one half of the vessel's carrying capacity; or

(3) Unloads its tuna catch after 40 days or more at sea from the date of departure.

Further, the Director, Southwest Region, may consider special circumstances for exemptions to this definition, provided written requests clearly describing the circumstances are received prior to the termination or the initiation of a fishing voyage. A response to the written request will be made by the Director, Southwest Region within five (5) days after receipt of the request. A vessel whose vessel certificate holder has failed to comply with the provisions of this section may not engage in fishing operations for which a general permit is required.

(B) [Reserved]

(C) The Director, Southwest Region, will provide to the public, periodic quota status reports summarizing the estimated incidental porpoise mortality by U.S. vessels of individual species and stock.

(iv) A vessel having a vessel certificate issued under paragraph (c)(1) may not engage in fishing operations for which a general permit is required unless it is equipped with a porpoise safety panel in its purse seine, and has and

uses the other required gear, equipment, and procedures.

(A) *Class I and II Vessels:* For Class I purse seiners (400 short tons carrying capacity or less) and for Class II purse seiners (greater than 400 short tons carrying capacity, built before 1961), the porpoise safety panel must be a minimum of 100 fathoms in length (as measured before installation), except that the minimum length of the panel in nets deeper than 10 strips must be determined at a ratio of 10 fathoms in length for each strip that the net is deep. It must be installed so as to protect the perimeter of the backdown area. The perimeter of the backdown area is the length of the corkline which begins at the outboard end of the last bow bunch pulled and continues to at least two-thirds the distance from the backdown channel apex to the stern tiedown point. The porpoise safety panel must consist of small mesh webbing not to exceed 1¼" stretch mesh, extending from the corkline downward to a minimum depth equivalent to one strip of 100 meshes of 4¼" stretch mesh webbing. In addition, at least a 20-fathom length of corkline must be free from bunchlines at the apex of the backdown channel.

(B) *Class III Vessels:* For Class III purse seiners (greater than 400 short tons carrying capacity, built after 1960), the porpoise safety panel must be a minimum of 180 fathoms in length (as measured before installation), except that the minimum length of the panel in nets deeper than 18 strips must be determined in a ratio of 10 fathoms in length for each strip of net depth. It must be installed so as to protect the perimeter of the backdown area. The perimeter of the backdown area is the length of corkline which begins at the outboard end of the last bowbunch pulled and continues to at least two-thirds the distance from the backdown channel apex to the stern tiedown point. The porpoise safety panel must consist of small mesh webbing not to exceed 1¼" stretch mesh extending downward from the corkline and, if present, the base of the porpoise apron to a minimum depth equivalent to two strips of 100 meshes of 4¼" stretch mesh webbing. In addition, at least a 20-fathom length of corkline must be

free from bunchlines at the apex of the backdown channel.

(C) *Porpoise safety panel markers:* Each end of the porpoise safety panel and porpoise apron shall be identified with an easily distinguishable marker.

(D) *Porpoise safety panel hand holds:* Throughout the length of the corkline under which the porpoise safety panel and porpoise apron are located, hand hold openings are to be secured so that the insertion of a 1 $\frac{3}{8}$ " diameter cylindrical-shaped object meets resistance.

(E) *Porpoise safety panel corkline hangings:* Throughout the length of the corkline under which the porpoise safety panel and porpoise apron are located, corkline hangings shall be inspected by the vessel operator following each trip. Hangings found to have loosened to the extent that a cylindrical object with a 1 $\frac{3}{8}$ " diameter will not meet resistance when inserted between the cork and corkline hangings, must be tightened so that a cylindrical object with a 1 $\frac{3}{8}$ " diameter cannot be inserted.

(F) *Speedboats:* Certificated vessels engaged in fishing operations involving setting on marine mammals shall carry a minimum of two speedboats in operating condition. All speedboats carried aboard purse seine vessels and in operating condition shall be rigged with towing bridles and tows. Speedboat hoisting bridles shall not be substituted for towing bridles.

(G) *Raft:* A raft suitable to be used as a porpoise observation-and-rescue platform shall be carried on all certificated vessels.

(H) *Facemask and snorkel, or viewbox:* At least two facemasks and snorkels, or viewboxes, must be carried on all certificated vessels.

(I) *Lights:* All certificated vessels shall be equipped by July 1, 1986, with lights capable of producing a minimum of 140,000 lumens of output for use in darkness to ensure sufficient light to observe that procedures for porpoise release are carried out and to monitor incidental porpoise mortality.

(v) *Vessel inspection:* (A) *Annual:* At least once during each calendar year, purse seine nets and other gear and equipment required by these regulations shall be made available for inspection by an authorized National Ma-

rine Fisheries Service Inspector as specified by the Director, Southwest Region.

(B) *Reinspection:* Purse seine nets and other gear and equipment required by these regulations shall be made available for reinspection by an authorized National Marine Fisheries Service Inspector as specified by the Director, Southwest Region. The vessel certificate holder shall notify the Director, Southwest Region of any net modification at least 5 days prior to departure of the vessel in order to determine whether a reinspection or trial set is required.

(C) Upon failure to pass an inspection or reinspection, a vessel having a vessel certificate of inclusion issued under paragraph (c)(1) may not engage in fishing operations for which a general permit is required until the deficiencies in gear or equipment are corrected as required by an authorized National Marine Fisheries Service inspector.

(vi) *Operator training requirements.* All operators shall maintain proficiency sufficient to perform the procedures required herein, and must attend and satisfactorily complete a formal training session conducted under the auspices of the National Marine Fisheries Service in order to obtain their certificate of inclusion. At the training session an attendee shall be instructed concerning the provisions of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, the regulations promulgated pursuant to the MMPA, and the fishing gear and techniques which are required or will contribute to reducing serious injury and mortality of porpoise incidental to purse seining for tuna. Operators who have received a written certificate of satisfactory completion of training and who possess a current or previous calendar year certificate of inclusion will not be required to attend additional formal training sessions unless there are substantial changes in the MMPA, the regulations, or the required fishing gear and techniques. Additional training may be required for any operator who is found by the Director, Southwest Region, to lack proficiency in the procedures required.

(vii) *Marine mammal release requirements:* All operators shall use the following procedures during all sets involving the incidental taking of marine mammals in association with the capture and landing of tuna.

(A) *Backdown procedure:* Backdown shall be performed following a purse seine set in which marine mammals are captured in the course of catching and landing tuna, and shall be continued until it is no longer possible to remove live marine mammals from the net by this procedure. Thereafter, other release procedures required shall be continued until all live animals have been released from the net.

(B) *Prohibited use of sharp or pointed instrument:* The use of a sharp or pointed instrument to remove any marine mammal from the net is prohibited.

(C) *Sundown sets prohibited.* On every set encircling porpoise, the backdown procedure must be completed and rolling of the net to sack-up must be begun before one-half hour after sundown, except as provided below. For the purpose of this section, *sundown* is defined as the time at which the upper edge of the sun disappears below the horizon or, if view of the sun is obscured, the local time of sunset calculated from tables developed by the U.S. Naval Observatory. A *sundown set* is a set in which the backdown procedure has not been completed and rolling the net to sack-up has not begun within one-half hour after sundown. Should a set extend beyond one-half hour after sundown, the operator must use the required marine mammal release procedures including the use of the high intensity lighting system.

(I) A certificated operator may obtain an initial waiver from this prohibition, for trips with an observer, by establishing to the satisfaction of the Director, Southwest Region, NMFS, based upon NMFS and Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) observer records, that the operator's average kill of marine mammals per set in sundown sets involving marine mammals was 3.01 marine mammals or fewer.

(j) The application must include the following:

(A) Name of the operator as it appears on the certificate of inclusion;

(B) The dates of all observed trips any part of which occurred since July 1, 1986 and observed trips before that date, if necessary to include a minimum of three observed sundown sets;

(C) Names of the vessels operated during those trips;

(D) The number of marine mammals killed in sundown sets and the number of sundown sets involving marine mammals;

(E) Detailed description of the circumstances that support any request that the mortality associated with a particular sundown set be excluded from consideration; and

(F) The operator's signature or the signature of an individual authorized by the operator to make the application in the operator's absence.

(ii) All sundown sets since July 1, 1986 will be considered for this determination, except that the Director, Southwest Region will exclude one sundown set from each twelve month period from the calculations of average kill if the operator establishes to the satisfaction of the Director, Southwest Region that the kill in that sundown set was due to an unforeseeable equipment malfunction that could not have been avoided by reasonable diligence in operating or maintaining the vessel.

(iii) An operator must have a minimum of five observed sundown sets for the Director, Southwest Region to consider in determining whether or not the operator qualifies for an exemption. If an operator does not have five observed sundown sets since July 1, 1986, the Director, Southwest Region will consider records from observed trips before that date, starting with the most recent observed trip during which a sundown set was made and reviewing as many trips as necessary to obtain at least five sundown sets for consideration.

(2) An operator fishing under an exemption from the sundown set prohibition must follow the marine mammal release requirements, including the use of high intensity lights for sets that continue one-half hour past sundown.

(3) An operator exemption is valid for one calendar year only on trips carrying a NMFS or IATTC observer and expires on December 31, unless renewed by the Director, Southwest Region.

(4) An exemption will be reviewed annually between November 1 and December 15 and the exemption will not be renewed if the operator's average mortality in sundown sets during trips completed in the previous twelve month period ending November 1 exceeds the United States fleet's average mortality rate in daylight sets for all of the observed trips completed in the same period.

(5) An operator who is notified that his or her exemption will not be renewed, or who anticipates not getting renewed, may petition the Director, Southwest Region in writing to reinstate the exemption based on excluding from the calculations one set where an unforeseeable equipment malfunction caused mortality in a sundown set that could not have been avoided by reasonable diligence in operating or maintaining the vessel. The Director, Southwest Region will reinstate the exemption if the evidence supports excluding the set and if the resulting recalculation of the operator's performance meets the standard required by these regulations.

(D) *Porpoise Safety Panel:* During backdown, the porpoise safety panel must be positioned so that it protects the perimeter of the backdown area. The perimeter of the backdown area is the length of corkline which begins at the outboard end of the last bow bunch pulled and continues to at least two-thirds the distance from the backdown channel apex to the stern tiedown point. Any super apron must be positioned at the apex of the backdown channel.

(E) *Use of explosive devices:* The use of explosive devices is prohibited in all tuna purse seine operations that involve marine mammals.

(viii) *Experimental fishing operations:* The Assistant Administrator may authorize experimental fishing operations and may waive, as appropriate, any requirements within § 216.24(d)(2), except quotas on the incidental kill of marine mammals and the prohibition on setting nets on pure schools of certain porpoise species.

(A) A vessel certificate holder may apply for an experimental fishing operation waiver by submitting the following information to the Assistant Ad-

ministrator no less than 90 days before the intended date the proposed operation is intended to begin:

(1) Name(s) of the vessel(s) and the vessel certificate holder(s) to participate;

(2) A statement of the specific vessel gear and equipment or procedural requirement to be exempted and why such an exemption is necessary to conduct the experiment;

(3) A description of how the proposed modification to the gear or procedures is expected to reduce incidental mortalities or serious injury of marine mammals;

(4) A description of the applicability of this modification to other purse seine vessels;

(5) Planned design, time, duration, and general area of the experimental operation;

(6) Name(s) of the certificated operator(s) of the vessel(s) during the experiment;

(7) A statement of the qualifications of the individual or company doing the analysis of the research.

(B) The Assistant Administrator will acknowledge receipt of the application and, upon determining that it is complete, publish notice in the FEDERAL REGISTER summarizing the application, making the full application available for inspection and inviting comments for a minimum period of thirty days from the date of publication.

(C) The Assistant Administrator, after considering the information identified in paragraph (d)(2)(viii)(A) of this section and the comments received, will deny the application giving the reasons for denial or issue a permit to conduct the experiment including restrictions and conditions as deemed appropriate.

(D) The permit for an experimental fishing operation will be valid only for the vessels and operators named in the permit, for the time period and areas specified, for trips carrying an observer assigned by the NMFS, and when all the terms and conditions of the permit are met.

(E) The Assistant Administrator may suspend or revoke an experimental fishing permit by written notice to the permit holder if the terms and conditions of the permit or the provisions of

the regulations are not followed, after providing an opportunity for the permit holder to discuss the proposed suspension or revocation.

(ix) *Operator Certificate of Inclusion Holder Performance Requirements.* (A) The certificate of inclusion of any operator who makes one or more purse seine sets on marine mammals resulting in an average kill-per-set for a fishing trip which exceeds 26.30 marine mammals is suspended. Such suspension shall be effective upon notification from the Director, Southwest Region and shall be for a period of one year. If the operator exceeds the 26.30 marine mammals killed per set average for a subsequent trip within three years of reinstatement, the certificate is suspended. Such suspension shall be effective upon notification by the Director, Southwest Region and shall be for a period of one year. If the operator's average mortality rate exceeds 26.30 marine mammals kill-per-set on a subsequent trip within five years of the second reinstatement, the certificate is revoked. The revocation shall be effective upon notification by the Director, Southwest Region and shall be permanent. An operator who is subject to a suspension or revocation under this paragraph may petition the Director, Southwest Region to review the operator's marine mammal mortality history. The Director, Southwest Region may reinstate the operator's certificate if the operator demonstrates that the operator has not exceeded a kill-per-set of 3.89 marine mammals during any of the eight consecutive observed trips immediately preceding the trip which caused the suspension. However, that trip will be considered as a single trip exceeding a kill-per-set of 3.89 marine mammals and subject to the conditions described in paragraph (d)(2)(ix)(F) of this section. The Director, Southwest Region may exclude from the mortality calculation for a trip, those purse seine sets in which marine mammal mortality resulted from an unavoidable and unforeseeable equipment breakdown. The mortality rate calculated after exclusion of a set or sets under this paragraph will determine the action taken under this performance evaluation system.

(B) Fishing trips with five or fewer sets on marine mammals and an average kill-per-set less than or equal to 26.30 marine mammals are not subject to further action under the operator performance system. Such trips neither count as trips meeting the performance standard nor count as trips failing to meet the performance standard for the purpose of determining actions based on performance in consecutive fishing trips.

(C) Fishing trips with more than five sets on marine mammals resulting in an average kill-per-set of not greater than 26.30 marine mammals are subject to review under the operator performance system as follows:

(1) The operator's kill of marine mammals in purse seine sets on marine mammals will be determined from observer records.

(2) The kill-per-set will be determined by dividing the total kill of marine mammals by the number of sets involving marine mammals during the fishing trip.

(3) If the calculated kill-per-set for the trip is equal to or less than 3.89 marine mammals, the operator has met the performance standard and is not subject to further action under the performance system based on the current trip.

(4) If the calculated kill-per-set for the trip exceeds 3.89 marine mammals, the operator failed to meet the mortality performance standard and is subject to further action under the performance system.

(D) The Director, Southwest Region may exclude from the mortality calculation for a trip, those purse seine sets in which marine mammal mortality resulted from an unavoidable and unforeseeable equipment breakdown. Should exclusion of a set or sets cause the operator's performance to fall within the standard performance, that trip will not be counted as a trip for the purposes of the performance evaluation system.

(E) An operator shall not serve as a certificated operator until the Director, Southwest Region has determined under this subpart and notified the operator that the operator's marine mammal mortality rate performance met or failed to meet the applicable

performance standard on the previous observed trip. The Director, Southwest Region will make the determination within five days (excluding Saturdays, Sundays and Federal holidays) after receiving the observer data from the trip.

(F) An operator whose average marine mammal mortality rate exceeds 3.89 kill-per-set for a trip must have observer data and other pertinent records reviewed by the Director, Southwest Region and the Porpoise Rescue Foundation for the purpose of determining the causes of higher than acceptable mortality, must participate in supplemental marine mammal safety training as ordered by the Director, Southwest Region and must comply with actions for reducing marine mammal mortality which may be ordered by the Director, Southwest Region. The operator must carry an observer on the next trip for which he serves as the certificated operator. If the Director, Southwest Region determines that the required training or other ordered action has not been completed satisfactorily or is refused, the Director, Southwest Region will suspend the operator's certificate of inclusion for one year.

(G) An operator whose average marine mammal mortality rate exceeds 3.89 marine mammals killed per set on two consecutive trips or on three trips ending within a period of twenty-four months or on three trips within eight consecutive trips must have observer data and other pertinent records reviewed by the Director, Southwest Region and the Porpoise Rescue Foundation for the purpose of determining the causes of higher than acceptable mortality, must participate in supplemental marine mammal safety training as ordered by the Director, Southwest Region and must comply with actions for reducing marine mammal mortality which may be ordered by the Director, Southwest Region. The operator must carry an expert fisherman (*i.e.*, an experienced vessel operator with a history of low dolphin mortality), if required to do so by the Director, Southwest Region, to assist in perfecting marine mammal safety techniques, and must also carry an observer on the next trip for which he serves as the certificated operator. The

selection of the expert fisherman will be provided by the General Permit holder or the Porpoise Rescue Foundation and subject to the approval of the Director, Southwest Region. If the Director, Southwest Region determines that the required training or other ordered action has not been completed satisfactorily or is refused, the Director, Southwest Region will suspend the operator's certificate of inclusion for one year.

(H) The operator certificate of inclusion or an operator whose average marine mammal mortality rate exceeds 3.89 kill-per-set on three *consecutive* trips, or on any four trips (of which no more than two are consecutive) completed within a period of twenty-four months or on four trips (of which no more than two are consecutive) within eight consecutively observed trips, is suspended upon notification to the operator from the Director, Southwest Region.

(I) Following a suspension and a reinstatement of a certification of inclusion, the operator certificate of inclusion is suspended for any operator whose average marine mammal mortality rate exceeds 3.89 marine mammals killed per set on any subsequent trip as required under the criteria for a suspension established in paragraph (d)(2)(ix)(H) of this section. Under this paragraph, trips completed by the operator prior to suspension will be carried over and counted along with trips completed subsequent to the suspension. Such suspension shall be effective upon notification from the Director, Southwest Region and shall be for a period of one year. For purposes of this paragraph only, each suspension under paragraph (d)(2)(ix)(A) of this section will be considered equivalent to and counted as three consecutive trips exceeding the trip kill rate of 3.89 marine mammals killed per set.

(J) An operator may appeal suspension of revocation of a certificate of inclusion under paragraphs (d)(2)(ix)(A), (d)(2)(ix)(H), or (d)(2)(ix)(I) of this section to the Assistant Administrator. Appeals must be filed in writing within 30 days of suspension or revocation and must contain a statement setting forth the basis for the appeal. Appeals must be filed with the Director, Southwest

Region. The appeal may be presented at the option of the operator at a hearing before a person appointed by the Assistant Administrator to hear the appeal. The Assistant Administrator will determine, based upon the record, including any record developed at a hearing, if the suspension or revocation is supported under the criteria set forth in these regulations. The decision of the Assistant Administrator will be the final decision of the Department of Commerce.

(K) An operator must carry an observer on the operator's first trip after a suspension under this performance system has expired. An operator must also participate in supplemental marine mammal safety training and comply with actions for reducing marine mammal mortality as ordered by the Director, Southwest Region before making another trip as a certified operator.

(L) A person obtaining an operator certificate of inclusion for the first time must carry an observer on the operator's first trip.

(x) *Vessel Certificate of Inclusion Holder Performance Requirements*—(A) vessel certificate of inclusion holder desiring a DML for the following year must provide to the Director, Southwest Region, NMFS, 501 W. Ocean Blvd., Suite 4200, Long Beach, CA 90802-4213, by September 1, the name of the purse seine vessel(s) of carrying capacity greater than 400 short tons (362.8 mt) that the owner thinks will intentionally deploy purse seine fishing nets in the ETP to encircle dolphins in an effort to capture tuna during that year. NMFS will forward the list of purse seine vessels to the Director of the IATTC on or before October 1, or as required by the IATTC, for assignment of a DML for the following year.

(B) Each vessel certificate of inclusion holder that desires a DML for the period July 1 to December 31, for a vessel that has not previously had a DML assigned for the year, must provide to the Director, Southwest Region, NMFS, 501 W. Ocean Blvd., Suite 4200, Long Beach, CA 90802-4213, by March 15, the name of the purse seine vessel(s) of carrying capacity greater than 400 short tons (362.8 mt) that the owner thinks will intentionally deploy purse

seine fishing nets in the ETP to encircle dolphins in an effort to capture tuna during the period. NMFS will forward the list of purse seine vessels to the Director of the IATTC on or before April 1, or as required by the IATTC, for assignment of a DML for the 6-month period July 1 to December 31. Under the Agreement adopted at the Annual Meeting of the IATTC June 16-18, 1992, the DML shall be assigned from the unutilized pool of DMLs described under paragraph (d)(2)(x)(D) of this section, divided among the applicants for the 6-month period, and shall not exceed 50 percent of the DML assigned to a vessel in the fishery with a DML for the entire year.

(C)(1) NMFS will notify vessel owners of the DML assigned for each vessel for the following year as determined by the IATTC.

(2) NMFS may adjust the DMLs, either upward or downward with 15 percent of the original DML, except that the adjusted DMLs for the U.S. fleet will not exceed the original total of the DMLs for the U.S. fleet as assigned by the IATTC. All adjustments shall be made prior to December 1, and NMFS shall notify the IATTC prior to December 15. DMLs as assigned on December 1 will be applicable to the following year.

(3) NMFS may make an adjustment of a vessel's DMLs if it will further scientific or technological advancement in the protection of marine mammals in the fishery, or if the past performance of the vessel indicates that the protection or use of the yellowfin tuna stocks or marine mammals is best served by the adjustment, within the mandates of the MMPA. Experimental fishing operation waivers or scientific research permits shall be considered a basis for adjustments.

(D)(1) Any vessel assigned a DML, that does not participate, by June 1, in this fishery by operating under valid certificates of inclusion, or that leaves the fishery, shall lose its right to utilize its DML for the remainder of the year.

(2) NMFS will determine, based on the available information, whether a vessel has left the fishery. A vessel lost at sea, undergoing extensive repairs, operating in an ocean area other than

the ETP, or for which other information indicates will no longer be conducting purse seine operations in the ETP for the remainder of the period, shall be determined to have left the fishery. NMFS will make all reasonable efforts to determine the intentions of the vessel owner, and the owner of any vessel that has been preliminarily determined to have left the fishery will be provided notice of such preliminary determination and the opportunity to provide information on whether the vessel has left the fishery before NMFS makes a final determination and notifies the IATTC of this determination. The vessel owner will receive written notification of NMFS' final determination.

(3) Any unused DML for a vessel that has been determined to have left the fishery will be returned to the IATTC, to be added to the pool of unutilized DMLs.

(E) Any vessel that exceeds its assigned DML, after any applicable adjustment under paragraph (d)(2)(x)(C)(2) of this section, shall have its DML for the subsequent year reduced by the amount of overage.

(F)(1) The vessel operator and owner are responsible for ensuring that the DML for that vessel is not exceeded.

(2) Observers, either from the IATTC observer program or the NMFS observer program, will make their records available to the vessel operators at any time, including after each set, so that the operator can monitor the balance of the DML remaining for use during the trip.

(3) Vessel captains must cease deploying purse seine sets to encircle dolphins intentionally when the vessel's DML, as adjusted under paragraph (d)(2)(x)(C)(2) of this section, is reached.

(G)(1) Sanctions recommended by the Review Panel for any violation of these rules shall be considered by NMFS in its enforcement of these regulations.

(2) Intentionally deploying a purse seine net on or to encircle dolphins after the vessel's DML is reached will disqualify the vessel from consideration for a DML for the following year. If already assigned, the DMLs for the following year will be withdrawn, and the IATTC notified by NMFS that the

DML assigned to that vessel will be unutilized. The vessel owner will be provided an opportunity to provide information and comments on this issue before a final determination is made by NMFS.

(3) *Encircling gear, purse seining not involving the intentional taking of marine mammals.* (i) A certificate holder may take marine mammals so long as such taking is an incidental occurrence in the course of normal commercial fishing operations. Marine mammals taken incidental to commercial fishing operations shall be immediately returned to the environment where captured without further injury.

(ii) A certificate holder may take such steps as are necessary to protect his catch, gear, or person from depredation, damage or personal injury without inflicting death or injury to any marine mammal.

(iii) Only after all means permitted by paragraph (d)(3)(ii) of this section have been taken to deter a marine mammal from depredating the catch, damaging the gear, or causing personal injury, may the certificate holder injure or kill the animal causing the depredation or immediate damage, or about to cause immediate personal injury; however, in no event shall a certificate holder kill or injure an Atlantic bottlenosed dolphin, *Tursiops truncatus*, under the provisions of this paragraph. A certificate holder shall not injure or kill any animal permitted to be killed or injured under this paragraph unless the infliction of such damage is substantial and immediate and is actually being caused at the time such steps are taken. In all cases, the burden is on the certificate holder to report fully and demonstrate that the animal was causing substantial and immediate damage or about to cause personal injury and that all possible steps to protect against such damage or injury as permitted by paragraph (d)(3)(ii) of this section were taken and that such attempts failed.

(iv) Marine mammals taken in the course of commercial fishing operations shall be subject to the provisions of § 216.3 with respect to "Incidental catch," and may be retained except where a specific permit has been obtained authorizing the retention.



(v) All certificate holders shall maintain logs of incidental take of marine mammals in such form as prescribed by the Assistant Administrator. All deaths or injuries to marine mammals occurring in the course of commercial fishing operations under the conditions of a general permit shall be immediately recorded in the log and reported in writing to the Director, Southwest Region, where a certificate application was made, or to an enforcement agent or other designated agent of the National Marine Fisheries Service, at the earliest opportunity but no later than five days after such occurrence, except that if a vessel at sea returns to port later than five days after such occurrence, then it shall be reported within forty-eight hours after arrival in port. Reports must include:

(A) The location, time, and date of the death or injury;

(B) The identity and number of marine mammals killed or injured; and

(C) A description of the circumstances which led up to and caused the death or injury.

(4) *Stationary gear.* (i) A certificate holder may take marine mammals so long as such taking is an incidental occurrence in the course of normal commercial fishing operations. Marine mammals taken incidental to commercial fishing operations shall be immediately returned to the environment where captured without further injury.

(ii) A certificate holder may take such steps as are necessary to protect his catch, gear, or person from depredation, damage or personal injury without inflicting death or injury to any marine mammal.

(iii) Only after all means permitted by paragraph (d)(4)(ii) of this section have been taken to deter a marine mammal from depredating the catch, damaging the gear, or causing personal injury, may the certificate holder injure or kill the animal causing the depredation or immediate damage, or about to cause immediate personal injury; however, in no event shall a certificate holder kill or injure an Atlantic bottlenosed dolphin, *Tursiops truncatus*, under the provisions of this paragraph. A certificate holder shall not injure or kill any animal permitted to be killed or injured under this para-

graph unless the infliction of such damage is substantial and immediate and is actually being caused at the time such steps are taken. In all cases, the burden is on the certificate holder to report fully and demonstrate that the animal was causing substantial and immediate damage or about to cause personal injury and that all possible steps to protect against such damage or injury as permitted by paragraph (ii) were taken and that such attempts failed.

(iv) Marine mammals taken in the course of commercial fishing operations shall be subject to the provisions of §216.3 with respect to "Incidental catch," and may not be retained except where a specific permit has been obtained authorizing the retention.

(v) All certificate holders shall maintain logs of incidental take of marine mammals in such form as prescribed by the Assistant Administrator. All deaths or injuries to marine mammals occurring in the course of commercial fishing operations under the conditions of a general permit shall be immediately recorded in the log and reported in writing to the Director, Southwest Region, where a certificate application was made, or to an enforcement agent or other designated agent of the National Marine Fisheries Service, at the earliest opportunity but no later than five days after such occurrence, except that if a vessel at sea returns to port later than five days after such occurrence, then it shall be reported within forty-eight hours after arrival in port. Reports must include:

(A) The location time, and date of the death or injury;

(B) The identity and number of marine mammals killed or injured; and

(C) A description of the circumstances which led up to and caused the death or injury.

(5) *Other gear.* (i) A certificate holder may take marine mammals so long as such taking is an incidental occurrence in the course of normal commercial fishing operations. Marine mammals taken incidental to commercial fishing operations shall be immediately returned to the environment where captured without further injury.

(ii) A certificate holder may take such steps as are necessary to protect

his catch, gear, or person from depredation, damage or personal injury without inflicting death or injury to any marine mammal.

(iii) Only after all means permitted by paragraph (d)(5)(ii) of this section have been taken to deter a marine mammal from depredating the catch, damaging the gear, or causing personal injury, may the certificate holder injure or kill the animal causing the depredation or immediate damage, or about to cause immediate personal injury; however, in no event shall a certificate holder kill or injure an Atlantic bottlenosed dolphin, *Tursiops truncatus*, under the provisions of this paragraph. A certificate holder shall not injure or kill any animal permitted to be killed or injured under this paragraph unless the infliction of such damage is substantial and immediate and is actually being caused at the time such steps are taken. In all cases, the burden is on the certificate holder to report fully and demonstrate that the animal was causing substantial and immediate damage or about to cause personal injury and that all possible steps to protect against such damage or injury as permitted by paragraph (d)(5)(ii) of this section were taken and that such attempts failed.

(iv) Marine mammals taken in the course of commercial fishing operations shall be subject to the provisions of §216.3 with respect to "Incidental catch," and may not be retained except where a specific permit has been obtained authorizing the retention.

(v) All certificate holders shall maintain logs of incidental take of marine mammals in such form as prescribed by the Assistant Administrator. All deaths or injuries to marine mammals occurring in the course of commercial fishing operations under the conditions of a general permit shall be immediately recorded in the log and reported in writing to the Director, Southwest Region, where a certificate application was made, or to an enforcement agent, or other designated agent of the National Marine Fisheries Service, at the earliest opportunity but no later than five days after such occurrence, except that if a vessel at sea returns to port later than five days after such occurrence, then it shall be re-

ported within forty-eight hours after arrival in port. Reports must include:

(A) The location, time, and date of the death or injury;

(B) The identity and number of marine mammals killed or injured; and

(C) A description of the circumstances which led up to and caused the death or injury.

(vi) [Reserved]

(vii) The number of Dall's porpoise (*Phocoenoides dalli*) killed or injured by Japanese vessels operating in the U.S. EEZ is limited to an aggregate of 789 in the Bering Sea and 5250 in the North Pacific Ocean over the period 1987 to 1989, of which no more than 448 may be taken from the Bering Sea and no more than 2494 may be taken from the North Pacific Ocean in any single calendar year. The incidental take levels authorized by this subpart are reduced proportionately in the event that the Soviet Union reduces salmon quotas for 1988 or 1989 by more than 10 percent from the 1987 quota. Any permit issued under this part must indicate the measures by which the permit holder must comply with the conditions attached to the permit, and the reporting requirements of paragraph (d)(5)(v) of this section. Any permit issued under this part may allow retention of marine mammals for scientific purposes and will not require a separate permit under paragraph (d)(5)(iv) of this section.

(6) *Commercial passenger fishing vessels (CPFV)*. (i) A certificate holder aboard the vessel may take marine mammals so long as the taking is limited to harassment and is an incidental occurrence in the course of the active sportfishing subject to the following restrictions (paragraphs (d)(6) (ii) through (vi) of this section).

(ii) Takings are prohibited within 500 yards of a pinniped rookery or haul-out site.

(iii) A certificate holder aboard the CPFV must use only those non-lethal, non-injurious methods not including capture as approved in advance by the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries through publication in the FEDERAL REGISTER and stipulated in the General Permit for taking marine mammals.

(iv) Takings are allowed only while engaged in active sportfishing to prevent imminent marine mammal approaches to the vessel or to protect a passenger's catch or gear from depredation or damage, without inflicting death or injury to any marine mammal.

(v) All operators must ensure the safe use of the approved methods for preventing marine mammal sportfishing interaction and must satisfactorily complete such training as may be required by the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries.

(vi) All certificate holders must maintain records of incidental take of marine mammals in such form as prescribed by the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries. All incidents involving harassment of marine mammals must be immediately recorded and reported in writing to the Director, Southwest Region to whom the certificate application was made, or to an enforcement agent or other designated agent of the National Marine Fisheries Service, at the earliest opportunity, but no later than five days after such occurrence. At a minimum, reports must include:

(A) The time, date, and location of the taking;

(B) The type of harassment device used, and the number used at each occurrence;

(C) The number and species of affected marine mammals; and

(D) A description of any behavioral changes noted that may be due to using the harassment device.

(e) *Importation, purchase, shipment, sale and transport.* (1)(i) It is illegal to import into the United States any fish, whether fresh, frozen, or otherwise prepared, if the fish have been caught with commercial fishing technology that results in the incidental kill or incidental serious injury of marine mammals in excess of that allowed under this part for U.S. fishermen or in excess of what is specified in subsection (e)(5) in the case of fishing for yellowfin tuna.

(ii) For purposes of this paragraph (e), and in applying the definition of an "intermediary nation", an import occurs when the fish or fish product is released from a nation's Customs' custody and enters into the territory of

the nation. For other purposes, "import" is defined in §216.3.

(2) The following fish and categories of fish, which the Assistant Administrator has determined may be involved with commercial fishing operations which cause the death or injury of marine mammals, are subject to the requirements of this section:

(i) *Tuna: yellowfin.* The following U.S. Harmonized Tariff Schedule Item Numbers identify the categories of yellowfin tuna and yellowfin tuna products that are harvested in the ETP purse seine fishery (some of which are also harvested with large-scale driftnet), are imported into the United States, and are subject to the restrictions of paragraphs (e)(3) and (e)(5) of this section:

(A) Tuna, frozen whole or in the round:

0303.42.00.20.0 Tuna, yellowfin, whole frozen.  
0303.42.00.40.6 Tuna, yellowfin, eviscerated head-on, frozen.  
0303.42.00.60.1 Tuna, yellowfin, eviscerated head-off, frozen.  
0303.49.00.40.9 Tuna, non-specific, frozen.

(B) Tuna, canned:

1604.14.10.00.0 Tuna, non-specific, canned in oil.  
1604.14.20.40.0 Tuna, non-specific, canned, not in oil, not over 7kg in quota.  
1604.14.30.40.8 Tuna, non-specific, canned, not in oil, not over 7kg over quota.

(C) Tuna, loins:

1604.14.40.00.4 Tuna, non-specific, not in airtight container, not in oil, over 6.8kg.  
1604.14.50.00.1 Tuna, non-specific, not in airtight container, not in oil, not over 6.8kg.

(ii) *Tuna: non-yellowfin.* The following U.S. Harmonized Tariff Schedule Item Numbers identify the categories of tuna and tuna products that are harvested with large-scale driftnet and imported into the United States and are subject to the restrictions of paragraph (e)(3) of this section:

(A) Tuna, frozen whole or in the round:

0303.41.00.00.5 Tuna, albacore, frozen.  
0303.43.00.00.3 Tuna, skipjack, frozen.  
0303.49.00.20.3 Tuna, bluefin, frozen.

(B) Tuna, canned:

1604.14.20.20.4 Tuna, albacore, canned, not in oil, not over 7kg in quota.

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1604.14.30.20.2 Tuna, albacore, canned, not in oil, not over 7kg over quota.

(iii) *Fish, other than tuna.* The following U.S. Harmonized Tariff Schedule Item Numbers identify the categories of fish and fish products that are imported into the United States and are subject to the restrictions of paragraph (e)(3) of this section:

(A) Salmon:

(1) Salmon, frozen whole or in the round:

- 0303.10.00.12.8 Salmon, chinook, frozen.
- 0303.10.00.22.6 Salmon, chum, frozen.
- 0303.10.00.32.4 Salmon, pink, frozen.
- 0303.10.00.42.2 Salmon, sockeye, frozen.
- 0303.10.00.52.9 Salmon, coho, frozen.
- 0303.10.00.62.7 Salmon, Pacific, non-specific, frozen.
- 0303.21.00.00.9 Trout, frozen.
- 0303.22.00.00.8 Salmon, Atlantic, Danube, frozen.
- 0303.29.00.00.1 Salmonidae, non-specific, frozen.
- 0304.20.60.07.9 Salmonidae, salmon fillet, frozen.
- 0305.69.40.00.2 Salmon, non-specific, salted.

(2) Salmon, canned:

- 1604.11.20.20.7 Salmon, pink, canned in oil.
- 1604.11.20.30.5 Salmon, sockeye, canned in oil.
- 1604.11.20.90.2 Salmon, non-specific, canned in oil.
- 1604.11.40.10.5 Salmon, chum, canned, not in oil.
- 1604.11.40.20.3 Salmon, pink, canned, not in oil.
- 1604.11.40.30.1 Salmon, sockeye, canned, not in oil.
- 1604.11.40.40.9 Salmon, non-specific, canned, not in oil.
- 1604.11.40.50.6 Salmon, non-specific, other.

(B) Squid:

- 0307.49.00.10.1 Squid, non-specific, fillet, frozen.
- 0307.49.00.50.2 Squid, non-specific, frozen/dried/salted/brine.
- 0307.49.00.60.0 Squid, non-specific, & cuttlefish frozen/dried/salted/brine.
- 1605.90.60.55.9 Squid, non-specific, prepared/preserved.

(C) Shark:

- 0303.75.00.00.4 Shark, dogfish and other sharks, frozen.
- 0305.59.20.00.8 Shark fins.

(D) Swordfish:

- 0303.79.20.40.8 Swordfish, frozen.

(E) Species not specifically identified:

- 0303.79.40.90.3 Marine fish, non-specific, frozen.
- 0304.20.20.66.6 Marine fish, non-specific, fillet blocks frozen over 4.5kg.
- 0304.20.60.85.4 Marine fish, non-specific, fillet, frozen.
- 0305.30.60.80.6 Fish, non-specific, fillet dried/salted/brine over 6.8kg.
- 0305.49.40.40.9 Fish, non-specific, smoked.
- 0305.59.40.00.4 Fish, non-specific, dried.
- 0305.69.50.00.9 Fish, non-specific, salted, not over 6.8kg.
- 0305.69.60.00.7 Fish, non-specific, salted, over 6.8kg.
- 1604.19.20.00.3 Fish, non-specific, in airtight containers, not in oil.
- 1604.19.30.00.1 Fish, non-specific, in airtight containers, in oil.

(3)(i) *Tuna*—(A) *All nations.* No shipment containing an item listed in paragraph (e)(2)(i) or (e)(2)(ii) of this section, from any nation, may be imported into the United States unless:

(1) Accompanied by a completed Fisheries Certificate of Origin described in paragraph (e)(3)(iii) of this section, or, for points of entry where the ABI system is available, the information required for the Certificate may be filed electronically by the ABI system in lieu of the paper form, provided that the electronic filing is made no later than at the time of entry and all documentation in support of the ABI entry is maintained by the importer or broker for not less than 5 years and is kept available for inspection by NMFS personnel upon request;

(2) The tuna or tuna product was not harvested with a large-scale driftnet after July 1, 1991; and

(3) An original invoice accompanies the shipment at the time of importation, or is made available within 30 days of a request by the Secretary to produce the invoice.

(B) *Harvesting nations.* No shipment containing an item listed in paragraph (e)(2)(i) of this section may be imported into the United States from a harvesting nation subject to paragraph (e)(5)(i) of this section unless a finding required for importation has been made.

(C) *Intermediary nations.* No shipment containing an item listed in paragraph (e)(2)(i) of this section may be imported into the United States from an intermediary nation subject to paragraph (e)(5)(xiv) of this section if a ban is currently in force prohibiting the importation.

(D) *Harvesting and intermediary nations.* No shipment containing an item in paragraph (e)(2)(i) of this section may be imported into the United States from a nation that is both a harvesting nation subject to paragraph (e)(5)(i) of this section and an intermediary nation subject to paragraph (e)(5)(xiv) of this section unless the necessary findings have been made under both provisions and a ban is not currently in force.

(E) Tuna or tuna products sold in or exported from the United States that suggest the tuna was harvested in a manner not injurious to dolphins are subject to the requirements of subpart H.

(ii) *Other fish.* After July 1, 1991, no shipment containing an item listed in paragraphs (e)(2)(iii)(B) through (E) of this section, and, after July 1, 1992, no shipment containing an item in the whole of paragraph (e)(2)(iii) of this section, that was harvested by any nation determined by the Assistant Administrator to be engaged in large-scale driftnet fishing, or exported from any such nation, either directly or through an intermediary nation, may be imported into the United States unless:

(A) Accompanied by a complete Fisheries Certificate of Origin, as described in paragraph (e)(3)(iii) of this section;

(B) The fish or fish product was not harvested with a large-scale driftnet, if the area of harvest, as described on the Fisheries Certificate of Origin was:

(1) The South Pacific Ocean, for harvests after July 1, 1991; or

(2) Anywhere on the high seas, for harvests after July 1, 1992; and

(C) An original invoice accompanies the shipment at the time of importation, or is made available within 30 days of a request by the Secretary to produce the invoice.

(iii) *Certificates of Origin.* A Fisheries Certificate of Origin (NOAA Form 370),<sup>1</sup> certified to be accurate by the first exporter of the accompanying shipment, must include the following information:

(A) Country under whose laws the harvesting vessel operated;

(B) Exporter (name and address);

(C) Consignee (name and address);

(D) Type and quantity of the fish or fish products to be imported, listed by U.S. Harmonized Tariff Schedule Number;

(E) Ocean area where the fish was harvested (ETP, Western Pacific Ocean, South Pacific Ocean, Atlantic Ocean, Caribbean Sea, Indian Ocean, or other);

(F) Type of fishing gear used to harvest the fish (purse seine, longline, bait boat, large-scale driftnet, other type of gillnet, trawl, pole and line, other);

(G) Dates on which the fishing trip began and ended;

(H) If shipment is tuna or products from tuna that were harvested in the ETP with a purse seine net, the name of the harvesting vessel; and

(I) For shipments harvested by vessels of a nation known to use large-scale driftnets, as determined by the Secretary pursuant to paragraph (e)(4) of this section, a statement must be included on the Fisheries Certificate of Origin, or by separate attachment, that is dated and signed by a responsible government official of the harvesting nation, certifying that the fish or fish product was harvested by a method other than large-scale driftnet, if the shipment includes:

(1) Tuna or tuna products described in paragraph (e)(2) (i) or (ii) of this section that were harvested on the high seas after July 1, 1991; or

(2) Fish or fish products other than tuna described in paragraph (e)(2)(iii) of this section that were harvested in the South Pacific Ocean after July 1, 1991, or that were harvested anywhere on the high seas after July 1, 1992.

(4) *Large-scale driftnet nations.* Based upon the best information available, the Assistant Administrator will determine which nations have registered vessels that engage in fishing with large-scale driftnets. Such determinations shall be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER. A responsible government official of any such nation may certify to the Assistant Administrator that none of the nation's vessels use large-scale driftnets. Upon receipt of the certification, the Assistant Administrator may find, and publish such finding in the FEDERAL REGISTER, that none of

<sup>1</sup> Copies of the form are available from the Director, Southwest Region (see §216.3).

the nation's vessels engage in fishing with large-scale driftnets.

(5) *Yellowfin tuna.*

(i) Any tuna or tuna products in the classifications listed in paragraph (e)(2)(i) of this section, from harvesting nations whose vessels of greater than 400 short tons (362.8 mt) carrying capacity operate in the ETP tuna purse seine fishery as determined by the Assistant Administrator, may not be imported into the United States unless the Assistant Administrator makes an affirmative finding under either paragraph (e)(5)(v), (e)(5)(viii) or (e)(5)(x) of this section and publishes the finding in the FEDERAL REGISTER that:

(A) The government of the harvesting nation has adopted a regulatory program governing the incidental taking of marine mammals in the course of such harvesting that is comparable to the regulatory program of the United States; and

(B) The average rate of incidental mortality by the vessels of the harvesting nation is comparable to the average rate of incidental mortality of marine mammals by U.S. vessels in the course of such harvesting as specified in paragraphs (e)(5)(v)(E) and (e)(5)(v)(F) of this section.

(ii) A harvesting nation which desires an initial finding under these regulations that will allow it to import into the United States those products listed in paragraph (e)(2)(i) of this section must provide the Assistant Administrator with the following information:

(A) A detailed description of the nation's regulatory and enforcement program governing incidental taking of marine mammals in the purse seine fishery for yellowfin tuna, including:

(1) A description, with copies of relevant laws, implementing regulations and guidelines, of the gear and procedures required in the fishery to protect marine mammals, including but not limited to the following:

(i) A description of the methods used to identify problems and to take corrective actions to improve the performance of individual fishermen in reducing incidental mortality and serious injury. By 1990 the methods must identify individual operators with marine mammal mortality rates which are consistently and substantially higher

than the majority of the nation's fleet, and provide for corrective training and, ultimately, suspension and removal from the fishery if the operator's performance does not improve to at least the performance of the majority of the fleet in a reasonable time period;

(ii) By 1990, a description of a regulatory system in operation which ensures that all marine mammal sets are completed through backdown to rolling the net to sack-up no later than one-half hour after sundown, except that individual operators may be exempted, if they have maintained consistently a rate of kill during their observed sundown sets which is not higher than that of the nation's fleet average during daylight sets made during the time period used for their comparability finding; and

(iii) By 1990, a description of its restrictions on the use of explosive devices in the purse seine fishery which are comparable to those of the United States.

(2) A detailed description of the method (e.g., Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) or other international program observer records) and level of observer coverage by which the incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammals will be monitored.

(B) A list of its vessels and any certified charter vessels of greater than 400 short tons carrying capacity which purse seined for yellowfin tuna at any time during the preceding year in the ETP, indicating the status of each such vessel during that period (i.e., actively fishing in ETP, fishing in other waters; in port for repairs; inactive) and the status of each vessel expected to operate in the ETP in the year in which the submission is made.

(C) A compilation of the best available data for each calendar year on the performance of any of its purse seine vessels (including certified charter vessels) fishing at any time for tuna associated with marine mammals within the ETP including the following:

(1) Total number of tons of yellowfin tuna observed caught in each fishing area by purse seine sets on:

(i) Common dolphin and

(ii) All other marine mammal species;

(2) Total number of marine mammals observed killed and the total number of marine mammals observed seriously injured in each fishing area by species/stock by purse seine sets on:

(i) Common dolphin and

(ii) All other marine mammal species;

(3) Total number of observed trips and total number of observed purse seine sets on marine mammals in each fishing area by the nation's purse seine fleet during the year;

(4) Total number of vessel trips and total number of purse seine sets on marine mammals in each fishing area by the nation's purse seine fleet during the year; and

(5) The total number of observed purse seine sets in each fishing area in which more than 15 marine mammals were killed.

(D) Data required by paragraph (e)(5)(ii)(C)(2) presented individually for the following marine mammal species/stocks: offshore spotted dolphin, coastal spotted dolphin, eastern spinner dolphin, whitebelly spinner dolphin, common dolphin, striped dolphin, and "other marine mammals".

(E) A description of the source of the data provided in accordance with paragraph (e)(5)(ii)(C) of this section. The observer program from which these data are provided must be operated by the IATTC or another international program in which the United States participates and must sample at least the same percentage of the fishing trips as the United States achieves over the same time period, unless the Assistant Administrator determines that an alternative observer program, including a lesser level of observer coverage, will provide a sufficiently reliable average rate of incidental taking of marine mammals for the nation.

(iii) A nation applying for its initial finding of comparability should apply at least 120 days before the desired effective date. The Assistant Administrator's determination on a nation's application for its initial finding will be announced and published in the FEDERAL REGISTER within 120 days of receipt of the information required in paragraph (e)(5)(ii) of this section.

(iv) A harvesting nation that has in effect a positive finding under this

section may request renewal of its finding for the following calendar year by providing the Assistant Administrator, by December 1 of the current calendar year, an update of the information listed in §216.24(e)(5)(ii) summarizing all fishing trips completed during the 12-month period from October 1 of the previous calendar year through September 30 of the current year.

(v) The Assistant Administrator's determination of a nation's timely submitted request for renewal of an affirmative finding will be announced by December 31. A finding will be valid for the calendar year following the fishing season for which observer data was submitted for obtaining a finding. The Assistant Administrator will make an affirmative finding or renew an affirmative finding if:

(A) The harvesting nation has provided all information required by paragraphs (e)(5)(ii) and (e)(5)(iv) of this section;

(B) The nation's regulatory program is comparable to the regulatory program of the United States as described in paragraphs (a), (c), (d)(2), and (f) of this section and the nation has incorporated into its regulatory program such additional prohibitions as the United States may apply to its own vessels within 180 days after the prohibition applies to U.S. vessels;

(C) The data on marine mammal mortality and serious injury submitted by the harvesting nation are determined to be accurate;

(D) The observer coverage of fishing trips was equal to that achieved by the United States during the same time period or, if less, was determined by the Assistant Administrator to provide a sufficiently accurate sample of the nation's fleet mortality rate;

(E) For findings using data collected after 1988, the average kill-per-set rate for the longest period of time for which data are available, up to 5 consecutive years, or for the most recent year, whichever is lower, is no more than 25 percent greater than the U.S. average for the same time period, after the U.S. mortality rate is weighted to account for dissimilar amounts of fishing effort between the two nations in the three

ETP fishing areas and for common dolphin and other marine mammal species, except as provided in paragraph (e)(5)(v)(F) of this section for findings made in 1990;

(F) For determining comparability where there are fewer than five sets (including no effort) on dolphin by the U.S. fleet in a fishing area on a species grouping that has fishing effort by the foreign nation requesting a comparability test, the mortality rates used for comparability will be the overall (i.e., unweighted) kill-per-set rate of the U.S. fleet and of the foreign nation's fleet.

(G) For the 1989 fishing year and subsequent years, the nation's observed kill of eastern spinner dolphin (*Stenella longirostris*) and coastal spotted dolphin (*Stenella attenuata*) is no greater than 15 percent and 2 percent, respectively, of the nation's total annual observed dolphin mortality; and

(H) The nation has complied with all reasonable requests by the Assistant Administrator for cooperation in carrying out dolphin population assessments in the ETP.

(vi) *Period of validity.* A finding is valid only for the period for which it was issued and may be terminated before the end of the year if the Assistant Administrator finds that the nation no longer has a comparable regulatory program or kill rate.

(vii) *Reconsideration of finding.* The Assistant Administrator may reconsider a finding upon a request from and the submission of additional information by the harvesting nation, if the information indicates that the nation has met the requirements under paragraph (e)(5)(v) of this section. For a harvesting nation whose marine mammal mortality rate was found to exceed the acceptable levels prescribed in paragraphs (e)(5)(v)(E), (e)(5)(v)(F), or (e)(5)(v)(G) of this section, the additional information must include data collected by an acceptable observer program, which must demonstrate that the nation's fleet marine mammal mortality rate improved to the acceptable level during the period submitted for comparison, which must include, at a minimum, the most recent:

(A) Twelve months of observer data if the species composition rate prescribed

by paragraph (e)(5)(v)(G) of this section was not acceptable; or

(B) Six months of observer data if the average kill-per-set rate prescribed by paragraph (e)(5)(v)(E) of this section was not acceptable.

(viii) *Application for finding for non-marine-mammal intentional sets.* The Assistant Administrator's determination on a nation's application for a finding will be announced and published in the FEDERAL REGISTER. A harvesting nation which has implemented a regulatory program that prohibits the intentional setting of any purse seine net to encircle marine mammals and desires an initial finding under these regulations that will allow it to import into the United States those products listed in paragraph (e)(2)(i) of this section must provide the Assistant Administrator with the following:

(A) Documentary evidence establishing that its regulatory program includes:

(1) A law prohibiting the intentional setting of purse seine nets on marine mammals (a copy of the law must be submitted);

(2) A requirement that a certificate from an observer be obtained within 30 days of the completion of each and every trip of the nation's purse seine vessels greater than 400 short tons (362.8 mt) carrying capacity, stating that the observer was aboard the vessel during the entire trip and that there were no intentional purse seine sets on marine mammals; and

(B) A complete list of the nation's vessels and any certified charter vessels of greater than 400 short tons (362.8 mt) carrying capacity which purse seine for yellowfin tuna in the ETP, indicating the status of each vessel (i.e., actively fishing in the ETP, in port for repairs, etc.), and a list of changes to this fleet within 30 days when changes occur.

(ix) *Application for renewal of finding for non-marine-mammal intentional sets.* A harvesting nation, which has in effect an affirmative finding under this section, may request a renewal of its finding for the subsequent calendar year by providing the Assistant Administrator an annual report by November 1, covering the previous October 1 to



September 30 period, which includes the following:

(A) Vessel summary data, to include:

(1) The total number of observed trips;

(2) The percentage of all purse seine fishing trips that carried observers under a program approved by the Assistant Administrator;

(3) The total number, if any, of observed purse seine sets on marine mammals;

(4) A summary of the number and species, if any, of all marine mammals killed or seriously injured in intentional purse seine sets on marine mammals;

(5) A complete list of the nation's vessels and any certified charter vessels of greater than 400 short tons (362.8 mt) carrying capacity which purse seine for yellowfin tuna in the ETP, indicating the status of each vessels as of October 1;

(B) A summary, which copies of relevant laws, of any changes in the nation's laws or regulatory program regarding marine mammals for the purse seine fishery in the ETP; and

(C) A summary of any enforcement actions taken to ensure compliance with the nation's marine mammal protection laws.

(x) *Review of finding for non-marine-mammal intentional sets.* The Assistant Administrator will renew an affirmative finding obtained under paragraph (e)(5)(ix) of this section if:

(A) The harvesting nation has provided all of the information required by paragraph (e)(5)(ix) of this section and the conditions under which the original finding was made under paragraph (e)(5)(viii) of this section continue to exist; and

(B) Either 100-percent observer coverage is provided for all purse seine vessels as required by paragraph (e)(5)(viii)(A)(2) of this section; or the harvesting nation is in a probationary status in accordance with paragraph (e)(5)(xi)(B)(1) of this section; and

(C) The harvesting nation meets the criteria of paragraphs (e)(5)(v)(E), and (e)(5)(v)(G) of this section; and

(D) Certificates have been provided to the Assistant Administrator within 30 days of the completion of each and every trip of the nation's purse seine

vessels greater than 400 short tons (362.8 mt) carrying capacity from an observer approved by the Assistant Administrator or under the direction of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, and verified by the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, stating that the observer was aboard the vessel during the entire trip and that there were no intentional purse seine sets on marine mammals or the nation received a positive reconsideration for an affirmative finding under paragraph (e)(5)(xii)(A) of this section.

(xi) *Probation and revocation.* (A)(1) If it is determined that, during any trip, a purse seine was intentionally set on marine mammals, the nation will enter into a probationary status for 180 days, effective upon the date the vessel returns to port to unload.

(2) If, during the probationary period of 180 days, there are any additional intentional purse seine sets made on marine mammals, the Assistant Administrator will immediately revoke the affirmative finding.

(B)(1) If it is determined that, during any trip, an observer is not aboard a nation's purse seine vessel greater than 400 short tons (362.8 mt) carrying capacity fishing in the ETP, that nation will enter into a probationary status for 1 year, effective upon the date the vessel returns to port to unload.

(2) If, during the 1-year probationary period, a nation's purse seine vessel returns to port to unload, and it is determined that an observer was not aboard the vessel during a trip in the ETP, the Assistant Administrator will immediately revoke an affirmative finding made under paragraphs (e)(5)(viii) or (e)(5)(x) of this section.

(xii) *Reconsideration.* (A) The Assistant Administrator will reconsider a revocation of an affirmative finding upon request from a harvesting nation which had its affirmative finding revoked under paragraph (e)(5)(xi)(A) of this section if:

(1) The number of marine mammals taken in purse seine nets that were intentionally set on marine mammals does not exceed the comparability standards established in paragraphs (e)(5)(v)(E) and (e)(5)(v)(G) of this section; and

(2) That nation provides documentary evidence that no additional purse seines were intentionally set on marine mammals during the 90-day period immediately preceding the request for reconsideration.

(B) A harvesting nation which has its affirmative finding revoked under paragraph (e)(5)(xi)(B) of this section or its reconsideration under paragraph (e)(5)(xii)(A) of this section denied, may request reconsideration for an affirmative finding under paragraph (e)(5)(vii) of this section.

(xiii) *Verification.* The Assistant Administrator may require verification of statements made in connection with requests to allow importations.

(xiv) *Intermediary nation.* Any yellowfin tuna or yellowfin tuna products in the classifications listed in paragraph (e)(2)(i) of this section, from any intermediary nation, as that term is defined in section 3 of the MMPA, may not be imported into the United States unless the Assistant Administrator determines and publishes in the FEDERAL REGISTER that the intermediary nation has provided reasonable proof and has certified to the United States that it has not imported, in the preceding 6 months, yellowfin tuna or yellowfin tuna products that are subject to a ban on direct importation into the United States under section 101(a)(2)(B) of the MMPA. A prohibition on imports under this paragraph may be lifted by the Assistant Administrator upon a determination announced in the FEDERAL REGISTER, based upon new information supplied by the government of the intermediary nation, that the nation has not imported, in the preceding 6 months, yellowfin tuna or yellowfin tuna products subject to a ban on direct imports under section 101(a)(2)(B) of the MMPA. Shipments of yellowfin tuna or yellowfin tuna products through a nation on a through bill of lading or in another manner that does not enter the shipments into that nation as an importation do not make that nation an intermediary nation. The Assistant Administrator shall act on any request to review decisions under this paragraph (e)(5)(xiv) that are accompanied by specific and detailed supporting information or documentation, within 30 days of receipt of

such request. For purposes of this paragraph (e)(5)(xiv), certification and reasonable proof means the submission by a responsible government official from the nation of a document reflecting the nation's customs records for the preceding 6 months, together with a certificate attesting that the document is accurate.

(xv) *Pelly certification.* After 6 months on an embargo being in place against a nation under this section, that fact shall be certified to the President for purposes of certification under section 8(a) of the Fishermen's Protective Act of 1967 (22 U.S.C. 1978(a)) for as long as the embargo is in effect.

(xvi) *Coordination.* The Assistant Administrator will promptly advise the Department of State of embargo decisions, actions and finding determinations.

(6) *Fish refused entry.* If fish is denied entry under the provisions of § 216.24(e)(3), the District Director of Customs shall refuse to release the fish for entry into the United States and shall issue a notice of such refusal to the importer or consignee.

(7) [Reserved]

(8) *Disposition of fish refused entry into the United States; redelivered fish.* Fish which is denied entry under § 216.24(e)(3) or which is delivered in accordance with § 216.24(e)(7) and which is not exported under Customs supervision within 90 days from the date of notice of refusal of admission or date of redelivery shall be disposed of under Customs laws and regulations. *Provided however,* That any disposition shall not result in an introduction into the United States of fish caught in violation of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972.

(9) *Dolphin safe requirements.* (i) It is unlawful for any person to sell, purchase, offer for sale, transport, or ship in the United States, any tuna or tuna product that is not dolphin safe.

(ii) For purposes of this section, tuna or a tuna product is dolphin safe if:

(A) It does not contain tuna that was harvested on the high seas by a vessel engaged in large-scale driftnet fishing;

(B) In the case of tuna or tuna product that contains tuna harvested in the ETP by a purse seine vessel, either the purse seine vessel is of less than 400

short tons (362.8 metric tons (mt)) carrying capacity or, if the purse seine vessel is of 400 short tons (362.8 mt) carrying capacity or greater, the tuna or tuna product is accompanied by:

(1) A completed Fisheries Certificate of Origin;

(2) A written statement by the captain of each vessel that harvested the tuna, certifying that the vessel did not intentionally deploy a purse seine net on, or to encircle, dolphins at any time during the trip; a written statement, signed by either the Secretary or a representative of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, certifying that an observer employed by or working under contract with the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission or the Secretary, was on board the vessel during the entire trip and that the vessel did not intentionally deploy a purse seine net on, or to encircle, dolphin at any time during the trip; and

(3) An endorsement on the Fisheries Certificate of Origin by each exporter, importer, and processor certifying that, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, the Fisheries Certificate of Origin and attached documents, and the statements required by this paragraph (e)(9)(ii) accurately describe the tuna products;

(C) In the case of tuna or a tuna product containing tuna harvested outside the eastern tropical Pacific Ocean by a purse seine vessel, it is accompanied by a written statement, executed by the captain of the vessel, certifying that no purse seine net was intentionally deployed on, or to encircle, dolphins during the particular voyage on which the tuna was harvested; and

(D) In the case of tuna or a tuna product containing tuna harvested outside the ETP by a purse seine vessel in a fishery in which the Secretary has determined that a regular and significant association occurs between marine mammals and tuna, and in which tuna is harvested through the use of purse seine nets deployed on, or to encircle, marine mammals, it is accompanied by a written statement, executed by the captain of the vessel and by an observer, certifying that no purse seine net was intentionally deployed on, or to encircle, marine mam-

mals during the particular voyage on which the tuna was harvested.

(iii) *Submission of documentation.*—(A) *Imported tuna or tuna product.* The documents required by paragraph (e)(9)(ii) of this section must accompany the imported tuna or tuna product until no further endorsements are required on the documentation and the documents have been submitted to officials of the U.S. Customs Service at the time of importation.

(B) *U.S. domestic shipments.* The documents required by paragraph (e)(9)(ii) of this section must accompany tuna or tuna product, other than imported, until no further endorsements are required on the documentation and the documents have been submitted to the Director, Southwest Region, National Marine Fisheries Service, 501 W. Ocean Boulevard, Suite 4200, Long Beach, CA 90802.

(f) *Observers.* (1) The vessel certificate holder of any certificated vessel shall, upon the proper notification by the National Marine Fisheries Service, allow an observer duly authorized by the Secretary to accompany the vessel on any or all regular fishing trips for the purpose of conducting research and observing operations, including collecting information which may be used in civil or criminal penalty proceedings, forfeiture actions, or permit or certificate sanctions.

(2) Research and observation duties shall be carried out in such a manner as to minimize interference with commercial fishing operations. The navigator shall provide true vessel locations by latitude and longitude, accurate to the nearest minute, upon request by the observer. No owner, master, operator, or crew member of a certificated vessel shall impair or in any way interfere with the research or observations being carried out.

(3) Marine mammals killed during fishing operations which are accessible to crewmen and requested from the certificate holder or master by the observer shall be brought aboard the vessel and retained for biological processing, until released by the observer for return to the ocean. Whole marine mammals designated as biological specimens by the observer shall be retained in cold storage aboard the vessel

until retrieved by authorized personnel of the National Marine Fisheries Service when the vessel returns to port for unloading.

(4) The Secretary shall provide for the payment of all reasonable costs directly related to the quartering and maintaining of such observers on board such vessels. A vessel certificate holder who has been notified that the vessel is required to carry an observer, via certified letter from the National Marine Fisheries Service, shall notify the office from which the letter was received at least five days in advance of the fishing voyage to facilitate observer placement. A vessel certificate holder who has failed to comply with the provisions of this section may not engage in fishing operations for which a general permit is required.

(5) It is unlawful for any person to forcibly assault, impede, intimidate, interfere with, or to influence or attempt to influence an observer, or to harass (including sexual harassment) an observer by conduct which has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with the observer's work performance, or which creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment. In determining whether conduct constitutes harassment, the totality of the circumstances, including the nature of the conduct and the context in which it occurred, will be considered. The determination of the legality of a particular action will be made from the facts on a case-by-case basis.

(6)(i) All observers must be provided sleeping, toilet and eating accommodations at least equal to that provided to a full crew member. A mattress or futon on the floor or a cot is not acceptable in place of a regular bunk. Meal and other galley privileges must be the same for the observer as for other crew members.

(ii) Female observers on a vessel with an all-male crew must be accommodated either in a single-person cabin or, if reasonable privacy can be ensured by installing a curtain or other temporary divider, in a two-person cabin shared with a licensed officer of the vessel. If the cabin assigned to a female observer does not have its own toilet and shower facilities that can be provided for the exclusive use of the ob-

server, then a schedule for time-sharing common facilities must be established before the placement meeting and approved by NMFS and must be followed during the entire trip.

(iii) In the event there are one or more female crew members, the female observer may be provided a bunk in a cabin shared solely with female crew members, and provided toilet and shower facilities shared solely with these female crew members.

(7)(i) A vessel certificate of inclusion holder (or vessel owner in the case of a new application) may seek an exemption from carrying a female observer on a vessel by applying to the Director, Southwest Region when applying for the vessel certificate of inclusion until July 10, 1989 and establishing the following:

(A) The vessel will have an all-male crew;

(B) The vessel has fewer than two private (one-person) and semi-private (two-person) cabins in total (excluding the captain's cabin);

(C) A temporary divider like a curtain cannot be installed in the private or semi-private cabin (excluding the captain's cabin) to provide reasonable privacy; and

(D) There are no other areas (excluding the captain's cabin) that can be converted to a sleeping room without either significant expense or significant sacrifice to the crew's quarters.

(ii) The exclusion criteria in paragraph (f)(7)(i) of this section can be met without having to provide the captain's cabin for the observer. The application for an exemption must also include an accurate diagram of the vessel's living areas, and other areas possibly suitable for sleeping. Additional documentation to support the application may also be required, as may an inspection of the vessel. The exemption, once granted, is valid for the same calendar year as the vessel certificate of inclusion, and the exemption must be renewed annually to remain valid. The vessel certificate of inclusion holder is responsible for reporting to the Director, Southwest Region any changes aboard the vessel within 15 days of the change which might affect the continued eligibility for an exemption. The Director, Southwest Region will revoke an exemption

if the criteria for an exemption are no longer met.

(g) *Penalties and rewards:* Any person or vessel subject to the jurisdiction of the United States shall be subject to the penalties provided for under the MMPA for the conduct of fishing operations in violation of these regulations. The Secretary shall recommend to the Secretary of the Treasury that an amount equal to one-half of the fine incurred but not to exceed \$2,500 be paid to any person who furnishes information which leads to a conviction for a violation of these regulations. Any officer, employee, or designated agent of the United States or of any State or local government who furnishes information or renders service in the performance of his official duties shall not be eligible for payment under this section.

[45 FR 72187, Oct. 31, 1980]

EDITORIAL NOTE: For FEDERAL REGISTER citations affecting §216.24, see the List of CFR Sections Affected in the Finding Aids section of this volume.

**§216.25 Exempted marine mammals and marine mammal products.**

(a) The provisions of the MMPA and these regulations shall not apply:

(1) To any marine mammal taken before December 21, 1972<sup>1</sup>, or

(2) To any marine mammal product if the marine mammal portion of such product consists solely of a marine mammal taken before such date.

(b) The prohibitions contained in §216.12(c) (3) and (4) shall not apply to marine mammals or marine mammal products imported into the United States before the date on which a notice is published in the FEDERAL REGISTER with respect to the designation of the species or stock concerned as depleted or endangered.

(c) Section 216.12(b) shall not apply to articles imported into the United States before the effective date of the foreign law making the taking or sale, as the case may be, of such marine

<sup>1</sup>In the context of captive maintenance of marine mammals, the only marine mammals exempted under this section are those that were actually captured or otherwise in captivity before December 21, 1972.

mammals or marine mammal products unlawful.

[39 FR 1852, Jan. 15, 1974, as amended at 56 FR 43888, Sept. 5, 1991; 59 FR 50376, Oct. 3, 1994]

**§216.26 Collection of certain marine mammal parts without prior authorization.**

Notwithstanding any other provision of this subpart:

(a) Any bones, teeth or ivory of any dead marine mammal may be collected from a beach or from land within ¼ of a mile of the ocean. The term *ocean* includes bays and estuaries.

(b) Notwithstanding the provisions of subpart D, soft parts that are sloughed, excreted, or discharged naturally by a living marine mammal in the wild may be collected or imported for bona fide scientific research and enhancement, provided that collection does not involve the taking of a living marine mammal in the wild.

(c) Any marine mammal part collected under paragraph (a) of this section or any marine mammal part collected and imported under paragraph (b) of this section must be registered and identified, and may be transferred or otherwise possessed, in accordance with §216.22(c). In registering a marine mammal part collected or imported under paragraph (b) of this section, the person who collected or imported the part must also state the scientific research or enhancement purpose for which the part was collected or imported.

(d) No person may purchase, sell or trade for commercial purposes any marine mammal part collected or imported under this section.

(e) The export of parts collected without prior authorization under paragraph (b) of this section may occur if consistent with the provisions at §216.37(d) under subpart D.

[39 FR 1852, Jan. 15, 1974, as amended at 59 FR 50376, Oct. 3, 1994; 61 FR 21933, May 10, 1996]

**§216.27 Release, non-releasability, and disposition under special exception permits for rehabilitated marine mammals.**

(a) *Release requirements.* (1) Any marine mammal held for rehabilitation

must be released within six months of capture or import unless the attending veterinarian determines that:

(i) The marine mammal might adversely affect marine mammals in the wild;

(ii) Release of the marine mammal to the wild will not likely be successful given the physical condition and behavior of the marine mammal; or

(iii) More time is needed to determine whether the release of the marine mammal to the wild will likely be successful. Releasability must be reevaluated at intervals of no less than six months until 24 months from capture or import, at which time there will be a rebuttable presumption that release into the wild is not feasible.

(2) The custodian of the rehabilitated marine mammal shall provide written notification prior to any release into the wild.

(i) Notification shall be provided to:

(A) The NMFS Regional Director at least 15 days in advance of releasing any beached or stranded marine mammal, unless advance notice is waived in writing by the Regional Director; or

(B) The Office Director at least 30 days in advance of releasing any imported marine mammal.

(ii) Notification shall include the following:

(A) A description of the marine mammal, including its physical condition and estimated age;

(B) The date and location of release; and

(C) The method and duration of transport prior to release.

(3) The Regional Director, or the Office Director as appropriate, may:

(i) Require additional information prior to any release;

(ii) Change the date or location of release, or the method or duration of transport prior to release;

(iii) Impose additional conditions to improve the likelihood of success or to monitor the success of the release; or

(iv) Require other disposition of the marine mammal.

(4) All marine mammals must be released near wild populations of the same species, and stock if known, unless a waiver is granted by the Regional Director or the Office Director.

(5) All marine mammals released must be tagged or marked in a manner acceptable to the Regional Director or the Office Director. The tag number or description of the marking must be reported to the Regional Director or Office Director following release.

(b) *Non-releasability and postponed determinations.* (1) The attending veterinarian shall provide the Regional Director or Office Director with a written report setting forth the basis of any determination under paragraphs (a)(1)(i) through (iii) of this section.

(2) Upon receipt of a report under paragraph (b)(1) of this section, the Regional Director or Office Director, in their sole discretion, may:

(i) Order the release of the marine mammal;

(ii) Order continued rehabilitation for an additional 6 months; or

(iii) Order other disposition as authorized.

(3) No later than 30 days after a marine mammal is determined unreleasable in accordance with paragraphs (a)(1)(i) through (iii) of this section, the person with authorized custody must:

(i) Request authorization to retain or transfer custody of the marine mammal in accordance with paragraph (c) of this section, or;

(ii) Humanely euthanize the marine mammal or arrange any other disposition of the marine mammal authorized by the Regional Director or Office Director.

(4) Notwithstanding any of the provisions of this section, the Office Director may require use of a rehabilitated marine mammal for any activity authorized under subpart D in lieu of animals taken from the wild.

(5) Any rehabilitated beached or stranded marine mammal placed on public display following a non-releasability determination under paragraph (a)(1) of this section and pending disposition under paragraph (c) of this section, or any marine mammal imported for medical treatment otherwise unavailable and placed on public display pending disposition after such medical treatment is concluded, must be held in captive maintenance consistent with all requirements for public display.

(c) *Disposition for a special exception purpose.* (1) Upon receipt of an authorization request made under paragraph (b)(3)(i) of this section, or release notification under (a)(2), the Office Director may authorize the retention or transfer of custody of the marine mammal for a special exception purpose authorized under subpart D.

(2) The Office Director will first consider requests from a person authorized to hold the marine mammal for rehabilitation. The Office Director may authorize such person to retain or transfer custody of the marine mammal for scientific research, enhancement, or public display purposes.

(3) The Office Director may authorize retention or transfer of custody of the marine mammal only if:

(i) Documentation has been submitted to the Office Director that the person retaining the subject animal or the person receiving custody of the subject animal by transfer, hereinafter referred to as the recipient, complies with public display requirements of 16 U.S.C. 1374(c)(2)(A) or, for purposes of scientific research and enhancement, holds an applicable permit, or an application for such a special exception permit under §216.33 or a request for a major amendment under §216.39 has been submitted to the Office Director and has been found complete;

(ii) The recipient agrees to hold the marine mammal in conformance with all applicable requirements and standards; and

(iii) The recipient acknowledges that the marine mammal is subject to seizure by the Office Director:

(A) If, at any time pending issuance of the major amendment or permit, the Office Director determines that seizure is necessary in the interest of the health or welfare of the marine mammal;

(B) If the major amendment or permit is denied; or

(C) If the recipient is issued a notice of violation and assessment, or is subject to permit sanctions, in accordance with 15 CFR part 904.

(4) There shall be no remuneration associated with any transfer, provided that, the transferee may reimburse the transferor for any and all costs associ-

ated with the rehabilitation and transport of the marine mammal.

(5) Marine mammals undergoing rehabilitation or pending disposition under this section shall not be subject to public display, unless such activities are specifically authorized by the Regional Director or the Office Director, and conducted consistent with the requirements applicable to public display. Such marine mammals shall not be trained for performance or be included in any aspect of a program involving interaction with the public; and

(6) Marine mammals undergoing rehabilitation shall not be subject to intrusive research, unless such activities are specifically authorized by the Office Director in consultation with the Marine Mammal Commission and its Committee of Scientific Advisors on Marine Mammals, and are conducted pursuant to a scientific research permit.

(d) Reporting. In addition to the report required under §216.22(b), the person authorized to hold marine mammals for rehabilitation must submit reports to the Regional Director or Office Director regarding release or other disposition. These reports must be provided in the form and frequency specified by the Regional Director or Office Director.

[61 FR 21933, May 10, 1996]

### Subpart D—Special Exceptions

#### §216.30 [Reserved]

#### §216.31 Definitions.

For the purpose of this subpart, the definitions set forth in 50 CFR part 217 shall apply to all threatened and endangered marine mammals, unless a more restrictive definition exists under the MMPA or part 216.

[61 FR 21935, May 10, 1996]

#### §216.32 Scope.

The regulations of this subpart apply to:

(a) All marine mammals and marine mammal parts taken or born in captivity after December 20, 1972; and

(b) All marine mammals and marine mammal parts that are listed as

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threatened or endangered under the ESA.

[61 FR 21935, May 10, 1996]

**§ 216.33 Permit application submission, review, and decision procedures.**

(a) *Application submission.* Persons seeking a special exemption permit under this subpart must submit an application to the Office Director. The application must be signed by the applicant, and provide in a properly formatted manner all information necessary to process the application. Written instructions addressing information requirements and formatting may be obtained from the Office Director upon request.

(b) *Applications to export living marine mammals.* For applicants seeking a special exception permit to export living marine mammals, the application must:

(1) Be submitted through the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Fauna and Flora management authority of the foreign government or, if different, the appropriate agency or agencies of the foreign government that exercises oversight over marine mammals.

(2) Include a certification from the foreign government that:

(i) The information set forth in the application is accurate;

(ii) The laws and regulations of the foreign government involved allow enforcement of the terms and conditions of the permit, and that the foreign government will enforce all terms and conditions; and

(iii) The foreign government involved will afford comity to any permit amendment, modification, suspension or revocation decision.

(c) *Initial review.* (1) NMFS will notify the applicant of receipt of the application.

(2) During the initial review, the Office Director will determine:

(i) Whether the application is complete.

(ii) Whether the proposed activity is for purposes authorized under this subpart.

(iii) If the proposed activity is for enhancement purposes, whether the species or stock identified in the applica-

tion is in need of enhancement for its survival or recovery and whether the proposed activity will likely succeed in its objectives.

(iv) Whether the activities proposed are to be conducted consistent with the permit restrictions and permit specific conditions as described in § 216.35 and § 216.36(a).

(v) Whether sufficient information is included regarding the environmental impact of the proposed activity to enable the Office Director:

(A) To make an initial determination under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) as to whether the proposed activity is categorically excluded from preparation of further environmental documentation, or whether the preparation of an environmental assessment (EA) or environmental impact statement (EIS) is appropriate or necessary; and

(B) To prepare an EA or EIS if an initial determination is made by the Office Director that the activity proposed is not categorically excluded from such requirements.

(3) The Office Director may consult with the Marine Mammal Commission (Commission) and its Committee of Scientific Advisors on Marine Mammals (Committee) in making these initial, and any subsequent, determinations.

(4) Incomplete applications will be returned with explanation. If the applicant fails to resubmit a complete application or correct the identified deficiencies within 60 days, the application will be deemed withdrawn. Applications that propose activities inconsistent with this subpart will be returned with explanation, and will not be considered further.

(d) *Notice of receipt and application review.* (1) Upon receipt of a valid, complete application, and the preparation of any NEPA documentation that has been determined initially to be required, the Office Director will publish a notice of receipt in the FEDERAL REGISTER. The notice will:

(i) Summarize the application, including:

(A) The purpose of the request;  
(B) The species and number of marine mammals;



(C) The type and manner of special exception activity proposed;

(D) The location(s) in which the marine mammals will be taken, from which they will be imported, or to which they will be exported; and

(E) The requested period of the permit.

(ii) List where the application is available for review.

(iii) Invite interested parties to submit written comments concerning the application within 30 days of the date of the notice.

(iv) Include a NEPA statement that an initial determination has been made that the activity proposed is categorically excluded from the requirement to prepare an EA or EIS, that an EA was prepared resulting in a finding of no significant impact, or that a final EIS has been prepared and is available for review.

(2) The Office Director will forward a copy of the complete application to the Commission for comment. If no comments are received within 45 days (or such longer time as the Office Director may establish) the Office Director will consider the Commission to have no objection to issuing a permit.

(3) The Office Director may consult with any other person, institution, or agency concerning the application.

(4) Within 30 days of publication of the notice of receipt in the FEDERAL REGISTER, any interested party may submit written comments or may request a public hearing on the application.

(5) If the Office Director deems it advisable, the Office Director may hold a public hearing within 60 days of publication of the notice of receipt in the FEDERAL REGISTER. Notice of the date, time, and place of the public hearing will be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER not less than 15 days in advance of the public hearing. Any interested person may appear in person or through representatives and may submit any relevant material, data, views, or comments. A summary record of the hearing will be kept.

(6) The Office Director may extend the period during which any interested party may submit written comments. Notice of the extension must be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER within

60 days of publication of the notice of receipt in the FEDERAL REGISTER.

(7) If, after publishing a notice of receipt, the Office Director determines on the basis of new information that an EA or EIS must be prepared, the Office Director must deny the permit unless an EA is prepared with a finding of no significant impact. If a permit is denied under these circumstances the application may be resubmitted with information sufficient to prepare an EA or EIS, and will be processed as a new application.

(e) *Issuance or denial procedures.* (1) Within 30 days of the close of the public hearing or, if no public hearing is held, within 30 days of the close of the public comment period, the Office Director will issue or deny a special exception permit.

(2) The decision to issue or deny a permit will be based upon:

(i) All relevant issuance criteria set forth at §216.34;

(ii) All purpose-specific issuance criteria as appropriate set forth at §216.41, §216.42, and §216.43;

(iii) All comments received or views solicited on the permit application; and

(iv) Any other information or data that the Office Director deems relevant.

(3) If the permit is issued, upon receipt, the holder must date and sign the permit, and return a copy of the original to the Office Director. The permit shall be effective upon the permit holder's signing of the permit. In signing the permit, the holder:

(i) Agrees to abide by all terms and conditions set forth in the permit, and all restrictions and relevant regulations under this subpart; and

(ii) Acknowledges that the authority to conduct certain activities specified in the permit is conditional and subject to authorization by the Office Director.

(4) Notice of the decision of the Office Director shall be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER within 10 days after the date of permit issuance or denial and shall indicate where copies of the permit, if issued, may be reviewed or obtained. If the permit issued involves marine mammals listed as endangered

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or threatened under the ESA, the notice shall include a finding by the Office Director that the permit:

- (i) Was applied for in good faith;
- (ii) If exercised, will not operate to the disadvantage of such endangered or threatened species; and
- (iii) Is consistent with the purposes and policy set forth in section 2 of the ESA.

(5) If the permit is denied, the Office Director shall provide the applicant with an explanation for the denial.

(6) Under the MMPA, the Office Director may issue a permit for scientific research before the end of the public comment period if delaying issuance could result in injury to a species, stock, or individual, or in loss of unique research opportunities. The Office Director also may waive the 30-day comment period required under the ESA in an emergency situation where the health or life of an endangered or threatened marine mammal is threatened and no reasonable alternative is available. If a permit is issued under these circumstances, notice of such issuance before the end of the comment period shall be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER within 10 days of issuance.

(7) The applicant or any party opposed to a permit may seek judicial review of the terms and conditions of such permit or of a decision to deny such permit. Review may be obtained by filing a petition for review with the appropriate U.S. District Court as provided for by law.

[61 FR 21935, May 10, 1996]

### § 216.34 Issuance criteria.

(a) For the Office Director to issue any permit under this subpart, the applicant must demonstrate that:

(1) The proposed activity is humane and does not present any unnecessary risks to the health and welfare of marine mammals;

(2) The proposed activity is consistent with all restrictions set forth at § 216.35 and any purpose-specific restrictions as appropriate set forth at § 216.41, § 216.42, and § 216.43;

(3) The proposed activity, if it involves endangered or threatened marine mammals, will be conducted con-

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sistent with the purposes and policies set forth in section 2 of the ESA;

(4) The proposed activity by itself or in combination with other activities, will not likely have a significant adverse impact on the species or stock;

(5) Whether the applicant's expertise, facilities, and resources are adequate to accomplish successfully the objectives and activities stated in the application;

(6) If a live animal will be held captive or transported, the applicant's qualifications, facilities, and resources are adequate for the proper care and maintenance of the marine mammal; and

(7) Any requested import or export will not likely result in the taking of marine mammals or marine mammal parts beyond those authorized by the permit.

(b) The opinions or views of scientists or other persons or organizations knowledgeable of the marine mammals that are the subject of the application or of other matters germane to the application will be considered.

[61 FR 21936, May 10, 1996]

### § 216.35 Permit restrictions.

The following restrictions shall apply to all permits issued under this subpart:

(a) The taking, importation, export, or other permitted activity involving marine mammals and marine mammal parts shall comply with the regulations of this subpart.

(b) The maximum period of any special exception permit issued, or any major amendment granted, is five years from the effective date of the permit or major amendment. In accordance with the provisions of § 216.39, the period of a permit may be extended by a minor amendment up to 12 months beyond that established in the original permit.

(c) Except as provided for in § 216.41(c)(1)(v), marine mammals or marine mammal parts imported under the authority of a permit must be taken or imported in a humane manner, and in compliance with the Acts and any applicable foreign law. Importation of marine mammals and marine mammal parts is subject to the provisions of 50 CFR part 14.

(d) The permit holder shall not take from the wild any marine mammal which at the time of taking is either unweaned or less than eight months old, or is a part of a mother-calf/pup pair, unless such take is specifically authorized in the conditions of the special exception permit. Additionally, the permit holder shall not import any marine mammal that is pregnant or lactating at the time of taking or import, or is unweaned or less than eight months old unless such import is specifically authorized in the conditions of the special exception permit.

(e) Captive marine mammals shall not be released into the wild unless specifically authorized by the Office Director under a scientific research or enhancement permit.

(f) The permit holder is responsible for all activities of any individual who is operating under the authority of the permit;

(g) Individuals conducting activities authorized under the permit must possess qualifications commensurate with their duties and responsibilities, or must be under the direct supervision of a person with such qualifications;

(h) Persons who require state or Federal licenses to conduct activities authorized under the permit must be duly licensed when undertaking such activities;

(i) Special exception permits are not transferable or assignable to any other person, and a permit holder may not require any direct or indirect compensation from another person in return for requesting authorization for such person to conduct the taking, import, or export activities authorized under the subject permit;

(j) The permit holder or designated agent shall possess a copy of the permit when engaged in a permitted activity, when the marine mammal is in transit incidental to such activity, and whenever marine mammals or marine mammal parts are in the possession of the permit holder or agent. A copy of the permit shall be affixed to any container, package, enclosure, or other means of containment, in which the marine mammals or marine mammal parts are placed for purposes of transit, supervision, or care. For marine mammals held captive and marine mammal

parts in storage, a copy of the permit shall be kept on file in the holding or storage facility.

[61 FR 21936, May 10, 1996]

**§ 216.36 Permit conditions.**

(a) *Specific conditions.* (1) Permits issued under this subpart shall contain specific terms and conditions deemed appropriate by the Office Director, including, but not limited to:

(i) The number and species of marine mammals that are authorized to be taken, imported, exported, or otherwise affected;

(ii) The manner in which marine mammals may be taken according to type of take;

(iii) The location(s) in which the marine mammals may be taken, from which they may be imported, or to which they may be exported, as applicable, and, for endangered or threatened marine mammal species to be imported or exported, the port of entry or export;

(iv) The period during which the permit is valid.

(2) [Reserved]

(b) *Other conditions.* In addition to the specific conditions imposed pursuant to paragraph (a) of this section, the Office Director shall specify any other permit conditions deemed appropriate.

[61 FR 21937, May 10, 1996]

**§ 216.37 Marine mammal parts.**

With respect to marine mammal parts acquired by take or import authorized under a permit issued under this subpart:

(a) Marine mammal parts are transferrable if:

(1) The person transferring the part receives no remuneration of any kind for the marine mammal part;

(2) The person receiving the marine mammal part is:

(i) An employee of NMFS, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, or any other governmental agency with conservation and management responsibilities, who receives the part in the course of their official duties;

(ii) A holder of a special exception permit which authorizes the take, import, or other activity involving the

possession of a marine mammal part of the same species as the subject part; or

(iii) In the case of marine mammal parts from a species that is not depleted, endangered or threatened, a person who is authorized under section 112(c) of the MMPA and subpart C of this part to take or import marine mammals or marine mammal parts;

(iv) Any other person specifically authorized by the Regional Director, consistent with the requirements of paragraphs (a)(1) and (a)(3) through (6) of this section.

(3) The marine mammal part is transferred for the purpose of scientific research, maintenance in a properly curated, professionally accredited scientific collection, or education, provided that, for transfers for educational purposes, the recipient is a museum, educational institution or equivalent that will ensure that the part is available to the public as part of an educational program;

(4) A unique number assigned by the permit holder is marked on or affixed to the marine mammal part or container;

(5) The person receiving the marine mammal part agrees that, as a condition of receipt, subsequent transfers may only occur subject to the provisions of paragraph (a) of this section; and

(6) Within 30 days after the transfer, the person transferring the marine mammal part notifies the Regional Director of the transfer, including a description of the part, the person to whom the part was transferred, the purpose of the transfer, certification that the recipient has agreed to comply with the requirements of paragraph (a) of this section for subsequent transfers, and, if applicable, the recipient's permit number.

(b) Marine mammal parts may be loaned to another person for a purpose described in paragraph (a)(3) of this section and without the agreement and notification required under paragraphs (a)(5) and (6) of this section, if:

(1) A record of the loan is maintained; and

(2) The loan is for not more than one year. Loans for a period greater than 12 months, including loan extensions or renewals, require notification of the

Regional Director under paragraph (a)(6).

(c) Unless other disposition is specified in the permit, a holder of a special exception permit may retain marine mammal parts not destroyed or otherwise disposed of during or after a scientific research or enhancement activity, if such marine mammal parts are:

(1) Maintained as part of a properly curated, professionally accredited collection; or

(2) Made available for purposes of scientific research or enhancement at the request of the Office Director.

(d) Marine mammal parts may be exported and subsequently reimported by a permit holder or subsequent authorized recipient, for the purpose of scientific research, maintenance in a properly curated, professionally accredited scientific collection, or education, provided that:

(1) The permit holder or other person receives no remuneration for the marine mammal part;

(2) A unique number assigned by the permit holder is marked on or affixed to the marine mammal specimen or container;

(3) The marine mammal part is exported or reimported in compliance with all applicable domestic and foreign laws;

(4) If exported or reimported for educational purposes, the recipient is a museum, educational institution, or equivalent that will ensure that the part is available to the public as part of an educational program; and

(5) Special reports are submitted within 30 days after both export and reimport as required by the Office Director under § 216.38.

[61 FR 21937, May 10, 1996]

**§ 216.38 Reporting.**

All permit holders must submit annual, final, and special reports in accordance with the requirements established in the permit, and any reporting format established by the Office Director.

[61 FR 21937, May 10, 1996]

**§216.39 Permit amendments.**

(a) *General.* Special exception permits may be amended by the Office Director. Major and minor amendments may be made to permits in response to, or independent of, a request from the permit holder. Amendments must be consistent with the Acts and comply with the applicable provisions of this subpart.

(1) A “major amendment” means any change to the permit specific conditions under §216.36(a) regarding:

(i) The number and species of marine mammals that are authorized to be taken, imported, exported, or otherwise affected;

(ii) The manner in which these marine mammals may be taken, imported, exported, or otherwise affected, if the proposed change may result in an increased level of take or risk of adverse impact;

(iii) The location(s) in which the marine mammals may be taken, from which they may be imported, and to which they may be exported, as applicable; and

(iv) The duration of the permit, if the proposed extension would extend the duration of the permit more than 12 months beyond that established in the original permit.

(2) A “minor amendment” means any amendment that does not constitute a major amendment.

(b) *Amendment requests and proposals.*

(1) Requests by a permit holder for an amendment must be submitted in writing and include the following:

(i) The purpose and nature of the amendment;

(ii) Information, not previously submitted as part of the permit application or subsequent reports, necessary to determine whether the amendment satisfies all issuance criteria set forth at §216.34, and, as appropriate, §216.41, §216.42, and §216.43.

(iii) Any additional information required by the Office Director for purposes of reviewing the proposed amendment.

(2) If an amendment is proposed by the Office Director, the permit holder will be notified of the proposed amendment, together with an explanation.

(c) *Review of proposed amendments.* (1) *Major amendments.* The provisions of

§216.33(d) and (e) governing notice of receipt, review and decision shall apply to all proposed major amendments.

(2) *Minor amendments.* (i) After reviewing all appropriate information, the Office Director will provide the permit holder with written notice of the decision on a proposed or requested amendment, together with an explanation for the decision.

(ii) If the minor amendment extends the duration of the permit 12 months or less from that established in the original permit, notice of the minor amendment will be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER within 10 days from the date of the Office Director’s decision.

(iii) A minor amendment will be effective upon a final decision by the Office Director.

[61 FR 21937, May 10, 1996]

**§216.40 Penalties and permit sanctions.**

(a) Any person who violates any provision of this subpart or permit issued thereunder is subject to civil and criminal penalties, permit sanctions and forfeiture as authorized under the Acts, and 15 CFR part 904.

(b) All special exception permits are subject to suspension, revocation, modification and denial in accordance with the provisions of subpart D of 15 CFR part 904.

[61 FR 21938, May 10, 1996]

**§216.41 Permits for scientific research and enhancement.**

In addition to the requirements under §216.33 through §216.38, permits for scientific research and enhancement are governed by the following requirements:

(a) *Applicant.* (1) For each application submitted under this section, the applicant shall be the principal investigator responsible for the overall research or enhancement activity. If the research or enhancement activity will involve a periodic change in the principal investigator or is otherwise controlled by and dependent upon another entity, the applicant may be the institution, governmental entity, or corporation responsible for supervision of the principal investigator.

(2) For any scientific research involving captive maintenance, the application must include supporting documentation from the person responsible for the facility or other temporary enclosure.

(b) *Issuance Criteria.* For the Office Director to issue any scientific research or enhancement permit, the applicant must demonstrate that:

(1) The proposed activity furthers a bona fide scientific or enhancement purpose;

(2) If the lethal taking of marine mammals is proposed:

(i) Non-lethal methods for conducting the research are not feasible; and

(ii) For depleted, endangered, or threatened species, the results will directly benefit that species or stock, or will fulfill a critically important research need.

(3) Any permanent removal of a marine mammal from the wild is consistent with any applicable quota established by the Office Director.

(4) The proposed research will not likely have significant adverse effects on any other component of the marine ecosystem of which the affected species or stock is a part.

(5) For species or stocks designated or proposed to be designated as depleted, or listed or proposed to be listed as endangered or threatened:

(i) The proposed research cannot be accomplished using a species or stock that is not designated or proposed to be designated as depleted, or listed or proposed to be listed as threatened or endangered;

(ii) The proposed research, by itself or in combination with other activities will not likely have a long-term direct or indirect adverse impact on the species or stock;

(iii) The proposed research will either:

(A) Contribute to fulfilling a research need or objective identified in a species recovery or conservation plan, or if there is no conservation or recovery plan in place, a research need or objective identified by the Office Director in stock assessments established under section 117 of the MMPA;

(B) Contribute significantly to understanding the basic biology or ecology of the species or stock, or to identify-

ing, evaluating, or resolving conservation problems for the species or stock; or

(C) Contribute significantly to fulfilling a critically important research need.

(6) For proposed enhancement activities:

(i) Only living marine mammals and marine mammal parts necessary for enhancement of the survival, recovery, or propagation of the affected species or stock may be taken, imported, exported, or otherwise affected under the authority of an enhancement permit. Marine mammal parts would include in this regard clinical specimens or other biological samples required for the conduct of breeding programs or the diagnosis or treatment of disease.

(ii) The activity will likely contribute significantly to maintaining or increasing distribution or abundance, enhancing the health or welfare of the species or stock, or ensuring the survival or recovery of the affected species or stock in the wild.

(iii) The activity is consistent with:

(A) An approved conservation plan developed under section 115(b) of the MMPA or recovery plan developed under section 4(f) of the ESA for the species or stock; or

(B) If there is no conservation or recovery plan, with the Office Director's evaluation of the actions required to enhance the survival or recovery of the species or stock in light of the factors that would be addressed in a conservation or recovery plan.

(iv) An enhancement permit may authorize the captive maintenance of a marine mammal from a threatened, endangered, or depleted species or stock only if the Office Director determines that:

(A) The proposed captive maintenance will likely contribute directly to the survival or recovery of the species or stock by maintaining a viable gene pool, increasing productivity, providing necessary biological information, or establishing animal reserves required to support directly these objectives; and

(B) The expected benefit to the species or stock outweighs the expected

benefits of alternatives that do not require removal of marine mammals from the wild.

(v) The Office Director may authorize the public display of marine mammals held under the authority of an enhancement permit only if:

(A) The public display is incidental to the authorized captive maintenance;

(B) The public display will not interfere with the attainment of the survival or recovery objectives;

(C) The marine mammals will be held consistent with all requirements and standards that are applicable to marine mammals held under the authority of the Acts and the Animal Welfare Act, unless the Office Director determines that an exception is necessary to implement an essential enhancement activity; and

(D) The marine mammals will be excluded from any interactive program and will not be trained for performance.

(vi) The Office Director may authorize non-intrusive scientific research to be conducted while a marine mammal is held under the authority of an enhancement permit, only if such scientific research:

(A) Is incidental to the permitted enhancement activities; and

(B) Will not interfere with the attainment of the survival or recovery objectives.

(c) *Restrictions.* (1) The following restrictions apply to all scientific research permits issued under this subpart:

(i) Research activities must be conducted in the manner authorized in the permit.

(ii) Research results shall be published or otherwise made available to the scientific community in a reasonable period of time.

(iii) Research activities must be conducted under the direct supervision of the principal investigator or a co-investigator identified in the permit.

(iv) Personnel involved in research activities shall be reasonable in number and limited to:

(A) Individuals who perform a function directly supportive of and necessary to the permitted research activity; and

(B) Support personnel included for the purpose of training or as backup personnel for persons described in paragraph (c)(1)(iv)(A).

(v) Any marine mammal part imported under the authority of a scientific research permit must not have been obtained as the result of a lethal taking that would be inconsistent with the Acts, unless authorized by the Office Director.

(vi) Marine mammals held under a permit for scientific research shall not be placed on public display, included in an interactive program or activity, or trained for performance unless such activities:

(A) Are necessary to address scientific research objectives and have been specifically authorized by the Office Director under the scientific research permit; and

(B) Are conducted incidental to and do not in any way interfere with the permitted scientific research; and

(C) Are conducted in a manner consistent with provisions applicable to public display, unless exceptions are specifically authorized by the Office Director.

(vii) Any activity conducted incidental to the authorized scientific research activity must not involve any taking of marine mammals beyond what is necessary to conduct the research (i.e., educational and commercial photography).

(2) Any marine mammal or progeny held in captive maintenance under an enhancement permit shall be returned to its natural habitat as soon as feasible, consistent with the terms of the enhancement permit and the objectives of an approved conservation or recovery plan. In accordance with section 10(j) of the ESA, the Office Director may authorize the release of any population of an endangered or threatened species outside the current range of such species if the Office Director determines that such release will further the conservation of such species.

[61 FR 21938, May 10, 1996]

**§ 216.42 Photography. [Reserved]**

**§ 216.43 Public display. [Reserved]**

**§ 216.44 Applicability/transition.**

(a) *General.* The regulations of this subpart are applicable to all persons, including persons holding permits or other authorizing documents issued before June 10, 1996, by NMFS for the take, import, export, or conduct of any otherwise prohibited activity involving a marine mammal or marine mammal part for special exception purposes.

(b) *Scientific research.* Any intrusive research as defined in § 216.3, initiated after June 10, 1996, must be authorized under a scientific research permit. Intrusive research authorized by the Office Director to be conducted on captive marine mammals held for public display purposes prior to June 10, 1996, must be authorized under a scientific research permit one year after June 10, 1996.

[61 FR 21939, May 10, 1996]

**§ 216.45 General Authorization for Level B harassment for scientific research.**

(a) *General Authorization.* (1) Persons are authorized under section 104(c)(3)(C) of the MMPA to take marine mammals in the wild by Level B harassment, as defined in § 216.3, for purposes of bona fide scientific research *Provided*, That:

(i) They submit a letter of intent in accordance with the requirements of paragraph (b) of this section, receive confirmation that the General Authorization applies in accordance with paragraph (c) of this section, and comply with the terms and conditions of paragraph (d) of this section; or

(ii) If such marine mammals are listed as endangered or threatened under the ESA, they have been issued a permit under Section 10(a)(1)(A) of the ESA and implementing regulations at 50 CFR parts 217-227, particularly at § 222.23 through § 222.28, to take marine mammals in the wild for the purpose of scientific research, the taking authorized under the permit involves such Level B harassment of marine mammals or marine mammal stocks, and they comply with the terms and conditions of that permit.

(2) Except as provided under paragraph (a)(1)(ii) of this section, no taking, including harassment, of marine mammals listed as threatened or endangered under the ESA is authorized under the General Authorization. Marine mammals listed as endangered or threatened under the ESA may be taken for purposes of scientific research only after issuance of a permit for such activities pursuant to the ESA.

(3) The following types of research activities will likely qualify for inclusion under the General Authorization: Photo-identification studies, behavioral observations, and vessel and aerial population surveys (except aerial surveys over pinniped rookeries at altitudes of less than 1,000 ft).

(b) *Letter of intent.* Except as provided under paragraph (a)(1)(ii) of this section, any person intending to take marine mammals in the wild by Level B harassment for purposes of bona fide scientific research under the General Authorization must submit, at least 60 days before commencement of such research, a letter of intent by certified return/receipt mail to the Chief, Permits Division, F/PR1, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1335 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910-3226.

(1) The letter of intent must be submitted by the principal investigator (who shall be deemed the applicant). For purposes of this section, the principal investigator is the individual who is responsible for the overall research project, or the institution, governmental entity, or corporation responsible for supervision of the principal investigator.

(2) The letter of intent must include the following information:

(i) The name, address, telephone number, qualifications and experience of the applicant and any co-investigator(s) to be conducting the proposed research, and a curriculum vitae for each, including a list of publications by each such investigator relevant to the objectives, methodology, or other aspects of the proposed research;

(ii) The species or stocks of marine mammals (common and scientific names) that are the subject of the scientific research and any other species



or stock of marine mammals that may be harassed during the conduct of the research;

(iii) The geographic location(s) in which the research is to be conducted, e.g., geographic name or lat./long.;

(iv) The period(s) of time over which the research will be conducted (up to five years), including the field season(s) for the research, if applicable;

(v) The purpose of the research, including a description of how the proposed research qualifies as bona fide research as defined in §216.3; and

(vi) The methods to be used to conduct the research.

(3) The letter of intent must be signed, dated, and certified by the applicant as follows:

In accordance with section 104(c)(3)(C) of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*) and implementing regulations (50 CFR part 216), I hereby notify the National Marine Fisheries Service of my intent to conduct research involving only Level B harassment on marine mammals in the wild, and request confirmation that the General Authorization for Level B Harassment for Scientific Research applies to the proposed research as described herein. I certify that the information in this letter of intent is complete, true, and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief, and I understand that any false statement may subject me to the criminal penalties of 18 U.S.C. 1001, or penalties under the MMPA and implementing regulations. I acknowledge and accept that authority to conduct scientific research on marine mammals in the wild under the General Authorization is a limited conditional authority restricted to Level B harassment only, and that any other take of marine mammals, including the conduct of any activity that has the potential to injure marine mammals (i.e., Level A harassment), may subject me to penalties under the MMPA and implementing regulations.

(c) *Confirmation that the General Authorization applies or notification of permit requirement.*

(1) Not later than 30 days after receipt of a letter of intent as described in paragraph (b) of this section, the Chief, Permits Division, NMFS will issue a letter to the applicant either:

(i) Confirming that the General Authorization applies to the proposed scientific research as described in the letter of intent;

(ii) Notifying the applicant that all or part of the research described in the

letter of intent is likely to result in a taking of a marine mammal in the wild involving other than Level B harassment and, as a result, cannot be conducted under the General Authorization, and that a scientific research permit is required to conduct all or part of the subject research; or

(iii) Notifying the applicant that the letter of intent fails to provide sufficient information and providing a description of the deficiencies, or notifying the applicant that the proposed research as described in the letter of intent is not bona fide research as defined in §216.3.

(2) A copy of each letter of intent and letter confirming that the General Authorization applies or notifying the applicant that it does not apply will be forwarded to the Marine Mammal Commission.

(3) Periodically, NMFS will publish a summary document in the FEDERAL REGISTER notifying the public of letters of confirmation issued.

(d) *Terms and conditions.* Persons issued letters of confirmation in accordance with paragraph (c) of this section are responsible for complying with the following terms and conditions:

(1) Activities are limited to those conducted for the purposes, by the means, in the locations, and during the periods of time described in the letter of intent and acknowledged as authorized under the General Authorization in the confirmation letter sent pursuant to paragraph (c) of this section;

(2) Annual reports of activities conducted under the General Authorization must be submitted to the Chief, Permits Division (address listed in paragraph (b) of this section) within 90 days of completion of the last field season(s) during the calendar year or, if the research is not conducted during a defined field season, no later than 90 days after the anniversary date of the letter of confirmation issued under paragraph (c) of this section. Annual reports must include:

(i) A summary of research activities conducted;

(ii) Identification of the species and number of each species taken by Level B harassment;

(iii) An evaluation of the progress made in meeting the objectives of the

research as described in the letter of intent; and

(iv) Any incidental scientific, educational, or commercial uses of photographs, videotape, and film obtained as a result of or incidental to the research and if so, names of all photographers.

(3) Authorization to conduct research under the General Authorization is for the period(s) of time identified in the letter of intent or for a period of 5 years from the date of the letter of confirmation issued under paragraph (c) of this section, whichever is less, unless extended by the Director or modified, suspended, or revoked in accordance with paragraph (e) of this section;

(4) Activities conducted under the General Authorization may only be conducted under the on-site supervision of the principal investigator or co-investigator(s) named in the letter of intent. All personnel involved in the conduct of activities under the General Authorization must perform a function directly supportive of and necessary for the research being conducted, or be one of a reasonable number of support personnel included for the purpose of training or as back-up personnel;

(5) The principal investigator must notify the appropriate Regional Director, NMFS, (Regional Director) in writing at least 2 weeks before initiation of on-site activities. The Regional Director shall consider this information in efforts to coordinate field research activities to minimize adverse impacts on marine mammals in the wild. The principal investigator must cooperate with coordination efforts by the Regional Director in this regard;

(6) If research activities result in a taking which exceeds Level B harassment, the applicant shall:

(i) Report the taking within 12 hours to the Director, Office of Protected Resources, or his designee as set forth in the letter authorizing research; and

(ii) Temporarily discontinue for 72 hours all field research activities that resulted in the taking. During this time period, the applicant shall consult with NMFS as to the circumstances surrounding the taking and any precautions necessary to prevent future taking, and may agree to amend the re-

search protocol, as deemed necessary by NMFS.

(7) NMFS may review scientific research conducted pursuant to the General Authorization. If requested by NMFS, the applicant must cooperate with any such review and shall:

(i) Allow any employee of NOAA or any other person designated by the Director, Office of Protected Resources to observe research activities; and

(ii) Provide any documents or other information relating to the scientific research;

(8) Any photographs, videotape, or film obtained during the conduct of research under the General Authorization must be identified by a statement that refers to the General Authorization or ESA permit number, and includes the file number provided by NMFS in the confirmation letter, the name of the photographer, and the date the image was taken. This statement must accompany the image(s) in all subsequent uses or sales. The annual report must note incidental scientific, educational, or commercial uses of the images, and if there are any such uses, the names of all photographers; and

(9) Persons conducting scientific research under authority of the General Authorization may not transfer or assign any authority granted thereunder to any other person.

(e) *Suspension, revocation, or modification.* (1) NMFS may suspend, revoke, or modify the authority to conduct scientific research under the General Authorization if:

(i) The letter of intent included false information or statements of a material nature;

(ii) The research does not constitute bona fide scientific research;

(iii) Research activities result in takings of marine mammals other than by Level B harassment;

(iv) Research activities differ from those described in the letter of intent submitted by the applicant and letter of confirmation issued by NMFS; or

(v) The applicant violates any term or condition set forth in this section.

(2) Any suspension, revocation, or modification is subject to the requirements of 15 CFR part 904.

[59 FR 50376, Oct. 3, 1994]

**§§ 216.46–216.49 [Reserved]****Subpart E—Designated Ports****§ 216.50 Importation at designated ports.**

(a) Any marine mammal or marine mammal product which is subject to the jurisdiction of the National Marine Fisheries Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Department of Commerce and is intended for importation into the United States shall be subject to the provisions of 50 CFR part 14.

(b) For the information of importers, designated ports of entry for the United States are:

New York, N.Y.  
Miami, Fla.  
Chicago, Ill.  
San Francisco, Calif.  
Los Angeles, Calif.  
New Orleans, La.  
Seattle, Wash.  
Honolulu, Hi.

(c) Additionally, marine mammals or marine mammal products which are entered into Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa or the Virgin Islands and which are not to be forwarded or transhipped within the United States may be imported through the following ports:

Alaska—Juneau, Anchorage, Fairbanks  
Hawaii—Honolulu  
Puerto Rico—San Juan  
Guam—Honolulu, Hi.  
American Samoa—Honolulu, Hi.  
Virgin Islands—San Juan, P.R.

(d) Importers are advised to see 50 CFR part 14 for importation requirements and information.

[39 FR 1852, Jan. 15, 1974. Redesignated at 59 FR 50376, Oct. 3, 1994]

**Subpart F—Pribilof Islands, Taking for Subsistence Purposes****§ 216.71 Allowable take of fur seals.**

Pribilovians may take fur seals on the Pribilof Islands if such taking is

- (a) For subsistence uses, and
- (b) Not accomplished in a wasteful manner.

[51 FR 24840, July 9, 1986. Redesignated at 61 FR 11750, Mar. 22, 1996]

**§ 216.72 Restrictions on taking.**

(a) The harvests of seals on St. Paul and St. George Islands shall be treated independently for the purposes of this section. Any suspension, termination, or extension of the harvest is applicable only to the island for which it is issued.

(b) By April 1 of every third year, beginning April 1994, the Assistant Administrator will publish in the FEDERAL REGISTER a summary of the preceding 3 years of harvesting and a discussion of the number of seals expected to be taken annually over the next 3 years to satisfy the subsistence requirements of each island. This discussion will include an assessment of factors and conditions on St. Paul and St. George Islands that influence the need by Pribilof Aleuts to take seals for subsistence uses and an assessment of any changes to those conditions indicating that the number of seals that may be taken for subsistence each year should be made higher or lower. Following a 30-day public comment period, a final notification of the expected annual harvest levels for the next 3 years will be published.

(c)(1) No fur seal may be taken on the Pribilof Islands before June 23 of each year.

(2) No fur seal may be taken except by experienced sealers using the traditional harvesting methods, including stunning followed immediately by exsanguination. The harvesting method shall include organized drives of subadult males to killing fields unless it is determined by the NMFS representatives, in consultation with the Pribilovians conducting the harvest, that alternative methods will not result in increased disturbance to the rookery or the increased accidental take of female seals.

(3) Any taking of adult fur seals or pups, or the intentional taking of subadult female fur seals is prohibited.

(4) Only subadult male fur seals 124.5 centimeters or less in length may be taken.

(5) Seals with tags and/or entangling debris may only be taken if so directed by NMFS scientists.

(d) The scheduling of the harvest is at the discretion of the Pribilovians, but must be such as to minimize stress

to the harvested seals. The Pribilovians must give adequate advance notice of their harvest schedules to the NMFS representatives to allow for necessary monitoring activities. Scheduling must be consistent with the following restrictions:

(1) *St. Paul Island*—Seals may only be harvested from the following haulout areas: Zapadni, English Bay, Northeast Point, Polovina, Lukanin, Kitovi, and Reef. No haulout area may be harvested more than once per week.

(2) *St. George Island*—Seals may only be harvested from the following haulout areas: Northeast and Zapadni. Neither haulout area may be harvested more than twice per week.

(e)(1) The Assistant Administrator is required to suspend the take provided for in §215.31 when:

(i) He determines, after reasonable notice by NMFS representatives to the Pribilovians on the island, that the subsistence needs of the Pribilovians on the island have been satisfied;

or

(ii) He determines that the harvest is otherwise being conducted in a wasteful manner; or

(iii) The lower end of the range of the estimated subsistence level provided in the notice issued under paragraph (b) of this section is reached.

(2) A suspension based on a determination under paragraph (e)(1)(ii) of this section may be lifted by the Assistant Administrator if he finds that the conditions which led to the determination that the harvest was being conducted in a wasteful manner have been remedied.

(3) A suspension issued in accordance with paragraph (e)(1)(iii) of this section may not exceed 48 hours in duration and shall be followed immediately by a review of the harvest data to determine if a finding under paragraph (e)(1)(i) of this section is warranted. If a the harvest is not suspended under paragraph (e)(1)(i) of this section, the Assistant Administrator must provide a revised estimate of the number of seals required to satisfy the Pribilovians' subsistence needs.

(f) The Assistant Administrator shall terminate the take provided for in §215.31 on August 8 of each year or when it is determined under paragraph

(e)(1)(i) of this section that the subsistence needs of the Pribilovians on the island have been satisfied, whichever occurs first.

[51 FR 24840, July 9, 1986, as amended at 57 FR 33902, July 31, 1992; 59 FR 35474, July 12, 1994. Redesignated at 61 FR 11750, Mar. 22, 1996]

#### §216.73 Disposition of fur seal parts.

Except for transfers to other Alaskan Natives for barter or sharing for personal or family consumption, no part of a fur seal taken for subsistence uses may be sold or otherwise transferred to any person unless it is a nonedible by-product which:

(a) Has been transformed into an article of handicraft, or

(b) Is being sent by an Alaskan Native directly, or through a registered agent, to a tannery registered under 50 CFR 216.23(c) for the purpose of processing, and will be returned directly to the Alaskan Native for conversion into an article of handicraft, or

(c) Is being sold or transferred to an Alaskan Native, or to an agent registered under 50 CFR 216.23(c) for resale or transfer to an Alaskan Native, who will convert the seal part into a handicraft.

[51 FR 24840, July 9, 1986. Redesignated at 61 FR 11750, Mar. 22, 1996]

#### §216.74 Cooperation with Federal officials.

Pribilovians who engage in the harvest of seals are required to cooperate with scientists engaged in fur seal research on the Pribilof Islands who may need assistance in recording tag or other data and collecting tissue or other fur seal samples for research purposes. In addition, Pribilovians who take fur seals for subsistence uses must, consistent with 5 CFR 1320.7(k)(3), cooperate with the NMFS representatives on the Pribilof Islands who are responsible for compiling the following information on a daily basis:

(a) The number of seals taken each day in the subsistence harvest,

(b) The extent of the utilization of fur seals taken, and

(c) Other information determined by the Assistant Administrator to be necessary for determining the subsistence

needs of the Pribilofians or for making determinations under § 215.32(e).

[51 FR 24840, July 9, 1986. Redesignated at 61 FR 11750, Mar. 22, 1996]

### Subpart G—Pribilof Islands Administration

#### § 216.81 Visits to fur seal rookeries.

From June 1 to October 15 of each year, no person, except those authorized by a representative of the National Marine Fisheries Service, or accompanied by an authorized employee of the National Marine Fisheries Service, shall approach any fur seal rookery or hauling grounds nor pass beyond any posted sign forbidding passage.

[41 FR 49488, Nov. 9, 1976. Redesignated at 61 FR 11750, Mar. 22, 1996]

#### § 216.82 Dogs prohibited.

In order to prevent molestation of fur seal herds, the landing of any dogs at Pribilof Islands is prohibited.

[41 FR 49488, Nov. 9, 1976. Redesignated at 61 FR 11750, Mar. 22, 1996]

#### § 216.83 Importation of birds or mammals.

No mammals or birds, except household cats, canaries and parakeets, shall be imported to the Pribilof Islands without the permission of an authorized representative of the National Marine Fisheries Service.

[41 FR 49488, Nov. 9, 1976. Redesignated at 61 FR 11750, Mar. 22, 1996]

#### § 216.84 [Reserved]

#### § 216.85 Walrus and Otter Islands.

By Executive Order 1044, dated February 27, 1909, Walrus and Otter Islands were set aside as bird reservations. All persons are prohibited to land on these islands except those authorized by the appropriate representative of the National Marine Fisheries Service.

[41 FR 49488, Nov. 9, 1976. Redesignated at 61 FR 11750, Mar. 22, 1996]

#### § 216.86 Local regulations.

Local regulations will be published from time to time and will be brought to the attention of local residents and persons assigned to duty on the Islands

by posting in public places and brought to the attention of tourists by personal notice.

[41 FR 49488, Nov. 9, 1976. Redesignated at 61 FR 11750, Mar. 22, 1996]

#### § 216.87 Wildlife research.

(a) Wildlife research, other than research on North Pacific fur seals, including specimen collection, may be permitted on the Pribilof Islands subject to the following conditions:

(1) Any person or agency, seeking to conduct such research shall first obtain any Federal or State of Alaska permit required for the type of research involved.

(2) Any person seeking to conduct such research shall obtain prior approval of the Director, Pribilof Islands Program, National Marine Fisheries Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 1700 Westlake Avenue North, Seattle, WA 98109, by filing with the Director an application which shall include:

(i) Copies of the required Federal and State of Alaska permits; and

(ii) A resume of the intended research program.

(3) All approved research shall be subject to all regulations and administrative procedures in effect on the Pribilof Islands, and such research shall not commence until approval from the Director is received.

(4) Any approved research program shall be subject to such terms and conditions as the Director, Pribilof Islands Program deems appropriate.

(5) Permission to utilize the Pribilof Islands to conduct an approved research program may be revoked by the Director, Pribilof Islands Program at any time for noncompliance with any terms and conditions, or for violations of any regulation or administrative procedure in effect on the Pribilof Islands.

[43 FR 5521, Feb. 9, 1978. Redesignated at 61 FR 11750, Mar. 22, 1996]

### Subpart H—Dolphin Safe Tuna Labeling

AUTHORITY: 16 U.S.C. 1385.

SOURCE: 61 FR 27794, June 3, 1996, unless otherwise noted.

**§ 216.90 Purpose.**

This subpart governs the requirements for labeling of tuna or tuna products sold in or exported from the United States that suggest the tuna was harvested in a manner not injurious to dolphins.

**§ 216.91 Labeling requirements.**

It is a violation of section 5 of the Federal Trade Commission Act (15 U.S.C. 45) for any person subject to U.S. jurisdiction, including any producer, exporter, importer, distributor, or seller of any tuna product exported from the United States or offered for sale in the United States to include on the label of that product the term “dolphin safe” or any other term, phrase, or symbol that claims or suggests that the tuna contained in the product was harvested using a fishing method that is not harmful to dolphins, if the product:

- (a) Contains tuna harvested with a large-scale driftnet; or
- (b) Contains tuna harvested in the ETP by a purse seine vessel 400 short tons (362.8 metric tons) carrying capacity or greater and is labeled in a manner that violates the standards set forth in § 216.92 or § 216.93.

**§ 216.92 Purse seine vessels greater than 400 short tons (362.8 metric tons).**

For purposes of § 216.91(b), any tuna product containing tuna that were harvested in the ETP by a purse seine vessel 400 short tons (362.8 metric tons) carrying capacity or greater, must be accompanied by:

- (a) A completed Fisheries Certificate of Origin;
- (b) A written statement by the captain of each vessel that harvested the tuna, certifying that the vessel did not intentionally deploy a purse seine net on or to encircle dolphins at any time during the trip;
- (c) A written statement certifying that an observer, employed by or working under contract with the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission or the Secretary, was on board the vessel during the entire trip and that the vessel did not intentionally deploy a purse seine net on or to encircle dol-

phin at any time during the trip. The statement must be signed by either:

- (1) The Secretary; or
- (2) A representative of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission; and
- (d) An endorsement on the Fisheries Certificate of Origin by each exporter, importer, and processor certifying that, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, the Fisheries Certificate of Origin and attached documentation, accurately describe the tuna products.

**§ 216.93 Submission of documentation.**

The documents required by § 216.92 must accompany the tuna product whenever it is offered for sale or export, except that these documents need not accompany the product when offered for sale if:

- (a) The documents do not require further endorsement by any importer or processor, and are submitted to officials of the U.S. Customs Service at the time of import; or
- (b) The documents are endorsed as required by § 216.92(d) and delivered to the Director, Southwest Region, or to the U.S. Customs Service at the time of exportation.

**§ 216.94 Requests to review documents.**

At any time, the Assistant Administrator may request, in writing, any exporter, importer, processor, distributor, or seller of any tuna or tuna product labeled in a manner subject to the requirements of § 216.91, to produce, within a specified time period, all documentary evidence concerning the origin of any product that is offered for sale as “dolphin safe,” including the original invoice.

**§ 216.95 False statements or endorsements.**

Any person who knowingly and willfully makes a false statement or false endorsement required by § 216.92 is liable for a civil penalty not to exceed \$100,000, that may be assessed in an action brought in any appropriate District Court of the United States on behalf of the Secretary.

### Subpart I—General Regulations Governing Small Takes of Marine Mammals Incidental to Specified Activities

governing certain specified activities are contained in subsequent subparts of this part.

SOURCE: 61 FR 15887, Apr. 10, 1996, unless otherwise noted.

#### § 216.101 Purpose.

The regulations in this subpart implement section 101(a)(5) (A) through (D) of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 1371(a)(5), which provides a mechanism for allowing, upon request, the incidental, but not intentional, taking of small numbers of marine mammals by U.S. citizens who engage in a specified activity (other than commercial fishing) within a specified geographic region.

#### § 216.102 Scope.

The taking of small numbers of marine mammals under section 101(a)(5) (A) through (D) of the Marine Mammal Protection Act may be allowed only if the National Marine Fisheries Service:

(a) Finds, based on the best scientific evidence available, that the total taking by the specified activity during the specified time period will have a negligible impact on species or stock of marine mammal(s) and will not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of those species or stocks of marine mammals intended for subsistence uses;

(b) Prescribes either regulations under § 216.106, or requirements and conditions contained within an incidental harassment authorization issued under § 216.107, setting forth permissible methods of taking and other means of effecting the least practicable adverse impact on the species or stock of marine mammal and its habitat and on the availability of the species or stock of marine mammal for subsistence uses, paying particular attention to rookeries, mating grounds, and areas of similar significance; and

(c) Prescribes either regulations or requirements and conditions contained within an incidental harassment authorization, as appropriate, pertaining to the monitoring and reporting of such taking. The specific regulations

#### § 216.103 Definitions.

In addition to definitions contained in the MMPA, and in § 216.3, and unless the context otherwise requires, in subsequent subparts to this part:

*Arctic waters* means the marine and estuarine waters north of 60° N. lat.

*Citizens of the United States* and *U.S. citizens* mean individual U.S. citizens or any corporation or similar entity if it is organized under the laws of the United States or any governmental unit defined in 16 U.S.C. 1362(13). U.S. Federal, state and local government agencies shall also constitute citizens of the United States for purposes of this part.

*Incidental harassment, incidental taking* and *incidental, but not intentional, taking* all mean an accidental taking. This does not mean that the taking is unexpected, but rather it includes those takings that are infrequent, unavoidable or accidental. (A complete definition of “take” is contained in § 216.3).

*Negligible impact* is 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.

*Small numbers* means a portion of a marine mammal species or stock whose taking would have a negligible impact on that species or stock.

*Specified activity* means any activity, other than commercial fishing, that takes place in a specified geographical region and potentially involves the taking of small numbers of marine mammals.

*Specified geographical region* means an area within which a specified activity is conducted and that has certain biogeographic characteristics.

*Unmitigable adverse impact* means an impact resulting from the specified activity:

(1) That is likely to reduce the availability of the species to a level insufficient for a harvest to meet subsistence needs by:

(i) Causing the marine mammals to abandon or avoid hunting areas;

(ii) Directly displacing subsistence users; or

(iii) Placing physical barriers between the marine mammals and the subsistence hunters; and

(2) That cannot be sufficiently mitigated by other measures to increase the availability of marine mammals to allow subsistence needs to be met.

**§ 216.104 Submission of requests.**

(a) In order for the National Marine Fisheries Service to consider authorizing the taking by U.S. citizens of small numbers of marine mammals incidental to a specified activity (other than commercial fishing), or to make a finding that an incidental take is unlikely to occur, a written request must be submitted to the Assistant Administrator. All requests must include the following information for their activity:

(1) A detailed description of the specific activity or class of activities that can be expected to result in incidental taking of marine mammals;

(2) The date(s) and duration of such activity and the specific geographical region where it will occur;

(3) The species and numbers of marine mammals likely to be found within the activity area;

(4) A description of the status, distribution, and seasonal distribution (when applicable) of the affected species or stocks of marine mammals likely to be affected by such activities;

(5) The type of incidental taking authorization that is being requested (i.e., takes by harassment only; takes by harassment, injury and/or death) and the method of incidental taking;

(6) By age, sex, and reproductive condition (if possible), the number of marine mammals (by species) that may be taken by each type of taking identified in paragraph (a)(5) of this section, and the number of times such takings by each type of taking are likely to occur;

(7) The anticipated impact of the activity upon the species or stock of marine mammal;

(8) The anticipated impact of the activity on the availability of the species or stocks of marine mammals for subsistence uses;

(9) The anticipated impact of the activity upon the habitat of the marine

mammal populations, and the likelihood of restoration of the affected habitat;

(10) The anticipated impact of the loss or modification of the habitat on the marine mammal populations involved;

(11) The availability and feasibility (economic and technological) of equipment, methods, and manner of conducting such activity or other means of effecting the least practicable adverse impact upon the affected species or stocks, their habitat, and on their availability for subsistence uses, paying particular attention to rookeries, mating grounds, and areas of similar significance;

(12) Where the proposed activity would take place in or near a traditional Arctic subsistence hunting area and/or may affect the availability of a species or stock of marine mammal for Arctic subsistence uses, the applicant must submit either a plan of cooperation or information that identifies what measures have been taken and/or will be taken to minimize any adverse effects on the availability of marine mammals for subsistence uses. A plan must include the following:

(i) A statement that the applicant has notified and provided the affected subsistence community with a draft plan of cooperation;

(ii) A schedule for meeting with the affected subsistence communities to discuss proposed activities and to resolve potential conflicts regarding any aspects of either the operation or the plan of cooperation;

(iii) A description of what measures the applicant has taken and/or will take to ensure that proposed activities will not interfere with subsistence whaling or sealing; and

(iv) What plans the applicant has to continue to meet with the affected communities, both prior to and while conducting the activity, to resolve conflicts and to notify the communities of any changes in the operation;

(13) The suggested means of accomplishing the necessary monitoring and reporting that will result in increased knowledge of the species, the level of taking or impacts on populations of marine mammals that are expected to be present while conducting activities



and suggested means of minimizing burdens by coordinating such reporting requirements with other schemes already applicable to persons conducting such activity. Monitoring plans should include a description of the survey techniques that would be used to determine the movement and activity of marine mammals near the activity site(s) including migration and other habitat uses, such as feeding. Guidelines for developing a site-specific monitoring plan may be obtained by writing to the Director, Office of Protected Resources; and

(14) Suggested means of learning of, encouraging, and coordinating research opportunities, plans, and activities relating to reducing such incidental taking and evaluating its effects.

(b)(1) The Assistant Administrator shall determine the adequacy and completeness of a request and, if determined to be adequate and complete, will begin the public review process by publishing in the FEDERAL REGISTER either:

(i) A proposed incidental harassment authorization; or

(ii) A notice of receipt of a request for the implementation or reimplementation of regulations governing the incidental taking.

(2) Through notice in the FEDERAL REGISTER, newspapers of general circulation, and appropriate electronic media in the coastal areas that may be affected by such activity, NMFS will invite information, suggestions, and comments for a period not to exceed 30 days from the date of publication in the FEDERAL REGISTER. All information and suggestions will be considered by the National Marine Fisheries Service in developing, if appropriate, the most effective regulations governing the issuance of letters of authorization or conditions governing the issuance of an incidental harassment authorization.

(3) Applications that are determined to be incomplete or inappropriate for the type of taking requested, will be returned to the applicant with an explanation of why the application is being returned.

(c) The Assistant Administrator shall evaluate each request to determine, based upon the best available scientific

evidence, whether the taking by the specified activity within the specified geographic region will have a negligible impact on the species or stock and, where appropriate, will not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of such species or stock for subsistence uses. If the Assistant Administrator finds that the mitigating measures would render the impact of the specified activity negligible when it would not otherwise satisfy that requirement, the Assistant Administrator may make a finding of negligible impact subject to such mitigating measures being successfully implemented. Any preliminary findings of “negligible impact” and “no unmitigable adverse impact” shall be proposed for public comment along with either the proposed incidental harassment authorization or the proposed regulations for the specific activity.

(d) If, subsequent to the public review period, the Assistant Administrator finds that the taking by the specified activity would have more than a negligible impact on the species or stock of marine mammal or would have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of such species or stock for subsistence uses, the Assistant Administrator shall publish in the FEDERAL REGISTER the negative finding along with the basis for denying the request.

#### **§ 216.105 Specific regulations.**

(a) For all petitions for regulations under this paragraph, applicants must provide the information requested in § 216.104(a) on their activity as a whole, which includes, but is not necessarily limited to, an assessment of total impacts by all persons conducting the activity.

(b) For allowed activities that may result in incidental takings of small numbers of marine mammals by harassment, serious injury, death or a combination thereof, specific regulations shall be established for each allowed activity that set forth:

(1) Permissible methods of taking;

(2) Means of effecting the least practicable adverse impact on the species and its habitat and on the availability of the species for subsistence uses; and

(3) Requirements for monitoring and reporting, including requirements for the independent peer-review of proposed monitoring plans where the proposed activity may affect the availability of a species or stock for taking for subsistence uses.

(c) Regulations will be established based on the best available information. As new information is developed, through monitoring, reporting, or research, the regulations may be modified, in whole or in part, after notice and opportunity for public review.

**§ 216.106 Letter of Authorization.**

(a) A Letter of Authorization, which may be issued only to U.S. citizens, is required to conduct activities pursuant to any regulations established under § 216.105. Requests for Letters of Authorization shall be submitted to the Director, Office of Protected Resources. The information to be submitted in a request for an authorization will be specified in the appropriate subpart to this part or may be obtained by writing to the above named person.

(b) Issuance of a Letter of Authorization will be based on a determination that the level of taking will be consistent with the findings made for the total taking allowable under the specific regulations.

(c) Letters of Authorization will specify the period of validity and any additional terms and conditions appropriate for the specific request.

(d) Notice of issuance of all Letters of Authorization will be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER within 30 days of issuance.

(e) Letters of Authorization shall be withdrawn or suspended, either on an individual or class basis, as appropriate, if, after notice and opportunity for public comment, the Assistant Administrator determines that:

(1) The regulations prescribed are not being substantially complied with; or

(2) The taking allowed is having, or may have, more than a negligible impact on the species or stock or, where relevant, an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of the species or stock for subsistence uses.

(f) The requirement for notice and opportunity for public review in § 216.106(e) shall not apply if the Assis-

tant Administrator determines that an emergency exists that poses a significant risk to the wellbeing of the species or stocks of marine mammals concerned.

(g) A violation of any of the terms and conditions of a Letter of Authorization or of the specific regulations shall subject the Holder and/or any individual who is operating under the authority of the Holder's Letter of Authorization to penalties provided in the MMPA.

**§ 216.107 Incidental harassment authorization for Arctic waters.**

(a) Except for activities that have the potential to result in serious injury or mortality, which must be authorized under § 216.105, incidental harassment authorizations may be issued, following a 30-day public review period, to allowed activities that may result in only the incidental harassment of a small number of marine mammals. Each such incidental harassment authorization shall set forth:

(1) Permissible methods of taking by harassment;

(2) Means of effecting the least practicable adverse impact on the species, its habitat, and on the availability of the species for subsistence uses; and

(3) Requirements for monitoring and reporting, including requirements for the independent peer-review of proposed monitoring plans where the proposed activity may affect the availability of a species or stock for taking for subsistence uses.

(b) Issuance of an incidental harassment authorization will be based on a determination that the number of marine mammals taken by harassment will be small, will have a negligible impact on the species or stock of marine mammal(s), and will not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of species or stocks for taking for subsistence uses.

(c) An incidental harassment authorization will be either issued or denied within 45 days after the close of the public review period.

(d) Notice of issuance or denial of an incidental harassment authorization will be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER within 30 days of issuance of a determination.

(e) Incidental harassment authorizations will be valid for a period of time not to exceed 1 year but may be renewed for additional periods of time not to exceed 1 year for each reauthorization.

(f) An incidental harassment authorization shall be modified, withdrawn, or suspended if, after notice and opportunity for public comment, the Assistant Administrator determines that:

(1) The conditions and requirements prescribed in the authorization are not being substantially complied with; or

(2) The authorized taking, either individually or in combination with other authorizations, is having, or may have, more than a negligible impact on the species or stock or, where relevant, an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of the species or stock for subsistence uses.

(g) The requirement for notice and opportunity for public review in paragraph (f) of this section shall not apply 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 concerned.

(h) A violation of any of the terms and conditions of an incidental harassment authorization shall subject the holder and/or any individual who is operating under the authority of the holder's incidental harassment authorization to penalties provided in the MMPA.

**§ 216.108 Requirements for monitoring and reporting under incidental harassment authorizations for Arctic waters.**

(a) Holders of an incidental harassment authorization in Arctic waters and their employees, agents, and designees must cooperate with the National Marine Fisheries Service and other designated Federal, state, or local agencies to monitor the impacts of their activity on marine mammals. Unless stated otherwise within an incidental harassment authorization, the holder of an incidental harassment authorization effective in Arctic waters must notify the Alaska Regional Director, National Marine Fisheries Service, of any activities that may involve a take by incidental harassment in Arc-

tic waters at least 14 calendar days prior to commencement of the activity.

(b) Holders of incidental harassment authorizations effective in Arctic waters may be required by their authorization to designate at least one qualified biological observer or another appropriately experienced individual to observe and record the effects of activities on marine mammals. The number of observers required for monitoring the impact of the activity on marine mammals will be specified in the incidental harassment authorization. If observers are required as a condition of the authorization, the observer(s) must be approved in advance by the National Marine Fisheries Service.

(c) The monitoring program must, if appropriate, document the effects (including acoustical) on marine mammals and document or estimate the actual level of take. The requirements for monitoring plans, as specified in the incidental harassment authorization, may vary depending on the activity, the location, and the time.

(d) Where the proposed activity may affect the availability of a species or stock of marine mammal for taking for subsistence purposes, proposed monitoring plans or other research proposals must be independently peer-reviewed prior to issuance of an incidental harassment authorization under this subpart. In order to complete the peer-review process within the time frames mandated by the MMPA for an incidental harassment authorization, a proposed monitoring plan submitted under this paragraph must be submitted to the Assistant Administrator no later than the date of submission of the application for an incidental harassment authorization. Upon receipt of a complete monitoring plan, and at its discretion, the National Marine Fisheries Service will either submit the plan to members of a peer review panel for review or within 60 days of receipt of the proposed monitoring plan, schedule a workshop to review the plan. The applicant must submit a final monitoring plan to the Assistant Administrator prior to the issuance of an incidental harassment authorization.

(e) At its discretion, the National Marine Fisheries Service may place an

observer aboard vessels, platforms, aircraft, etc., to monitor the impact of activities on marine mammals.

(f)(1) As specified in the incidental harassment authorization, the holder of an incidental harassment authorization for Arctic waters must submit reports to the Assistant Administrator within 90 days of completion of any individual components of the activity (if any), within 90 days of completion of the activity, but no later than 120 days prior to expiration of the incidental harassment authorization, whichever is earlier. This report must include the following information:

- (i) Dates and type(s) of activity;
- (ii) Dates and location(s) of any activities related to monitoring the effects on marine mammals; and
- (iii) Results of the monitoring activities, including an estimate of the actual level and type of take, species name and numbers of each species observed, direction of movement of species, and any observed changes or modifications in behavior.

(2) Monitoring reports will be reviewed by the Assistant Administrator and, if determined to be incomplete or inaccurate, will be returned to the holder of the authorization with an explanation of why the report is being returned. If the authorization holder disagrees with the findings of the Assistant Administrator, the holder may request an independent peer review of the report. Failure to submit a complete and accurate report may result in a delay in processing future authorization requests.

(g) Results of any behavioral, feeding, or population studies, that are conducted supplemental to the monitoring program, should be made available to the National Marine Fisheries Service before applying for an incidental harassment authorization for the following year.

**Subpart J—Taking of Ringed Seals Incidental to On-Ice Seismic Activities**

SOURCE: 47 FR 21254, May 18, 1982, unless otherwise noted. Redesignated at 61 FR 15887, Apr. 10, 1996.

**§216.111 Specified activity and specified geographical region.**

Regulations in this subpart apply only to the incidental taking of ringed seals (*Phoca hispida*) by U.S. citizens engaged in on-ice seismic exploratory and associated activities over the Outer Continental Shelf of the Beaufort Sea of Alaska, from the shore outward to 45 miles (72 km) and from Point Barrow east to Demarcation Point, from January 1 through May 31 of any calendar year.

[58 FR 4093, Jan. 13, 1993]

EFFECTIVE DATE NOTE: At 58 FR 4093, Jan. 13, 1993 §228.11 was revised, effective through December 31, 1997. At 61 FR 15887, Apr. 10, 1996, the section was redesignated as §216.111.

**§216.112 Effective dates.**

Regulations in this subpart are effective from February 12, 1993 through December 31, 1997.

[58 FR 4093, Jan. 13, 1993]

EFFECTIVE DATE NOTE: At 58 FR 4093, Jan. 13, 1993 §228.12 was revised, effective through December 31, 1997. At 61 FR 15887, Apr. 10, 1996, the section was redesignated as §216.112.

**§216.113 Permissible methods.**

(a) The incidental, but not intentional, taking of ringed seals from January 1 through May 31 by U.S. citizens holding a Letter of Authorization is permitted during the course of the following activities:

(1) On-ice geophysical seismic activities involving vibrator-type, airgun, or other energy source equipment shown to have similar or lesser effects; and

(2) Operation of transportation and camp facilities associated with seismic activities.

(b) All activities identified in §216.113(a) must be conducted in a manner that minimizes to the greatest extent practicable adverse effects on ringed seals and their habitat.

(c) All activities identified in §216.113(a) must be conducted as far as practicable from any observed ringed seal or ringed seal lair. No energy source must be placed over an observed

ringed seal lair, whether or not any seal is present.

[47 FR 21254, May 18, 1982, as amended at 58 FR 4093, Jan. 13, 1993. Redesignated and amended at 61 FR 15887, 15890, Apr. 10, 1996]

EFFECTIVE DATE NOTE: At 58 FR 4093, Jan. 13, 1993 in §228.13 paragraphs (b) and (c) were revised, effective through December 31, 1997. At 61 FR 15887, Apr. 10, 1996, the section was redesignated as §216.113.

**§216.114 Requirements for monitoring and reporting.**

(a) Holders of Letters of Authorization are required to cooperate with the National Marine Fisheries Service and any other Federal, State, or local agency monitoring the impacts on ringed seals.

(b) Holders of Letters of Authorization must designate a qualified individual or individuals to observe and record the presence of ringed seals and ringed seal lairs along shot lines and around camps, and the information required in §216.114(c).

(c) An annual report must be submitted to the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries within 90 days after completing each year's activities and must include the following information:

- (1) Location(s) of survey activities;
- (2) Level of effort (e.g., duration, area surveyed, number of surveys), methods used, and a description of habitat (e.g., ice thickness, surface topography) for each location;
- (3) Numbers of ringed seals observed, proximity to seismic or associated activities, and any seal reactions observed for each location;
- (4) Numbers of ringed seal lairs observed and proximity to seismic or associated activities for each location; and
- (5) Other information as required in a Letter of Authorization.

[47 FR 21254, May 18, 1982, as amended at 58 FR 4093, Jan. 13, 1993. Redesignated and amended at 61 FR 15887, 15890, Apr. 10, 1996]

EFFECTIVE DATE NOTE: At 58 FR 4093, Jan. 13, 1993 in §228.14 paragraph (b) and paragraph (c) introductory text were revised, effective through December 31, 1997. At 61 FR 15887, Apr. 10, 1996, the section was redesignated as §216.114.

**Subparts K–L [Reserved]**

**Subpart M—Taking of Bottlenose Dolphins and Spotted Dolphins Incidental to Oil and Gas Structure Removal Activities**

SOURCE: 60 FR 53145, Oct. 12, 1995, unless otherwise noted. Redesignated at 61 FR 15887, Apr. 10, 1996.

EFFECTIVE DATE NOTE: At 60 FR 53145, Oct. 12, 1995, subpart E to part 228 was added, effective Nov. 13, 1995 through Nov. 13, 2000. At 61 FR 15887, Apr. 10, 1996, subpart E to part 228 was redesignated as subpart M to part 216.

**§216.141 Specified activity and specified geographical region.**

(a) Regulations in this subpart apply only to the incidental taking of marine mammals by U.S. citizens engaged in removing oil and gas drilling and production structures in state waters and on the Outer Continental Shelf in the Gulf of Mexico adjacent to the coasts of Texas, Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi, and Florida. The incidental, but not intentional, taking of marine mammals by U.S. citizens holding a Letter of Authorization is permitted during the course of severing pilings, well conductors, and related supporting structures, and other activities related to the removal of the oil well structure.

(b) The incidental take of marine mammals under the activity identified in paragraph (a) of this section is limited annually to a combined total of no more than 200 takings by harassment of bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*) and spotted dolphins (*Stenella frontalis* and *S. attenuata*).

**§216.142 Effective dates.**

Regulations in this subpart are effective from November 13, 1995 through November 13, 2000.

**§216.143 Permissible methods of taking; mitigation.**

(a) The use of the following means in conducting the activities identified in §216.141 is permissible: Bulk explosives, shaped explosive charges, mechanical

## § 216.144

or abrasive cutters, and underwater arc cutters.

(b) All activities identified in § 216.141 must be conducted in a manner that minimizes, to the greatest extent practicable, adverse effects on bottlenose dolphins, spotted dolphins, and their habitat. When using explosives, the following mitigation measures must be utilized:

(1)(i) If bottlenose or spotted dolphins are observed within 3,000 ft (910 m) of the platform prior to detonating charges, detonation must be delayed until either the marine mammal(s) are more than 3,000 ft (910 m) from the platform or actions (e.g., operating a vessel in the vicinity of the dolphins to stimulate bow riding, then steering the vessel away from the structure to be removed) are successful in removing them at least 3,000 ft (910 m) from the detonation site;

(ii) Whenever the conditions described in paragraph (b)(1)(i) of this section occur, the aerial survey required under § 216.145(b)(1) must be repeated prior to detonation of charges if the timing requirements of § 216.145(b)(1) cannot be met.

(2) Detonation of explosives must occur no earlier than 1 hour after sunrise and no later than 1 hour before sunset;

(3) If weather and/or sea conditions preclude adequate aerial, shipboard or subsurface surveillance, detonations must be delayed until conditions improve sufficiently for surveillance to be undertaken; and

(4) Detonations must be staggered by a minimum of 0.9 seconds for each group of charges.

[60 FR 53145, Oct. 12, 1995. Redesignated and amended at 61 FR 15887, 15890, Apr. 10, 1996]

### § 216.144 Prohibitions.

Notwithstanding takings authorized by § 216.143 or by a Letter of Authorization issued under § 216.106, the following activities are prohibited:

(a) The taking of a marine mammal that is other than unintentional, except that the intentional passive herding of dolphins from the vicinity of the platform may be authorized under section 109(h) of the Act as described in a Letter of Authorization;

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(b) The violation of, or failure to comply with, the terms, conditions, and requirements of this part or a Letter of Authorization issued or renewed under § 216.106 or § 216.146;

(c) The incidental taking of any marine mammal of a species either not specified in this subpart or whenever the incidental taking authorization for authorized species has been reached; and

(d) The use of single explosive charges having an impulse and pressure greater than that generated by a 50-lb (22.7 kg) explosive charge detonated outside the rig piling.

[60 FR 53145, Oct. 12, 1995. Redesignated and amended at 61 FR 15887, 15890, Apr. 10, 1996]

### § 216.145 Requirements for monitoring and reporting.

(a) Observer(s) approved by the National Marine Fisheries Service in advance of the detonation must be used to monitor the area around the site prior to, during, and after detonation of charges.

(b)(1) Both before and after each detonation episode, an aerial survey by NMFS-approved observers must be conducted for a period not less than 30 minutes within 1 hour of the detonation episode. To ensure that no marine mammals are within the designated 3,000 ft (1,000 yd, 941 m) safety zone nor are likely to enter the designated safety zone prior to or at the time of detonation, the pre-detonation survey must encompass all waters within one nautical mile of the structure.

(2) A second post-detonation aerial or vessel survey of the detonation site must be conducted no earlier than 48 hours and no later than 1 week after the oil and gas structure is removed, unless a systematic underwater survey, either by divers or remotely-operated vehicles, dedicated to marine mammals and sea turtles, of the site has been successfully conducted within 24 hours of the detonation event. The aerial or vessel survey must be systematic and concentrate down-current from the structure.

(3) The NMFS observer may waive post-detonation monitoring described in paragraph (b)(2) of this section provided no marine mammals were sighted

by the observer during either the required 48 hour pre-detonation monitoring period or during the pre-detonation aerial survey.

(c) During all diving operations (working dives as required in the course of the removals), divers must be instructed to scan the subsurface areas surrounding the platform (detonation) sites for bottlenose or spotted dolphins and if marine mammals are sighted to inform either the U.S. government observer or the agent of the holder of the Letter of Authorization immediately upon surfacing.

(d)(1) A report summarizing the results of structure removal activities, mitigation measures, monitoring efforts, and other information as required by a Letter of Authorization, must be submitted to the Director, NMFS, Southeast Region, 9721 Executive Center Drive N, St. Petersburg, FL 33702 within 30 calendar days of completion of the removal of the rig.

(2) NMFS will accept the U.S. Government observer report as the activity report if all requirements for reporting contained in the Letter of Authorization are provided to that observer before the observer's report is complete.

#### **§ 216.146 Letters of Authorization.**

(a) To incidentally take bottlenose and spotted dolphins pursuant to these regulations, each company operating or which operated an oil or gas structure in the geographical area described in § 216.141, and which is responsible for abandonment or removal of the platform, must apply for and obtain a Letter of Authorization in accordance with § 216.106.

(b) A copy of the Letter of Authorization must be in the possession of the persons conducting activities that may involve incidental takings of bottlenose and spotted dolphins.

[60 FR 53145, Oct. 12, 1995. Redesignated and amended at 61 FR 15887, 15890, Apr. 10, 1996]

#### **§ 216.147 Renewal of Letters of Authorization.**

(a) A Letter of Authorization issued under § 216.106 for the activity identified in § 216.141 will be renewed annually upon:

(1) Timely receipt of the reports required under § 216.145(d), which have

been reviewed by the Assistant Administrator and determined to be acceptable;

(2) A determination that the maximum incidental take authorizations in § 216.141(b) will not be exceeded; and

(3) A determination that the mitigation measures required under § 216.143(b) and the Letter of Authorization have been undertaken.

(b) If a species' annual authorization is exceeded, the Assistant Administrator will review the documentation submitted with the annual reports required under § 216.145(d), to determine that the taking is not having more than a negligible impact on the species or stock involved.

(c) Notice of issuance of a renewal of the Letter of Authorization will be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER.

[60 FR 53145, Oct. 12, 1995. Redesignated and amended at 61 FR 15887, 15890, Apr. 10, 1996]

#### **§ 216.148 Modifications to Letters of Authorization.**

(a) In addition to complying with the provisions of § 216.106, except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section, no substantive modification, including withdrawal or suspension, to the Letter of Authorization issued pursuant to § 216.106 and subject to the provisions of this subpart shall be made until after notice and an opportunity for public comment. For purposes of this paragraph, renewal of a Letter of Authorization under § 216.147, without modification, 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 § 216.141(b), the Letter of Authorization issued pursuant to § 216.106, or renewed pursuant to this section may be substantively modified without prior notice and an opportunity for public comment. A notice will be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER subsequent to the action.

[60 FR 53145, Oct. 12, 1995. Redesignated and amended at 61 FR 15887, 15890, Apr. 10, 1996]

**Subpart N—Taking of Marine Mammals Incidental to Underwater Detonation of Conventional Explosives by the Department of Defense**

SOURCE: 59 FR 5126, Feb. 3, 1994, unless otherwise noted. Redesignated at 61 FR 15887, Apr. 10, 1996.

EFFECTIVE DATE NOTE: At 59 FR 5126, Feb. 3, 1994, subpart F to part 228 was added, effective March 3, 1994 through March 3, 1999. At 61 FR 15887, Apr. 10, 1996, subpart F of part 228 was redesignated as subpart N of part 216.

**§ 216.151 Specified activity, geographical region, and incidental take levels.**

(a) Regulations in this subpart apply only to the incidental taking of marine mammals specified in paragraph (b) of this section by U.S. citizens engaged in the detonation of conventional military explosives within the waters of the Outer Sea Test Range of the Naval Air Warfare Center, Pt. Mugu, Ventura County, CA.

(b) The incidental take of marine mammals under the activity identified in paragraph (a) of this section is limited annually to the following species and species groups:

	Le- thal	In- jury	Har- ass- ment
California Sea Lion .....	2	38	173
Harbor Seal .....	2	16	68
Northern Elephant Seal .....	9	158	724
Northern Fur Seal .....	2	13	57
Common Dolphin .....	1	16	67
Striped Dolphin .....	0	2	5
Risso's Dolphin .....	0	1	2
Pacific White-Sided Dolphin .....	3	52	236
Northern Rt. Whale Dolphin .....	2	24	108
Dall's Porpoise .....	0	6	18
Bottlenose Dolphin .....	0	4	15
Killer Whale .....	0	0	1
Sperm Whale .....	0	6	20
Beaked Whales .....	0	0	3
Minke Whale .....	0	0	4
Blue Whale .....	0	1	11
Fin Whale .....	0	0	6
Sei Whale .....	0	0	1
Humpback Whale .....	0	0	4
Gray Whale .....	0	3	40
Right Whale .....	0	0	1

**§ 216.152 Effective dates.**

Regulations in this subpart are effective from March 3, 1994, through March 3, 1999.

**§ 216.153 Permissible methods of taking; mitigation.**

(a) U.S. citizens holding a Letter of Authorization issued pursuant to § 216.106 may incidentally, but not intentionally, take marine mammals by harassment, injury or killing in the course of the detonation of conventional explosives up to the following maximum annual level within the area described in § 216.151(a):

- (1) 12 detonations of 10,000 lbs (4,536 kg);
- (2) 2 detonations of 1,200 lbs (544 kg);
- (3) 10 detonations of 100 lbs (45 kg);
- (4) 10 detonations of 10 lbs (4.5 kg); and
- (5) 20 detonations of 1 lb (0.45 kg), provided all terms, conditions, and requirements of these regulations and such Letter of Authorization are complied with.

(b) The activity identified in paragraph (a) of this section must be conducted in a manner that minimizes, to the greatest extent possible, adverse impacts on marine mammals and their habitat. When detonating explosives, the following mitigation measures must be utilized:

(1) If marine mammals are observed within the designated safety zone prescribed in the Letter of Authorization, or on a course that will put them within the safety zone prior to detonation, detonation must be delayed until the marine mammals are no longer within the safety zone.

(2) If weather and/or sea conditions preclude adequate aerial surveillance, detonation must be delayed until conditions improve sufficiently for aerial surveillance to be undertaken.

(3) If post-test surveys determine that an injurious or lethal take of a marine mammal has occurred, the test procedure and the monitoring methods must be reviewed and appropriate changes must be made prior to conducting the next project.

[59 FR 5126, Feb. 3, 1994. Redesignated and amended at 61 FR 15887, 15890, Apr. 10, 1996]

**§ 216.154 Prohibitions.**

Notwithstanding takings authorized by § 216.153 or by a Letter of Authorization issued under § 216.106, the following activities are prohibited:



(a) The taking of a marine mammal that is other than unintentional;

(b) The violation of, or failure to comply with, the terms, conditions, and requirements of this part or a Letter of Authorization issued or renewed under § 216.106 or § 216.156; and

(c) The incidental taking of any marine mammal of a species either not specified in this subpart or whose taking authorization for the year has been reached.

[59 FR 5126, Feb. 3, 1994. Redesignated and amended at 61 FR 15887, 15890, Apr. 10, 1996]

**§ 216.155 Requirements for monitoring and reporting.**

(a) The holder of the Letter of Authorization is required to cooperate with the National Marine Fisheries Service and any other Federal, state or local agency monitoring the impacts of the activity on marine mammals. The holder must notify the Director, Southwest Region, National Marine Fisheries Service, 501 West Ocean Boulevard, suite 4200, Long Beach, CA (Telephone: (310) 980-4001), at least 2 weeks prior to activities involving the detonation of explosives in order to satisfy paragraph (f) of this section.

(b) The holder of the Letter of Authorization must designate a qualified on-site individual(s) to record the effects of explosives detonation on marine mammals that inhabit the Outer Sea Test Range.

(c) The primary test area, and if necessary, secondary and tertiary test areas, in the Outer Sea Test Range, must be surveyed by marine mammal biologists and other trained individuals, and the marine mammal populations monitored, approximately 48 hours prior to a scheduled detonation, on the day of detonation, and for a period of time specified in the Letter of Authorization after each test or project. Monitoring shall include, but not necessarily be limited to, aerial surveillance sufficient to ensure that no marine mammals are within the designated safety zone nor are likely to enter the designated safety zone prior to or at the time of detonation.

(d)(1) Under the direction of a certified marine mammal veterinarian, examination and recovery of any dead or injured marine mammals will be

conducted. Necropsies will be performed and tissue samples taken from any dead animals. After completion of the necropsy, animals not retained for shoreside examination, will be tagged and returned to the sea. The occurrence of live marine mammals will also be documented.

(2) Activities related to the monitoring described in paragraph (d)(1) of this section or the Letter of Authorization issued under this part may include the retention of marine mammals without the need for a separate scientific research permit. The use of such marine mammals in other scientific research may be authorized pursuant to 50 CFR parts 216 and 220.

(e) At its discretion, the National Marine Fisheries Service may place an observer on either the towing vessel, target vessel, or both, and on any ship or aircraft involved in marine mammal reconnaissance, or monitoring either prior to, during, or after explosives detonation in order to monitor the impact on marine mammals.

(f) A summary report must be submitted to the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA, within 90 days after the conclusion of any explosives detonation project. This report must include the following information:

(1) Date and time of the test(s);

(2) A summary of the pre-test and post-test activities related to mitigating and monitoring the effects of explosives detonation on marine mammal populations; and

(3) Results of the monitoring program, including numbers by species/stock of any marine mammals noted injured or killed as a result of the detonation and numbers that may have been harassed due to presence within the safety zone.

(g) An annual report must be submitted to the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA, no later than 120 days prior to the date of expiration of the annual Letter of Authorization in order for issuance of a Letter of Authorization for the following year. This annual report must contain the following information:

(1) Date and time of all tests conducted under the expiring Letter of Authorization;

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(2) A description of all pre-test and post-test activities related to mitigating and monitoring the effects of explosives detonation on marine mammal populations;

(3) Results of the monitoring program, including numbers by species/stock of any marine mammals noted injured or killed as a result of the detonation and numbers that may have been harassed due to presence within the designated safety zone;

(4) If one or more species' take levels have been reached or exceeded during the previous year, additional documentation must be provided on the taking and a description of any measures that will be taken in the following year to prevent exceeding the authorized incidental take level.

(5) Results of any population assessment studies made on marine mammals in the Outer Sea Test Range during the previous year.

**§ 216.156 Renewal of Letter of Authorization.**

(a) A Letter of Authorization issued under § 216.106 for the activity identified in § 216.151(a) will be renewed annually upon:

(1) Timely receipt of the reports required under § 216.155(f) and (g), which have been reviewed by the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA, and determined to be acceptable;

(2) A determination that the maximum incidental take authorizations in § 216.151(b) will not be exceeded; and

(3) A determination that the mitigation measures required under § 216.153(b) and the Letter of Authorization have been undertaken.

(b) If a species' annual authorization is exceeded, the National Marine Fisheries Service will review the documentation submitted with the annual report required under § 216.155(g), to determine that the taking is not having more than a negligible impact on the species or stock involved.

(c) Notice of issuance of a renewal of the Letter of Authorization will be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER.

[59 FR 5126, Feb. 3, 1994. Redesignated and amended at 61 FR 15887, 15890-15891, Apr. 10, 1996]

50 CFR Ch. II (10-1-96 Edition)

**§ 216.157 Modifications to Letter of Authorization.**

(a) In addition to complying with the provisions of § 216.106, except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section, no substantive modification, including withdrawal or suspension, to the Letter of Authorization issued pursuant to § 216.106 and subject to the provisions of this subpart shall be made until after notice and an opportunity for public comment. For purposes of this paragraph, renewal of a Letter of Authorization under § 216.146, without modification, is not considered a substantive modification.

(b) If the National Marine Fisheries Service determines that an emergency exists that poses a significant risk to the well-being of the species or stocks of marine mammals specified in § 216.151, or that significantly and detrimentally alters the scheduling of explosives detonation within the area specified in § 216.151, the Letter of Authorization issued pursuant to § 216.106, or renewed pursuant to this section may be substantively modified without prior notice and an opportunity for public comment. A notice will be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER subsequent to the action.

[59 FR 5126, Feb. 3, 1994. Redesignated and amended at 61 FR 15887, 15891, Apr. 10, 1996]

**Subparts O-Q [Reserved]**

**PART 217—GENERAL PROVISIONS**

**Subpart A—Introduction**

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**Subpart B—Definitions**

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**Subpart C—Addresses**

- 217.21 Assistant Administrator.
- 217.22 Office of Marine Mammals and Endangered Species.
- 217.23 Enforcement Division.

AUTHORITY: 16 U.S.C. 1531-1544; and 16 U.S.C. 742a *et seq.*, unless otherwise noted.