

with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), to examine whether significant environmental impacts could result from issuance of the proposed scientific research permit. The draft EA is available for review and comment simultaneous with the scientific research permit application.

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

Dated: May 8, 2012.

Tammy C. Adams,

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

[FR Doc. 2012-11525 Filed 5-10-12; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XA172

Marine Mammals; File No. 15453

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

ACTION: Notice; issuance of permit.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that a permit has been issued to the Waikiki Aquarium, 2777 Kalakaua Avenue, Honolulu, HI 96815 (Dr. Andrew Rossiter, Responsible Party), to conduct research on and enhancement of captive Hawaiian monk seals (*Monachus schauinslandi*).

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

Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13705, Silver Spring, MD 20910; phone (301) 427-8401; fax (301) 713-0376; and

Pacific Islands Region, NMFS, 1601 Kapiolani Boulevard, Room 1110, Honolulu, HI 96814-4700; phone (808) 944-2200; fax (808) 973-2941.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Amy Sloan or Jennifer Skidmore, (301)427-8401.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On January 27, 2011, notice was published in the **Federal Register** (76 FR 4867) that a request for a permit to conduct research on and enhancement of the

species identified above had been submitted by the above-named applicant. On May 24, 2011, notice was published in the **Federal Register** (76 FR 30109) that a request to amend the application had been submitted by the applicant to increase the number of seals to be maintained under the proposed permit (from two to three seals). The requested permit has been issued under the authority of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*), the regulations governing the taking and importing of marine mammals (50 CFR part 216), the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA; 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), and the regulations governing the taking, importing, and exporting of endangered and threatened species (50 CFR parts 222-226).

Permit No. 15453 authorizes the Waikiki Aquarium to maintain in captivity up to three non-releasable Hawaiian monk seals for research and enhancement purposes. Research includes (1) a long-term study on the digestive efficiency of captive seals; and (2) a post-vaccination antibody response study using West Nile virus and canine distemper virus vaccinations. The seals will be displayed to the public incidental to the research program, and the Waikiki Aquarium provides daily public narrations and educational graphics about the Hawaiian monk seal. The permit is valid for five years from the date of issuance.

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), a final determination has been made that the activity proposed is categorically excluded from the requirement to prepare an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement.

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

Dated: April 30, 2012.

Tammy C. Adams,

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

[FR Doc. 2012-11523 Filed 5-10-12; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XA873

Endangered Species; File No. 15566

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

ACTION: Notice; issuance of permit modification.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, Marine Resources Division, Charleston, SC 29422-2559 [Responsible Party: Mike Arendt] has been issued a modification to scientific research Permit No. 15566.

ADDRESSES: The modification and related documents are available for review upon written request or by appointment in the following offices:

Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13705, Silver Spring, MD 20910; phone (301) 427-8401; fax (301) 713-0376; and

Southeast Region, NMFS, 263 13th Ave South, St. Petersburg, FL 33701; phone (727) 824-5312; fax (727) 824-5309.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Kristy Beard or Amy Hapeman, (301) 427-8401.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On December 20, 2011, notice was published in the **Federal Register** (76 FR 78890) that a modification of Permit No. 15566 had been requested by the above-named organization. The requested modification has been granted under the authority of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA; 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), and the regulations governing the taking, importing, and exporting of endangered and threatened species (50 CFR 222-226).

Permit No. 15566, issued April 8, 2011 (76 FR 22877), authorizes capture by trawl of 345 loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*), 29 Kemp's ridley (*Lepidochelys kempii*), 9 green (*Chelonia mydas*), 1 leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*), and 1 hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) sea turtle to assess temporal change in catch rates, size distributions, sex and genetic ratios, and health of sea turtles. Captures occur annually in coastal waters between Winyah Bay, SC and St. Augustine, FL. Turtles may be handled, blood sampled, measured, flipper and passive integrated transponder (PIT)

tagged, photographed, and released. A subsample of animals are subject to barnacle, keratin, fecal, and tissue sampling, cloacal swabs, and attachment of satellite and/or VHF transmitters. Up to five loggerhead, one Kemp's ridley, one green, one leatherback, and one hawksbill sea turtle could be accidentally killed over the life of the permit. Permit No. 15566-01 increases the number of Kemp's ridleys that may be captured from 29 to 79 turtles annually. The 50 additional sea turtles will be captured, handled, blood sampled, measured, flipper and PIT tagged, photographed, and released.

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

Dated: May 7, 2012.

Tammy C. Adams,

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

[FR Doc. 2012-11522 Filed 5-10-12; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XA602

Marine Mammals; File Nos. 16109 and 15575

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

ACTION: Notice; issuance of permits.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that permits have been issued to GeoMarine, Inc. [File No. 16109] (Responsible Party: Jason Holt See; Principal Investigator: Amy Whitt), 2201 K Avenue, Suite A2, Plano, TX 75074 and to Robert A. DiGiovanni Jr. [File No. 15575], Riverhead Foundation for Marine Research and Preservation, 467 East Main St., Riverhead, NY 11901 to conduct research on marine mammals and sea turtles.

ADDRESSES: The permits and related documents are available for review upon written request or by appointment in the following offices:

Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13705, Silver Spring, MD 20910;

phone (301) 427-8401; fax (301) 713-0376;

Northeast Region, NMFS, 55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930; phone (978) 281-9328; fax (978) 281-9394; and

Southeast Region, NMFS, 263 13th Avenue South, Saint Petersburg, FL 33701; phone (727) 824-5312; fax (727) 824-5309.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Joselyd Garcia-Reyes [for File No. 16109] or Laura Morse [for File No. 15575] at (301) 427-8401.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On August 17, 2011, notice was published in the **Federal Register** (76 FR 51001) that requests for permits to conduct research on marine mammals and sea turtles had been submitted by the above-named applicants. The requested permits have been issued under the authority of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*), the regulations governing the taking and importing of marine mammals (50 CFR part 216), the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA; 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), and the regulations governing the taking, importing, and exporting of endangered and threatened species (50 CFR parts 222-226).

File No. 16109: GeoMarine, Inc. was issued a permit that authorizes takes of 35 species of cetaceans, four species of pinnipeds, and five species of sea turtles from New Jersey to North Carolina. The research involves harassment by survey approach during shipboard transect surveys. Eleven of the 44 species targeted for research are listed as threatened or endangered: Blue whale (*Balaenoptera musculus*), fin whale (*B. physalus*), humpback whale (*Megaptera novaeangliae*), North Atlantic right whale (*Eubalaena glacialis*), sei whale (*B. borealis*), sperm whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*), green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), hawksbill sea turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), loggerhead sea turtle (*Caretta caretta*), Kemp's ridley sea turtle (*Lepidochelys kempii*), and leatherback sea turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*). The permit expires May 15, 2017.

File No. 15575: Robert Di Giovanni, Jr. was issued a permit that authorizes takes of North Atlantic right whales and 43 other marine mammal and sea turtle species to conduct photo-identification surveys from both aerial and vessel platforms from North Carolina to Massachusetts. Eleven of the 44 species to be targeted for research are listed as threatened or endangered: Blue whale, fin whale, humpback whale, North Atlantic right whale, sei whale, sperm whale, green sea turtle, hawksbill sea

turtle, loggerhead sea turtle, Kemp's ridley sea turtle, and leatherback sea turtle. In addition, pinniped research includes the placement of remote camera systems at pinniped haul out sites for long-term monitoring of behavior and abundance, and collection of scat for health assessment studies. Opportunistic sighting data will be collected during vessel transits to and from pinniped haul out sites. The permit expires May 15, 2017.

An environmental assessment (EA) was prepared analyzing the effects of the permitted activities on the human environment, in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*). Based on the analyses in the EA, NMFS determined that issuance of the permits would not significantly impact the quality of the human environment and that preparation of an environmental impact statement was not required. That determination is documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), signed on May 1, 2012.

As required by the ESA, issuance of these permits was based on a finding that such permits: (1) Were applied for in good faith; (2) will not operate to the disadvantage of such endangered species; and (3) are consistent with the purposes and policies set forth in section 2 of the ESA.

Dated: May 7, 2012.

Tammy C. Adams,

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

[FR Doc. 2012-11521 Filed 5-10-12; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Availability of Seats for the Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council

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

ACTION: Notice and request for applications.

SUMMARY: The ONMS is seeking applications for the following vacant seats on the Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council: sport fishing, conservation and charter/commercial fishing. Applicants are chosen based upon their particular expertise and experience in relation to