

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE****National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

RIN 0648-XJ62

**North Pacific Fishery Management Council; Notice of Public Meeting**

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

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) will host a public workshop on proposed gear modifications to trawl sweeps used in the BSAI flatfish fisheries, at Dantrawl, in Seattle.

**DATES:** The meeting will be held on September 8, 2008, 1 p.m.–5 p.m.

**ADDRESSES:** Dantrawl, 1121 NW 52nd, Seattle, WA 98107.

*Council address:* North Pacific Fishery Management Council, 605 W. 4th Ave., Suite 306, Anchorage, AK 99501–2252.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Diana Evans, Council staff, Phone: 907–271–2809.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The agenda will be as follows:

(1) Introductions; (2) Latest research results; (3) Gear designs (bobbins, placement, rope types, with net reels and without net reels, practical applications); (4) Council June motion; (5) Draft regulations; (6) Monitoring and enforcement issues (identify problems and suggest solutions).

These meetings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Gail Bendixen at 907–271–2809 at least 7 working days prior to the meeting date.

Dated: August 4, 2008.

**Tracey L. Thompson,**

*Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.*  
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**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE****National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

RIN 0648-XJ56

**Small Takes of Marine Mammals Incidental to Specified Activities; Seismic Survey in the Beaufort Sea, Alaska, Summer and Early Fall 2008**

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

**ACTION:** Notice; issuance of an incidental take authorization.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) regulations, notification is hereby given that NMFS has issued an Incidental Harassment Authorization (IHA) to PGS Onshore, Inc. (PGS) to take, by harassment, small numbers of six species of marine mammals incidental to an exploratory three-dimensional (3D) marine seismic survey in the Beaufort Sea, Alaska, utilizing an ocean bottom cable/transition zone (OBC/TZ) technique in summer and early fall 2008.

**DATES:** Effective July 30, 2008, through July 29, 2009.

**ADDRESSES:** The application containing a list of references used in this document, an addendum to the application, and the IHA are available by writing to P. Michael Payne, Chief, Permits, Conservation and Education Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910–3225 or by telephoning the contact listed below (**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**) or online at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/permits/incidental.htm#applications>. Documents cited in this notice may be viewed, by appointment, during regular business hours, at the aforementioned address.

A copy of the 2006 Minerals Management Service's (MMS) Final Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA) and/or the NMFS/MMS Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (DPEIS) are available on the internet at: <http://www.mms.gov/alaska/>. NMFS' 2008 Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA) is available at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/permits/incidental.htm#applications>.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Candace Nachman, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, (301) 713–2289 or

Brad Smith, NMFS, Alaska Region, (907) 271–3023.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:****Background**

Sections 101(a)(5)(A) and (D) of the MMPA (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*) direct the Secretary of Commerce to allow, 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 geographical region if certain findings are made and either regulations are issued or, if the taking is limited to harassment, a notice of a proposed authorization is provided to the public for review.

Authorization for incidental takings shall be granted if NMFS finds that the taking will have a negligible impact on the species or stock(s), will not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of the species or stock(s) for subsistence uses (where relevant), and if the permissible methods of taking and requirements pertaining to the mitigation, monitoring and reporting of such takings are set forth. NMFS has defined “negligible impact” in 50 CFR 216.103 as “...an impact resulting from the specified activity that cannot be reasonably expected to, and is not reasonably likely to, adversely affect the species or stock through effects on annual rates of recruitment or survival.”

Section 101(a)(5)(D) of the MMPA established an expedited process by which citizens of the United States can apply for an authorization to incidentally take small numbers of marine mammals by harassment. Except with respect to certain activities not pertinent here, the MMPA defines “harassment” as:

any act of pursuit, torment, or annoyance which (i) has the potential to injure a marine mammal or marine mammal stock in the wild [Level A harassment]; or (ii) has the potential to disturb a marine mammal or marine mammal stock in the wild by causing disruption of behavioral patterns, including, but not limited to, migration, breathing, nursing, breeding, feeding, or sheltering [Level B harassment].

Section 101(a)(5)(D) establishes a 45–day time limit for NMFS review of an application followed by a 30–day public notice and comment period on any proposed authorizations for the incidental harassment of marine mammals. Within 45 days of the close of the comment period, NMFS must either issue or deny the authorization.

**Summary of Request**

On May 9, 2008, NMFS received an application from PGS for the taking, by Level B harassment only, of small