

January 22, 2008

Dear Alaska State or Federal Commercial Fishing Permit Holder:

You are receiving this letter and enclosed Authorization Certificate for the purpose of complying with the requirements of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA).

The MMPA requires that all US commercial fisheries be listed as a Category I, II, or III fishery according to the level of incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammals associated with each fishery. Category I fisheries are those with the highest levels of marine mammal serious injury and mortality, Category III has the lowest levels. Participants in Category I and II fisheries must be registered in the MMAP to be authorized for lawful incidental, but not intentional, marine mammal takes during fishing.

If you participate in a Category II fishery in Alaska listed on the enclosed authorization certificate, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has registered you in the Marine Mammal Authorization Program (MMAP). Registration in the MMAP provides to commercial fishery permit holders in certain fisheries exemption from the MMPA's general prohibition on the taking of marine mammals. However, this authorization explicitly does **not** exempt holders of commercial fishing permits from the prohibition on takes of marine mammals listed as endangered or threatened under the endangered Species Act. Your registration in the MMAP and issuance of this authorization is based on your current, valid State of Alaska or Federal commercial fishery permit for one or more of the fisheries listed on the reverse of the Certificate.

If you do not participate in one of the listed Alaska fisheries, your fishery is considered to be a Category III fishery under the MMPA. Category III fishery participants are automatically exempted from the incidental take prohibition. Therefore, you do not need to maintain the enclosed certificate aboard your vessel. However, you must report any incidental takes of marine mammals within 48 hours of the incident or your return to port. Such reports must be made on the enclosed reporting form. See below for obtaining additional copies.

If you plan to participate in one or more of the Category II fisheries identified on the reverse side of the enclosed Certificate, **you must:**

- Maintain the enclosed MMAP Authorization Certificate, or a photocopy, on board the vessel while engaging in any of the fisheries identified on the reverse side of the certificate. For non-vessel or set net fisheries, the enclosed Certificate, or a photocopy, must be in the possession of the permit holder during fishing operations. This Certificate, in combination with a current, valid state or Federal fishing permit, will serve as your authorization to incidentally take non-endangered or non-threatened marine mammals in the course of commercial fishing operations.

- Report all injuries and mortalities of marine mammals within 48 hours of returning from the trip during which these takes occurred using the enclosed Mortality/Injury Reporting Form (or visit <http://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/protectedresources/observers/mmapform.pdf> for a copy).
- Take an observer aboard your vessel, or for non-vessel or setnet fisheries provide access to fishing operations, if so requested.

Please review the Terms and Conditions listed on the enclosed MMAP Certificate. This Certificate may be suspended or revoked by NMFS for failure to comply with any of these Terms and Conditions. If you have any questions regarding MMAP registration or general questions about the MMAP and/or List of fisheries, please contact Bridget Mansfield at (907) 586-7642. For additional information, you can visit the NOAA Fisheries Service MMAP web page at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/interactions/mmap/>.

Sincerely,

Dr. James W. Balsiger
Administrator, Alaska Region

Bmansfield 1/17/08

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