

Endangered Species Act

Pursuant to section 7 of the ESA, the National Science Foundation (NSF) has consulted with NMFS on this seismic survey. NMFS has also consulted internally pursuant to Section 7 of the ESA on the issuance of an IHA under section 101(a)(5)(D) of the MMPA for this activity. In a Biological Opinion (BO), NMFS concluded that the 2007 SIO seismic survey in the northeastern Indian Ocean and the issuance of the associated IHA are not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of threatened or endangered species or destroy or adversely modify any designated critical habitat. NMFS has issued an incidental take statement (ITS) for 1 blue whale and 1 sperm whale (as well as a number of individuals of olive-Ridley sea turtles, green sea turtles, leatherback turtles, and hawksbill sea turtles) that contains reasonable and prudent measures with implementing terms and conditions to minimize the effects of this take. The terms and conditions of the BO have been incorporated into the SIO.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

NSF prepared an Environmental Assessment of a Planned Low-Energy Marine Seismic Survey by the Scripps Institution of Oceanography in the Northeast Indian Ocean, May July 2007. NMFS has adopted NSF's EA and issued a Finding of No Significant Impact for the issuance of the IHA.

Determinations

NMFS has determined that the impact of conducting the seismic survey in the northeast Indian Ocean may result, at worst, in a temporary modification in behavior (Level B Harassment) of small numbers of 29 species of cetaceans. Further, this activity is expected to result in a negligible impact on the affected species or stocks. The provision requiring that the activity not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of the affected species or stock for subsistence uses does not apply for this action.

This determination is supported by: (1) the likelihood that, given sufficient notice through relatively slow ship speed and ramp-up, marine mammals are expected to move away from a noise source that is annoying prior to its becoming potentially injurious; (2) the fact that marine mammals would have to be closer than 40 m from the vessel to be exposed to levels of sound (180 dB) believed to have even a minimal chance of causing TTS; and (3) the likelihood that marine mammal

detection ability by trained observers is high at that short distance from the vessel. As a result, no take by injury or death is anticipated and the potential for temporary or permanent hearing impairment is very low and will be avoided through the incorporation of the required mitigation measures.

While the number of potential incidental harassment takes will depend on the distribution and abundance of marine mammals in the vicinity of the survey activity, the number of potential harassment takings is estimated to be small, less than a few percent of any of the estimated population sizes, and has been mitigated to the lowest level practicable through incorporation of the measures mentioned previously in this document.

Authorization

As a result of these determinations, NMFS has issued an IHA to SIO for conducting a low-energy seismic survey in the Indian Ocean from June - August, 2007, provided the previously mentioned mitigation, monitoring, and reporting requirements are incorporated.

Dated: June 20, 2007.

James H. Lecky,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

XRIN 0648-XB20

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

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

ACTION: Notice of a public meeting.

SUMMARY: The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council will convene a public meeting of the Ad Hoc Review Panel for Red Drum.

DATES: The Ad Hoc Review Panel for Red Drum meeting will convene at 1 p.m. on Monday, July 23, 2007 and conclude no later than 3 p.m. on Tuesday, July 24, 2007.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the W New Orleans, 333 Poydras St., New Orleans, LA 70130; telephone: (504) 525-9444.

Council address: Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, 2203 North Lois Avenue, Suite 1100, Tampa, FL 33607.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Wayne Swingle, Fishery Executive Director, telephone: (813) 348-1630.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Panel will be convened to consider the Council's change to assess the availability of the information needed to conduct a SEDAR stock assessment for red drum and to propose data collection activities for that information that should be carried out in 2008. Representatives of the five gulf states will summarize fisheries dependent and independent data available from their state. The federal representatives will summarize the data available through their agency. The Panel will discuss other issues related to the stock assessment and SEDAR process.

Although other non-emergency issues not on the agenda may come before the Panel for discussion, in accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act), those issues may not be the subject of formal action during these meetings. Actions of the Ad Hoc Review Panel for Red Drum will be restricted to those issues specifically identified in the agenda and any issues arising after publication of this notice that require emergency action under section 305(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, provided the public has been notified of the Council's intent to take action to address the emergency.

Copies of the agenda can be obtained by calling (813) 348-1630.

Special Accommodations

This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Tina Trezza at the Council (see **ADDRESSES**) at least 5 working days prior to the meeting.

Dated: June 28, 2007.

Tracey L. Thompson,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Notice of Proposed Information Collection Requests

AGENCY: Department of Education.

SUMMARY: The IC Clearance Official, Regulatory Information Management Services, Office of Management, invites comments on the proposed information collection requests as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995.