

salmon occur in the salmon savings areas which provide ideal locations for conducting the experiment and ensuring the vessel encounters concentrations of salmon.

Because a large portion of the Chinook Salmon Savings Area and Chum Salmon Savings Area falls within the Steller Sea Lion Conservation Area (SCA), the EFP also allows for an exemption from the sector specific closure of the SCA (§ 679.22(a)(7)(vii)). This exemption applies only until the combined harvest of all sectors in the SCA exceeds the combined 28 percent of the annual TAC before April 1 (§ 679.20(a)(5)(i)(B)). In 2003 nearly 80,000 mt of pollock SCA quota was not harvested. The experiment will harvest approximately 1,300 mt of groundfish (mostly pollock) during the spring. Catcher vessels over 99 ft (30.2 m) length overall (LOA) harvested all of the 2003 quota available to its sector. The vessel used for the research may be a catcher vessel over 99 ft (30.2 m) LOA, the sector that is likely to be closed out of the SCA based on reaching its quota. Because of the large amount of SCA pollock quota that will likely remain unharvested and limitations on the exemption if the combined sector SCA quota is reached, the exemption from the SCA sector specific closure will have no effect on Steller sea lions.

The EFP also exempts the permit holders from the closure of the Catcher Vessel Operating Area (CVOA) at 50 CFR 679.22(a)(5)(ii). All of the Chum Salmon Savings Area is in the CVOA because of the high rates of chum salmon bycatch that are known to occur in this area. The CVOA is closed to catcher/processors during the pollock B season, June 10 through November 1. If a catcher/processor is chosen to conduct the chum salmon portion of the research, it will need access to the CVOA during the pollock B season to ensure enough chum salmon is encountered to provide a sufficient sample size for the experiment.

The EFP authorizes harvests up to 2,270 mt of groundfish in the Bering Sea in the fall of 2003 and the spring of 2004. These groundfish harvests will not be applied toward the groundfish TAC limits in 2003 or 2004.

Approximately 98 percent of the groundfish harvested will be pollock. The 2003 Bering Sea pollock TAC is 1,491,760 metric tons (mt) (68 FR 9907, March 3, 2003) and the 2004 TAC is likely to be over one million mt. The 2003 pollock acceptable biological catch (ABC) for the Bering Sea is 2.33 million mt, well above the TAC and additional harvest anticipated from the experiment. The vessel selected for

participation will retain all pollock and may retain other groundfish species in accordance with the maximum retainable incidental catch amounts at § 679.20(e) and (f), using only pollock as the basis species.

Approximately 200 chum salmon and 30 chinook salmon are required to support the experiment, well below the BSAI limits of 33,000 chinook salmon in 2003, 29,000 chinook salmon in 2004, and the annual limit of 42,000 non-chinook salmon (§ 679.21(e)(1)(vii) and (viii)). The authorized salmon bycatch for this experiment is 2,183 non-chinook salmon and 217 chinook salmon. This is above the amount needed to support the experiment, but is necessary to ensure the experiment is not prematurely ended before a sufficient amount of data are collected under conditions of higher than expected rates of salmon bycatch. If the salmon is of acceptable quality, the salmon bycatch will be retained for the Prohibited Species Donation Program under § 679.26. Otherwise, the salmon will be discarded in accordance with § 679.21(b).

The Regional Administrator may terminate the experiment if the groundfish or salmon bycatch limits specified in the permit are exceeded. To ensure no likelihood of adverse effects on Steller sea lions, the experiment may not be conducted in Steller sea lion protection areas that are closed to pollock trawling (68 FR 204, January 2, 2003, corrected 68 FR 24615, May 8, 2003), except as provided for in the SCA. A final report of the result of the experiment will be made available to the public at the end of 2004.

Failure of the permittees to comply with the terms and conditions of the EFP and all applicable provisions of 50 CFR parts 600 and 679, the Magnuson-Stevens Act, or any regulations promulgated thereunder, or any other applicable laws, may be grounds for revocation, suspension, or modification of this permit as well as civil or criminal sanctions imposed under those laws.

Classification

This action is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866 and the Regulatory Flexibility Act (RFA). The analytical requirements of the RFA are inapplicable because prior notice and opportunity for public comment are not required for this notification.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: July 25, 2003.

Bruce C. Morehead,
Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.
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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Office of the Secretary

Notice of Availability of the Ground-Based Midcourse Defense Extended Test Range Final Environmental Impact Statement

AGENCY: Missile Defense Agency, Department of Defense and Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation.

ACTION: Correction notice for the notice of availability.

SUMMARY: This notice amends the notice published in the **Federal Register** on July 15, 2003, (68 FR 41784) on "Ground-Based Midcourse Extended Test Range Environmental Impact Statement Notice of Availability (NOA)." This notice revises the published closure date to reflect the original NOA publication date in the **Federal Register** by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on July 11, 2003 (68 FR 41338). The corrected NOA closure date is August 11, 2003. All other information remains unchanged.

DATES: A Record of Decision will be issued no earlier than 30 days from July 11, 2003.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Please call Mr. Rick Lehner, MDA Director of Communications at (703) 697-8997.

Dated: July 24, 2003.

L.M. Bynum,
Alternate OSD Federal Liaison Officer, Department of Defense.
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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Office of the Secretary

Defense Science Board

AGENCY: Department of Defense.

ACTION: Notice of Advisory Committee meeting.

SUMMARY: The Defense Science Board Task Force on Quarantining Guidance for the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) Epidemic will meet in open session September 15, 2003,