

defined species' level of extinction risk, and identify factors that have led to its decline. If it is determined that the species' survival is at risk, we then assess existing efforts being made to protect the species to determine if those measures ameliorate the risks faced by the species. As described above, the BRT concluded that the defined species' (the Georgia Basin DPS of Pacific herring) survival is not at risk. It is not necessary to assess whether protective efforts reduce risks to a DPS that has been determined to be viable.

#### Listing Determination

Informed by NMFS' findings that: (1) the spawning stocks of Pacific herring in the Georgia Basin (including the marine waters of Puget Sound, the Strait of Georgia, and eastern Juan de Fuca Strait in the United States and Canada) constitute a DPS; and (2) the DPS is not in danger of extinction or likely to become endangered in the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range, we conclude that the Georgia Basin DPS of Pacific herring does not warrant listing as threatened or endangered under the ESA.

#### References

Copies of the BRT's Status Review Update report, the petition, and related materials are available on the Internet at <http://www.nwr.noaa.gov>, or upon request (see ADDRESSES section above).

**Authority:** 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*

Dated: June 1, 2005.

**Rebecca Lent,**

*Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, National Marine Fisheries Service.*

[FR Doc. 05-11210 Filed 6-6-05; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3510-22-S**

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 031005B]

#### Small Takes of Marine Mammals Incidental to Specified Activities; Naval Explosive Ordnance Disposal School Training Operations at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida

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

**ACTION:** Notice of receipt of application and proposed authorization for incidental harassment of marine mammals; request for comments and information.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS has received a request from Eglin Air Force Base (EAFB) for the take of small numbers of marine mammals, by harassment, incidental to Naval Explosive Ordnance Disposal School (NEODS) Training Operations at EAFB, Florida. Under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), NMFS is requesting comments on its proposal to authorize the Air Force to take, by harassment, small numbers of two species of cetaceans at EAFB beginning in July 7, 2005.

**DATES:** Comments and information must be received no later than July 7, 2005.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments on the application should be addressed to Steve Leathery, Chief, Permits, Conservation, and Education Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910-3225. The mailbox address for providing e-mail comments on this action is [PR1.031005B@noaa.gov](mailto:PR1.031005B@noaa.gov). NMFS is not responsible for e-mail comments sent to addresses other than the one provided here. Comments sent via e-mail, including all attachments, must not exceed a 10-megabyte file size. Comments may also be submitted via facsimile to (301) 427-2521. A copy of the application containing a list of references used in this document may be obtained by writing to this address, by telephoning the contact listed here (SEE FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT) or online at: [http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/prot\\_res/PR1/Small\\_Take/smalltake\\_info.htm#applications](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/prot_res/PR1/Small_Take/smalltake_info.htm#applications). Documents cited in this notice may be viewed, by appointment, during regular business hours, at the aforementioned address.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Jolie Harrison, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, (301) 713-2289, ext. 166.

#### 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 regulations are issued or, if the taking is limited to harassment, notice of a proposed authorization is provided to the public for review.

Authorization for incidental takings may be granted if NMFS finds that the taking will have no more than 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, and that the permissible methods of taking and requirements pertaining to the monitoring and reporting of such taking 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.

Subsection 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. The National Defense Authorization Act of 2004 (NDAA) (Public Law 108-136) amended the definition of "harassment" in section 18(A) of the MMPA as it applies to a "military readiness activity" to read as follows:

(i) any act that injures or has the significant potential to injure a marine mammal or marine mammal stock in the wild (Level A Harassment); or (ii) any act that disturbs or is likely to disturb a marine mammal or marine mammal stock in the wild by causing disruption of natural behavioral patterns, including, but not limited to, migration, surfacing, nursing, breeding, feeding, or sheltering, to a point where such behavioral patterns are abandoned or significantly altered (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 small numbers of marine mammals. Within 45 days of the close of the comment period, NMFS must either issue or deny issuance of the authorization.

#### Summary of Request

On March 11, 2004, NMFS received an application from EAFB, under section 101(a)(5)(D) of the MMPA, requesting authorization for the harassment of small numbers of Atlantic bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*) and Atlantic spotted dolphins (*Stenella frontalis*) incidental to NEODS training operations at EAFB, Florida, in the northern Gulf of Mexico (GOM). Each of up to six missions per year would include up to 5 live detonations of approximately 5-pound (2.3-kg) net explosive weight charges to occur in approximately 60-ft (18.3-m) deep water from one to three nm (1.9 to 5.6 km) off shore. Because this activity will be a multi-year activity, NMFS also plans to develop proposed regulations for NEODS training operations at EAFB.

### Specified Activities

The mission of NEODS is to train personnel to detect, recover, identify, evaluate, render safe, and dispose of unexploded ordnance (UXO) that constitutes a threat to people, material, installations, ships, aircraft, and operations. The NEODS proposes to utilize three areas within the Eglin Gulf Test and Training Range (EGTTR), consisting of approximately 86,000 square miles within the GOM and the airspace above, for Mine Countermeasures (MCM) detonations, which involve mine-hunting and mine-clearance operations. The detonation of small, live explosive charges disables the function of the mines, which are inert for training purposes. The proposed training would occur approximately one to three nautical miles (nm) (1.9 to 5.6 km) offshore of Santa Rosa Island (SRI) six times annually, at varying times within the year.

Each of the six training classes would include one or two "Live Demolition Days." During each set of Live Demolition Days, five inert mines would be placed in a compact area on the sea floor in approximately 60 ft (18.3 m) of water. Divers would locate the mines by hand-held sonars. The AN/PQS-2A acoustic locator has a sound pressure level (SPL) of 178.5 re 1 microPascal @ 1 meter and the Dukane Underwater Acoustic Locator has a SPL of 157-160.5 re 1 microPascal @ 1 meter. Because these sonar ranges are below any current threshold for protected species, noise impacts are not anticipated and are not addressed further in this analysis.

Five charges packed with five lbs (2.3 kg) of C-4 explosive material will be set up adjacent to each of the mines. No more than five charges will be detonated over the two-day period. Detonation times will begin no earlier than two hours after sunrise and end no later than two hours before dusk and charges utilized within the same hour period will have a maximum separation time of 20 minutes. Mine shapes and debris will be recovered and removed from the water when training is completed. A more detailed description of the work proposed for 2005 and 2006 is contained in the application which is available upon request (see **ADDRESSES**).

### Military Readiness Activity

NEODS supports the Naval Fleet by providing training to personnel from all four armed services, civil officials, and military students from over 70 countries. The NEODS facility supports the Department of Defense Joint Service Explosive Ordnance Disposal training

mission. The Navy and the Marine Corps believe that the ability of Sailors and Marines to detect, characterize, and neutralize mines from their operating areas at sea, on the shore, and inland, is vital to their doctrines.

The Navy believes that an array of transnational, rogue, and subnational adversaries now pose the most immediate threat to American interests. Because of their relative low cost and ease of use, mines will be among the adversaries' weapons of choice in shallow-water situations, and they will be deployed in an asymmetrical and asynchronous manner. The Navy needs organic means to clear mines and obstacles rapidly in three challenging environments: shallow water; the surf zone; and the beach zone. The Navy also needs a capability for rapid clandestine surveillance and reconnaissance of minefields and obstacles in these environments. The NEODS mission in the GOM offshore of EAFB is considered a military readiness activity pursuant to the NDAA (Public Law 108-136).

### Marine Mammals and Habitat Affected by the Activity

Marine mammal species that potentially occur within the EGTTR include several species of cetaceans and the West Indian manatee. While a few manatees may migrate as far north from southern Florida (where there are generally confined in the winter) as Louisiana in the summer, they primarily inhabit coastal and inshore waters and rarely venture offshore. NEODS missions are conducted one to 3 nm (5.6 km) from shore and effects on manatees are therefore considered very unlikely and not discussed further in this analysis.

Cetacean abundance estimates for the project area are derived from GulfCet II aerial surveys conducted from 1996 to 1998 over a 70,470 km<sup>2</sup> area, including nearly the entire continental shelf region of the EGTTR, which extends approximately 9 nm (16.7 km) from shore. The dwarf and pygmy sperm whales are not included in this analysis because their potential for being found near the project site is remote. Although Atlantic spotted dolphins do not normally inhabit nearshore waters, they are included in the analysis to ensure conservative mitigation measures are applied. The two marine mammal species expected to be affected by these activities are the bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*) and the Atlantic spotted dolphin (*Stenella frontalis*). Descriptions of the biology and local distribution of these species can be found in the application (see **ADDRESSES** for availability), other sources such as

Wursig et al. (2000), and the NMFS Stock Assessments, which can be viewed at: [http://www.NMFS.noaa.gov/pr/PR2/Stock\\_Assessment\\_Program/sars.html](http://www.NMFS.noaa.gov/pr/PR2/Stock_Assessment_Program/sars.html).

### Atlantic Bottlenose Dolphins

Atlantic bottlenose dolphins are distributed worldwide in tropical and temperate waters and occur in the slope, shelf, and inshore waters of the GOM. Based on a combination of geography and ecological and genetic research, Atlantic bottlenose dolphins have been divided into many separate stocks within the GOM. The exact structure of these stocks is complex and continues to be revised as research is completed. For now, bottlenose dolphins inhabiting waters less than 20 m (66 ft) deep in the U.S. GOM are believed to constitute 36 inshore or coastal stocks, and those inhabiting waters from 20 to 200 m (66 to 656 ft) deep in the northern GOM from the U.S.-Mexican border to the Florida Keys are considered the continental shelf stock (Waring et al., 2004). The proposed action would occur on the ocean floor at a depth of approximately 60 ft (18 m) and therefore has the potential to affect both the continental shelf and inshore stocks.

Continental shelf stock assessments were estimated using data from vessel surveys conducted between 1998 and 2001 (at 20- to 200-m (66- to 656-ft) depths). The minimum population estimate for the northern GOM continental shelf stock of the Atlantic bottlenose dolphin is 20,414 (Waring et al., 2004). The potential for biological removal (PBR), which is the "maximum number of animals that may be removed from a stock while allowing the stock to maintain its optimal sustainable population", of the continental shelf stock is currently 204.

The most recent inshore stock assessment surveys were conducted aerially in 1993 and covered the area from the shore or bay boundaries out to 9.3 km (5.0 nm) past the 18.3 m (60.0 nm) isobath (a slightly different area than that defined as inshore in the more recent stock assessment above). The minimum population estimate of the northern GOM coastal stock of the Atlantic bottlenose dolphin was 3,518 dolphins and the PBR for this stock was 35 (Waring et al., 1997).

Texas A&M University and the NMFS conducted GulfCet II aerial surveys in an area including the EGTTR from 1996 to 1998. Density estimates were calculated using abundance data collected from the continental shelf area of the EGTTR. In an effort to provide better species conservation and protection, estimates were adjusted to

incorporate temporal and spatial variations, surface and submerged variations, and overall density confidence. The adjusted density estimate for Atlantic bottlenose dolphins within the project area is 0.810 individuals/km<sup>2</sup>. A small number of dolphins could not be identified specifically as Atlantic bottlenose or Atlantic spotted and their estimated density was 0.053 individuals/km<sup>2</sup>.

#### *Atlantic Spotted Dolphins*

Atlantic spotted dolphins are endemic to the tropical and warm temperate waters of the Atlantic Ocean and can be found from the latitude of Cape May, New Jersey south along mainland shores to Venezuela, including the GOM and Lesser Antilles. In the GOM, Atlantic spotted dolphins occur primarily in continental shelf waters 10 to 200 m (33 to 656 ft) deep out to continental slope waters less than 500 m (1640.4 ft) deep. One recent study presents strong genetic support for differentiation between GOM and western North Atlantic management stocks, but the Gulf of Mexico stock has not yet been further subdivided.

Abundance was estimated in the most recent assessment of the northern GOM stock of the Atlantic spotted dolphin using combined data from continental shelf surveys (20 to 200 m (66 to 656 ft) deep) and oceanic surveys (200 m (656 ft) to offshore extent of U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone) conducted from 1996 to 2001. The minimum population estimate for the northern GOM is 24,752 Atlantic spotted dolphins (Waring *et al.*, 2004). The estimated PBR for this stock is 248 dolphins.

Density estimates for the Atlantic spotted dolphin within the EGTR were calculated using abundance data collected during the GulfCet II aerial surveys. In an effort to provide better species conservation and protection, estimates were adjusted to incorporate temporal and spatial variations, surface and submerged variations, and overall density confidence. The adjusted density estimate for Atlantic spotted dolphins within the project area is 0.677 individuals/km<sup>2</sup>. A small number of dolphins could not be identified specifically as Atlantic bottlenose or Atlantic spotted and their estimated density was 0.053 individuals/km<sup>2</sup>.

#### **Potential Effects of Activities on Marine Mammals**

The primary potential impact to the Atlantic bottlenose and the Atlantic spotted dolphins occurring in the EGTR from the proposed detonations is Level B harassment from noise. There is a slight potential, absent mitigation,

that small numbers of marine mammals may be injured or killed due to the energy generated from an explosive force on the sea floor. Analysis of NEODS noise impacts to cetaceans was based on criteria and thresholds initially presented in U.S. Navy Environmental Impact Statements for ship shock trials of the SEAWOLF submarine and the WINSTON CHURCHILL vessel and subsequently adopted by NMFS.

Non-lethal injurious impacts (Level A Harassment) are defined in EAFB's application and this proposed IHA as tympanic membrane (TM) rupture and the onset of slight lung injury. The threshold for Level A Harassment corresponds to a 50 percent rate of TM rupture, which can be stated in terms of an energy flux density (EFD) value of 205 dB re 1 microPa<sup>2</sup> s. TM rupture is well-correlated with permanent hearing impairment (Ketten (1998) indicates a 30 percent incidence of permanent threshold shift (PTS) at the same threshold). The zone of influence (ZOI) (farthest distance from the source at which an animal is exposed to the EFD level referred to) for the Level A Harassment threshold is 52.2 m (171.6 ft).

Level B (non-injurious) Harassment includes temporary (auditory) threshold shift (TTS), a slight, recoverable loss of hearing sensitivity. One criterion used for TTS is 182 dB re 1 microPa<sup>2</sup> s maximum EFD level in any 1/3-octave band above 100 Hz for toothed whales (e.g., dolphins). The ZOI for this threshold is 229.8 m (754.0 ft). A second criterion, 23 psi, has recently been established by NMFS to provide a more conservative range for TTS when the explosive or animal approaches the sea surface, in which case explosive energy is reduced, but the peak pressure is not. The ZOI for 23 psi is 222 m (728 ft).

Level B Harassment also includes behavioral modifications resulting from repeated noise exposures (below TTS) to the same animals (usually resident) over a relatively short period of time. Threshold criteria for this particular type of harassment are currently still under debate. One recommendation is a level of 6 dB below TTS (see 69 FR 21816, April 22, 2004), which would be 176 dB re 1 microPa<sup>2</sup> s. Due to the infrequency of the detonations, the potential variability in target locations, and the continuous movement of marine mammals off the northern Gulf, behavioral modification from repeated exposures to the same animals is considered highly unlikely.

#### **Numbers of Marine Mammals Expected to be Harassed**

Estimates of the potential number of Atlantic bottlenose dolphins and Atlantic spotted dolphins to be harassed by the training were calculated using the number of distinct firing or test events (maximum 30 per year), the ZOI for noise exposure, and the density of animals that potentially occur in the ZOI. The take estimates provided here do not include mitigation measures, which are expected to further minimize impacts to protected species and make injury or death highly unlikely.

The estimated number of Atlantic bottlenose dolphins and Atlantic spotted dolphins potentially taken through exposure to the Level A Harassment threshold (205 dB re 1 microPa<sup>2</sup> s), are less than one (0.22 and 0.19, respectively) annually.

For Level B Harassment, two separate criteria were established, one expressed in dB re 1 microPa<sup>2</sup> s maximum EFD level in any 1/3-octave band above 100 Hz, and one expressed in psi. The estimated numbers of Atlantic bottlenose dolphins and Atlantic spotted dolphins potentially taken through exposure to 182 dB are 4 and 3 individuals, respectively. The estimated numbers potentially taken through exposure to 23 psi are also 4 and 3 individuals, respectively.

#### **Possible Effects of Activities on Marine Mammal Habitat**

The Air Force anticipates no loss or modification to the habitat used by Atlantic bottlenose dolphins or Atlantic spotted dolphins in the EGTR. The primary source of marine mammal habitat impact resulting from the NEODS missions is noise, which is intermittent (maximum 30 times per year) and of limited duration. The effects of debris (which will be recovered following test activities), ordnance, fuel, and chemical residues were analyzed in the NEODS Biological Assessment and the Air Force concluded that marine mammal habitat would not be affected.

#### **Possible Effects of Activities on Subsistence Needs**

There are no subsistence uses for Atlantic bottlenose dolphins or Atlantic spotted dolphins in Gulf of Mexico waters, and thus, there are no anticipated effects on subsistence needs.

#### **Mitigation and Monitoring**

Mitigation will consist primarily of surveying and taking action to avoid detonating charges when protected species are within the ZOI. A trained, NMFS-approved observer will be staged

from the highest point possible on a support ship and have proper lines of communication to the Officer in Tactical Command. The survey area will be 460 m (1509 ft) in every direction from the target, which is twice the radius of the ZOI for Level B Harassment (230 m (755 ft)). To ensure visibility of marine mammals to observers, NEODS missions will be delayed if whitecaps cover more than 50 percent of the surface or if the waves are greater than 3 feet (Beaufort Sea State 4).

Pre-mission monitoring will be used to evaluate the test site for environmental suitability of the mission. Visual surveys will be conducted two hours, one hour, and five minutes prior to the mission to verify that the ZOI (230 m (755 ft)) is free of visually detectable marine mammals, sea turtles, large schools of fish, large flocks of birds, large Sargassum mats, or large concentrations of jellyfish and that the weather is adequate to support visual surveys. The observer will plot and record sightings, bearing, and time for all marine mammals detected, which would allow the observer to determine if the animal is likely to enter the test area during detonation. If an animal appears likely to enter the test area during detonation, if marine mammals, sea turtles, large schools of fish, large flocks of birds, large Sargassum mats, or large concentrations of jellyfish are present, or if the weather is inadequate to support monitoring, the observer will declare the range fouled and the tactical officer will implement a hold until monitoring indicates that the test area is and will remain clear of detectable marine mammals or sea turtles.

Monitoring of the test area will continue throughout the mission until the last detonation is complete. The mission would be postponed if:

(1) Any marine mammal is visually detected within the ZOI (230 m (755 ft)). The delay would continue until the animal that caused the postponement is confirmed to be outside the ZOI (visually observed swimming out of the range).

(2) Any marine mammal or sea turtle is detected in the ZOI and subsequently is not seen again. The mission would not continue until the last verified location is outside of the ZOI and the animal is moving away from the mission area.

(3) Large Sargassum rafts or large concentrations of jellyfish are observed within the ZOI. The delay would continue until the Sargassum rafts or jellyfish that caused the postponement are confirmed to be outside of the ZOI either due to the current and/or wind moving them out of the mission area.

(4) Large schools of fish are observed in the water within of the ZOI. The delay would continue until large fish schools are confirmed to be outside the ZOI.

In the event of a postponement, pre-mission monitoring would continue as long as weather and daylight hours allow. If a charge failed to explode, mitigation measures would continue while operations personnel attempted to recognize and solve the problem (detonate the charge).

Post-mission monitoring is designed to determine the effectiveness of pre-mission mitigation by reporting any sightings of dead or injured marine mammals or sea turtles. Post-detonation monitoring, concentrating on the area down current of the test site, would commence immediately following each detonation and continue for at least two hours after the last detonation. The monitoring team would document and report to the appropriate marine animal stranding network any marine mammals or turtles killed or injured during the test and, if practicable, recover and examine any dead animals. The species, number, location, and behavior of any animals observed by the teams would be documented and reported to the Officer in Tactical Command.

#### Reporting

The Air Force will notify NMFS 2 weeks prior to initiation of each training session. Any takes of marine mammals other than those authorized by the IHA, as well as any injuries or deaths of marine mammals, will be reported to the Southeast Regional Administrator, NMFS, by the next working day. A summary of mission observations and test results, including dates and times of detonations as well as pre- and post-mission monitoring observations, will be submitted to the Southeast Regional Office (NMFS) and to the Division of Permits, Conservation, and Education, Office of Protected Resources (NMFS) within 90 days after the completion of the last training session.

#### Endangered Species Act

In a Biological Opinion issued on October 25, 2004, NMFS concluded that the NEODS training missions and their associated actions are not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of threatened or endangered species under the jurisdiction of NMFS or destroy or adversely modify critical habitat that has been designated for those species. NMFS has issued an incidental take statement (ITS) for sea turtles pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. The ITS contains reasonable and prudent measures with implementing

terms and conditions to minimize the effects of this take. This proposed IHA action is within the scope of the previously analyzed action and does not change the action in a manner that was not considered previously.

#### National Environmental Policy Act

NMFS is currently conducting an analysis, pursuant to NEPA, to determine whether or not this activity may have a significant effect on the human environment. A record of decision will be issued prior to the issuance or denial of this IHA.

#### Preliminary Conclusions

NMFS proposes to issue an IHA to the USAF for the NEODS training missions to take place at EAFB over a 1-year period. The proposal to issue this IHA is contingent upon adherence to the previously mentioned mitigation, monitoring, and reporting requirements. NMFS has preliminarily determined that the impact of the NEODS training, which entails up to six missions per year, including up to 5 live detonations per mission of approximately 5-pound net explosive weight charges to occur in approximately 60-foot (18 m) deep water from one to three nm off shore, will result in the harassment of small numbers of Atlantic bottlenose dolphins and Atlantic spotted dolphins; would have no more negligible impact on these marine mammal stocks; and would not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of marine mammal stocks for subsistence uses. Dwarf and pygmy sperm whales and manatees are unlikely to be found in the area and, therefore, will not be affected. While behavioral modifications may be made by Atlantic bottlenose dolphins and Atlantic spotted dolphins to avoid the resultant acoustic stimuli, there is virtually no possibility of injury or mortality when the potential density of dolphins in the area and extent of mitigation and monitoring are taken into consideration. The effects of the NEODS training are expected to be limited to short-term and localized TTS-related behavioral changes.

Due to the infrequency and localized nature of these activities, the estimated number of marine mammals potentially taken by harassment is small. In addition, no take by injury and/or death is anticipated. No rookeries, mating grounds, areas of concentrated feeding, or other areas of special significance for marine mammals occur within or near the NEODS test sites.

#### Information Solicited

NMFS requests interested persons to submit comments and information

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

Dated: June 1, 2005.

**Michael Payne**,

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

[FR Doc. 05-11209 Filed 6-6-05; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3510-22-S**

## **DEFENSE BASE CLOSURE AND REALIGNMENT COMMISSION**

### **Notice of the 2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission—Open Meeting**

**AGENCY:** Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission.

**ACTION:** Notice; 2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission—open meeting (Baltimore, MD).

**SUMMARY:** Notice is hereby given that a delegation of Commissioners of the 2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission will hold an open meeting on July 8, 2005, from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Kraushaar Auditorium, Goucher College, 1021 Dulaney Valley Road, Baltimore, Maryland 21204. The Commission requests that the public consult the 2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission Web site, <http://www.brac.gov>, for updates.

The delegation will meet to receive comment from Federal, state and local government representatives and the general public on base realignment and closure actions in the District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Virginia that have been recommended by the Department of Defense (DoD). The purpose of this regional meeting is to allow communities experiencing a base closure or major realignment action (defined as loss of 300 civilian positions or 400 military and civilian positions) an opportunity to voice their concerns, counter-arguments, and opinions in a live public forum. This meeting will be open to the public, subject to the availability of space. The delegation will not render decisions regarding the DoD recommendations at this meeting, but will gather information for later deliberations by the Commission as a whole.

**DATES:** July 8, 2005, from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**ADDRESSES:** The Kraushaar Auditorium, Goucher College, 1021 Dulaney Valley Road, Baltimore, Maryland 21204.

### **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Please see the 2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission Web site, <http://www.brac.gov>. The Commission invites the public to provide direct comment by sending an electronic message through the portal provided on the Commission's Web site or by mailing comments and supporting documents to the 2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission, 2521 South Clark Street Suite 600, Arlington, Virginia 22202-3920. The Commission requests that public comments be directed toward matters bearing on the decision criteria described in *The Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990*, as amended, available on the Commission Web site. Sections 2912 through 2914 of that Act describe the criteria and many of the essential elements of the 2005 BRAC process. For questions regarding this announcement, contact Mr. Dan Cowhig, Deputy General Counsel and Designated Federal Officer, at the Commission's mailing address or by telephone at 703-699-2950 or 2708.

Dated: May 31, 2005.

**Jeannette Owings-Ballard**,

*Administrative Support Officer.*

[FR Doc. 05-11232 Filed 6-6-05; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 5001-06-P**

## **DEFENSE BASE CLOSURE AND REALIGNMENT COMMISSION**

### **Notice of the 2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission—Open Meeting**

**AGENCY:** Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission.

**ACTION:** Notice; 2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission—open meeting (Charlotte, NC).

**SUMMARY:** Notice is hereby given that a delegation of Commissioners of the 2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission will hold an open meeting on June 28, 2005, from 1 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. at the Harris Conference Center, Central Piedmont Community College West Campus, 3216 CPCC West Campus Drive, Charlotte, North Carolina 28208. The Commission requests that the public consult the 2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission Web site, <http://www.brac.gov>, for updates.

The delegation will meet to receive comment from Federal, State and local government representatives and the general public on base realignment and closure actions in North Carolina and South Carolina that have been recommended by the Department of

Defense (DoD). The purpose of this regional meeting is to allow communities experiencing a base closure or major realignment action (defined as loss of 300 civilian positions or 400 military and civilian positions) an opportunity to voice their concerns, counter-arguments, and opinions in a live public forum. This meeting will be open to the public, subject to the availability of space. The delegation will not render decisions regarding the DoD recommendations at this meeting, but will gather information for later deliberations by the Commission as a whole.

**DATES:** June 28, 2005, from 1 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

**ADDRESSES:** The Harris Conference Center, Central Piedmont Community College West Campus, 3216 CPCC West Campus Drive, Charlotte, North Carolina 28208.

### **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Please see the 2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission Web site, <http://www.brac.gov>. The Commission invites the public to provide direct comment by sending an electronic message through the portal provided on the Commission's Web site or by mailing comments and supporting documents to the 2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission, 2521 South Clark Street Suite 600, Arlington, Virginia 22202-3920. The Commission requests that public comments be directed toward matters bearing on the decision criteria described in *The Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990*, as amended, available on the Commission Web site. Sections 2912 through 2914 of that Act describe the criteria and many of the essential elements of the 2005 BRAC process. For questions regarding this announcement, contact Mr. Dan Cowhig, Deputy General Counsel and Designated Federal Officer, at the Commission's mailing address or by telephone at 703-699-2950 or 2708.

Dated: May 31, 2005.

**Jeannette Owings-Ballard**,

*Administrative Support Officer.*

[FR Doc. 05-11233 Filed 6-6-05; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 5001-06-P**

## **DEFENSE BASE CLOSURE AND REALIGNMENT COMMISSION**

### **Notice of the 2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission—Open Meeting**

**AGENCY:** Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission.