



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS 96TH AIR BASE WING (AFMC)
EGLIN AIR FORCE BASE FLORIDA

Mr. Stephen M. Seiber
96th CEG/CEVSN
501 DeLeon Street, Suite 101
Eglin AFB FL 32542-5133

11 OCT 2007

Shane Guan
National Marine Fisheries Service
Office of Protected Resources
Permits, Conservation and Education Division
1315 East-West Highway
SSMC-3, Room 13756
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Mr. Guan:

This letter is being submitted to the National Marine Fisheries Society (NMFS) to request an Incidental Harassment Authorization (IHA) associated with the Eglin Air Force Base *Santa Rosa Island (SRI) Mission Utilization Plan*. Compliance with respect to the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 will be accomplished by securing another IHA.

This project received an IHA on 11 December 2006 for training operations involving major surf zone exercises on SRI such as underwater detonations in shallow water that are used to clear mines and other obstacles. Initially, a 5-year Letter of Authorization (LOA) was requested due to the longevity of the proposed actions, but an IHA was issued instead to allow the mission to occur. That particular IHA will expire on 10 December 2007 and the Air Force would like to request another IHA until rule making can proceed for a 5-year LOA. This IHA request should include the same mission and mitigation requirements as indicated in the 11 December 2006 IHA. Attached is the IHA from December 2006 issued to Eglin AFB and a copy of the original application (November 2005) for the request of a LOA which includes applicable take tables.

The NMFS will be notified immediately if any of the actions considered in this proposed action are modified. Any modifications or conditions resulting from consultation or permitting with the NMFS will be implemented prior to commencement of activities. The Natural Resources Section believes this fulfills all requirements for the permitting process to proceed. If you have any questions regarding this letter or any of the proposed activities, please do not hesitate to contact either Mr. Bob Miller (850-883-1153) or myself at (850) 882-8391.

Sincerely

STEPHEN M. SEIBER, YF-2
Chief, Natural Resources Section

Attachments:

1. SRI IHA from December 2006
2. Original request for LOA from November 2005



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Silver Spring, MD 20910

DEC 18 2006

Mr. Stephen M. Seiber
Chief, Natural Resources Section
501 De Leon Street, Suite 101
Eglin AFB, Florida 32542-5133

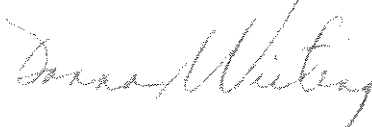
Dear Mr. Seiber:

Enclosed is an Incidental Harassment Authorization (IHA) issued to the U.S. Air Force Eglin Air Force Base (Eglin AFB) under the authority of Section 101(a)(5)(D) of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*), to take by Level B harassment of bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*) and Atlantic spotted dolphins (*Stenella frontalis*), incidental to conducting surf zone testing/training and amphibious vehicle training and weapons testing on Eglin's Santa Rosa Island property, including the shoreline of the Gulf of Mexico, Florida.

Eglin AFB is required to comply with the conditions contained in the IHA. In addition, you must cooperate with any federal, state or local agency authorized to monitor the impacts of your activities, and submit a report to the National Marine Fisheries Service's (NMFS) Office of Protected Resources and the Southeast Regional Office within 90 days after the expiration of this IHA.

Please note that this IHA is not valid until our office receives the signed copy of the enclosed signature page. You may submit the copy by facsimile to 301-427-2521 and send the original signature page by mail. If you have any questions concerning the IHA or its requirements, please contact Shane Guan, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, at (301) 713-2289, ext 137.

Sincerely,


(for) James H. Lecky, Director
Office of Protected Resources

Enclosure



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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Silver Spring, MD 20910

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE

Incidental Harassment Authorization

The U.S. Air Force Eglin Air Force Base (Eglin AFB), Florida 32542 is hereby authorized under section 101(a)(5)(D) of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 1371(a)(5)(D)) and 50 CFR 216.107 to take, by Level B harassment only, bottlenose and Atlantic spotted dolphins incidental to conducting surf zone testing/training and amphibious vehicle training and weapons testing on Eglin's Santa Rosa Island property, contingent upon the following conditions:

1. This Authorization is valid from December 11, 2006, through December 10, 2007.
2. This Authorization is valid only for activities associated with conducting 1 surf zone testing/training exercise, several amphibious vehicle training, and 2 live fire weapons testing on Eglin's Santa Rosa Island property off the coast of Florida, including the shoreline of the Gulf of Mexico (GOM), as specified in the Eglin AFB's November 29, 2005, request.
3. Species Impacted and Level of Takes
 - (a) The taking, by incidental Level B harassment only, is limited to the species listed under Condition 3(b) below. The taking by serious injury or death of these species is prohibited and may result in the modification, suspension, or revocation of this Authorization.
 - (b) The species authorized for takings by incidental harassment are bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*) and Atlantic spotted dolphins (*Stenella frontalis*).
 - (c) The taking of any marine mammal in a manner prohibited under this Authorization must be reported within 48 hours to the Director, Southeast Regional Office, National Marine Fisheries Service, Telephone 727-824-5517 and the Director, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service, Telephone 301-713-2332.
4. The holder of this Authorization is required to cooperate with the National Marine Fisheries Service and any other Federal, state, or local agency legally authorized to monitor the impacts of the activity on marine mammals. The holder must notify Shane Guan of the Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service (301-713-2289) at least 24 hours prior to starting activities (unless constrained by the date of issuance of this Authorization).



5. Mitigation Requirements

The holder of this Authorization must follow the conditions listed below when conducting surf zone testing/training and amphibious vehicle training and weapons testing:

(a) Time and Frequency:

(i) The surf zone testing/training mission shall only be conducted under daylight conditions of suitable visibility and Beaufort sea state 3 or less. The surf zone testing/training shall be conducted no more than once per year, starting from the date when this IHA becomes effective.

(ii) Operations involving live fire testing/training shall only be conducted with sea surface conditions of sea state 3 or less, and be conducted no more than twice per year, starting from the date when this IHA becomes effective.

(b) Safety Zones:

(i) Surf zone testing/training safety zones shall be established prior to initiation of the mission activities. The size of the safety zones shall correspond to the Zone of Influence (ZOI) for Level B behavior harassment (176 dB 1/3 octave sound pressure level), depending on the specific test system. The radii of safety zones for four of the test systems are listed below:

<u>Test System</u>	<u>Safety Zone Radii</u>
SABRE 232 lb NEW	1,440 m (4,724 ft)
MK-5 MCS 1,750 lb NEW	2,299 m (7,543 ft)
DET 130 lb	1,252 m (4,108 ft)
MK-82 ARRAY 1,372 lb	2,207 m (7,241 ft)

(ii) For surf zone testing/training, ZOI monitoring shall be conducted using a helicopter and small boat(s) prior to and after the operations; for other operations during daytime missions, the proposed action area shall be surveyed for marine mammals using small boat(s) prior to and after the operations. Detailed outline of monitoring procedures are listed under Condition 5(c) "Monitoring" below.

(c) Monitoring:

(i) The holder of this Authorization must train personnel to conduct aerial surveys for protected species. The aerial survey/monitoring team shall consist of an observer and a pilot familiar with flying transect patterns.

(ii) The aerial marine mammal observer must be experienced in marine mammal surveying and be familiar with species that may occur in the area. The observer shall be responsible for relaying the location (latitude and longitude), the species of marine mammal if known, and the number of animals sighted.

(iii) The aerial and shipboard monitoring team must have proper lines of communication to avoid communication deficiencies. Observers must have direct radio communication with the Lead Scientist.

(iv) The Lead Scientist must review the range conditions and recommend a Go/No-Go decision to the Officer in Tactical Command, who makes the final Go/No-Go decision.

(v) The holder of this Authorization must follow the stepwise pre-mission monitoring procedures listed below for surf zone missions:

(A) One Hour Prior to Mission:

Approximately one hour prior to the mission, or at daybreak, the appropriate vessel(s) must be on-site near the location of the earliest planned mission point. Personnel onboard the vessel must assess the suitability of the test site, based on visual observation of marine mammals and sea turtles. This information shall be relayed to the Lead Scientist.

(2) Fifteen Minutes Prior to Mission:

Aerial monitoring shall commence at the test site 15 minutes prior to the start of the mission. The entire ZOI shall be surveyed by flying transects through the area. Shipboard personnel must also monitor the area as available. All marine mammal sightings must be reported to the Lead Scientist, who shall enter all pertinent data into a sighting database.

(3) Go/No-Go Decision Process

The Lead Scientist must record sightings and bearing for all protected species detected. This shall depict animal sightings relative to the mission area. The Lead Scientist shall have the authority to declare the range fouled and recommend a hold until monitoring indicates that the ZOI is and will remain clear of detectable animals.

(vi) The mission must be postponed if any marine mammal or sea turtle is visually detected within the ZOI for Level B behavioral harassment. The delay must continue until the marine mammal or sea turtle is confirmed to be outside the ZOI for Level B behavioral harassment.

(vii) Post-mission monitoring shall commence immediately following surf zone detonation and continue for 15 minutes by a helicopter flying transects in the area above the detonation, concentrating on the area down current of the test site.

(viii) The monitoring team must attempt to document any marine mammals or sea turtles that were found dead or injured after the detonation, and, if practicable, recover and examine any dead animals. The species, number, location, and behavior of any animals observed by the observation teams must be documented and reported to the Lead Scientist.

(ix) Post-mission monitoring activities shall also include coordination with marine animal stranding networks.

6. Reporting

(a) The holder of this Authorization must report its activities covered under this IHA on an annual basis. This annual report must include marine mammal and sea turtle observations and any impacts to these animals resulted from the surf zone and amphibious vehicle and weapon testing/training activities.

(b) The report shall be submitted to the NMFS Southeast Regional Office and to the Office of Protected Resources within 90 days of the expiration of this IHA.

(c) If any marine mammal or sea turtle is observed or detected to be deceased prior to testing, or injured or killed during live fire, a report must be made to the NMFS by the following business day.

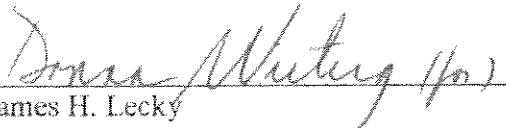
(d) Any unauthorized takes of marine mammals (i.e., serious injury or mortality) must be immediately reported to the NMFS representative and to the respective stranding network representative.

7. A copy of this Authorization must be in the possession of each observer or group operating under the authority of this IHA.

8. The holder of this Authorization, in signing this IHA, has accepted and will comply with the provisions of this IHA.

9. Penalties and Permit Sanctions


Any person who violates any provision of this IHA is subject to civil and criminal penalties, permit sanctions, and forfeiture as authorized under the MMPA.



James H. Lecky
Director
Office of Protected Resources
National Marine Fisheries Service

DEC 18 2006

Date



Stephen M. Seiber
Chief, Natural Resources Section
U.S. Air Force Eglin Air Force Base

8 JAN 2007

Date



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS 96TH AIR BASE WING (AFMC)
EGLIN AIR FORCE BASE FLORIDA

21 NOV 2005

Mr. Stephen M. Seiber
Chief, Natural Resources Section
501 De Leon Street, Suite 101
Eglin AFB FL 32542-5133

Mr. Steve Leathery
Office of Protected Resources
National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring MD 20910-3226

Dear Mr. Leathery

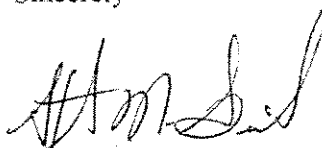
The following information is being submitted to support a Request for a "Letter of Authorization" (LOA) under Section 101 (a)(5)(D) of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended for incidental harassment of marine mammals. This take authorization request is made in support of Eglin's proposed actions in the Santa Rosa Island (SRI) Mission Utilization Plan for the Department of Defense (DoD), Department of the Air Force, Eglin Air Force Base (AFB). Eglin AFB has completed formal consultation with the NMFS South East Regional Office to fulfill requirements under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. An electronic copy of the SRI Mission Utilization Plan Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA), SRI Biological Assessment (BA) and Biological Opinion (BO) has also been included as an attachment for your review. Eglin AFB proposes to utilize portions of SRI for new testing and training exercises, as well as continue currently existing land uses at the base. The surf zone test and training activities, in particular surf zone detonations, have been found to be the only activities that may be impactive to marine mammals in the SRI Mission Utilization Plan PEA.

With this submittal, Eglin AFB requests a LOA for the incidental taking, but not intentional taking (in the form of noise-related harassment), of small numbers of marine mammals by the programmatic mission activities within the Eglin SRI Region of Influence over the next five years, as permitted by the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended. Because in-place mitigations would clear the area of any marine mammals before detonations occurred, it is anticipated that no federally protected marine animal takes would result in the form of mortality, injury, or Level A harassment. However, an LOA is being requested versus an incidental harassment authorization due to the longevity of the proposed actions.

The National Marine Fisheries Service will be notified immediately if any of the considered actions are further modified or if additional information on marine mammal species becomes available. Due to the extended time period for large consultations and the strict timeframe of this important DoD testing, Eglin AFB requests a timely consultation process of less than six months (May 2006).

If you have any questions regarding this letter or any of the proposed activities or analyses, please do not hesitate to contact either Mr. Bob Miller or myself at (850) 882-4164.

Sincerely



STEPHEN M. SEIBER, GS-13

4 Attachments:

1. SRI Request for LOA, November 2005
2. SRI BA, March 2005 (CD)
3. SRI BO, October 2005 (CD)
4. SRI Draft-Final PEA November 2005 (CD)

cc:

Roy E. Crabtree, Ph.D.
