

effectiveness of the side panel pockets at retaining escapees.

Species of principal interest in the study include haddock, cod, pollock, American plaice, witch flounder, winter flounder, and hake species. Once caught, these species would be sorted, and then divided into legal and sub-legal size groups. They would then be sub-sampled, measured, and weighed. All legal catch would be retained, while all other remaining catch would be returned to the sea as quickly as practicable. Based on data from previous experimental tows, the researchers anticipate that a total of 20,385 lb (9,246 kg) of fish would be harvested throughout the course of the study, along with 6,390 lb (2,898 kg) of regulatory discards from both the experimental and control nets. All legal-sized fish within the possession limit would be retained and sold, with the proceeds returned to the project for the purpose of enhancing future research.

All at-sea research is proposed to be conducted from the F/V Bad Penny (Permit # 250485, O.N. 617341) from the period between August 1, 2006, and July 31, 2007. The vessel intends to fish in two main areas of the GOM, known as "The Kettles" and "The Three Dories." The vessel would fish exclusively outside of all closed areas. A total of 10 days would be used for testing the experimental trawl, with an anticipated 4, 2-hour tows per day (2 control, 2 experimental). An additional 2 days would be used to evaluate side panel escapement, using the small mesh side pockets. During these escapement trials, the main net codend would remain open, and only fish captured through the side panels would be sampled. The researchers are therefore requesting exemption from a total of 2 NE multispecies DAS to conduct the net escapement trials, in which no fish will be landed.

Based on preliminary review of this project, and in accordance with NOAA Administrative Order 216-6, a Categorical Exclusion (CE) from requirements to prepare either an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or an Environmental Assessment (EA) under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) appears to be justified. The applicant may request minor modifications and extensions to the EFP throughout the year. EFP modifications and extensions may be granted without further notice if they are deemed essential to facilitate completion of the proposed research and have minimal impacts that do not change the scope or impact of the initially approved EFP request.

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

Dated: July 13, 2006.

James P. Burgess,

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

[FR Doc. E6-11406 Filed 7-18-06; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-S

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 071306F]

Marine Mammals; File No. 633-1778

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

ACTION: Notice; issuance of permit.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that the Center for Coastal Studies, P.O. Box 1036, Provincetown, MA 02657 [Principal Investigator: Julie Robbins] has been issued a permit to conduct scientific research.

ADDRESSES: The permit and related documents are available for review upon written request or by appointment in the following office(s):

Permits, Conservation and Education Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13705, Silver Spring, MD 20910; phone (301)713-2289; fax (301)427-2521;

Northeast Region, NMFS, One Blackburn Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930-2298; phone (978)281-9300; fax (978)281-9394; and

Southeast Region, NMFS, 263 13th Avenue South, Saint Petersburg, Florida 33701; phone (727)824-5312; fax (727)824-5309.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Carrie Hubard or Patrick Opay, (301)713-2289.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On March 21, 2005, notice was published in the **Federal Register** (70 FR 13481) that a request for a scientific research permit to take various pinniped and cetacean species, including endangered large whales, had been submitted by the above-named organization. The requested permit has been issued under the authority of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*), the regulations governing the taking and importing of marine mammals (50 CFR part 216), the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA; 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), and the regulations governing the taking, importing, and exporting of

endangered and threatened species (50 CFR parts 222-226).

The permit holder is authorized to conduct photo-identification and biopsy sampling of a variety of large whale species, with a focus on humpback whales (*Megaptera novaeangliae*). Sloughed skin may also be collected and all biological samples may be imported and exported. Several small cetaceans species as well as harbor seals (*Phoca vitulina*) and grey seals (*Halicoerus grypus*) may be incidentally harassed during the research. Activities will be conducted in the U.S. waters of the Gulf of Maine and waters off the U.S. northeast and mid-Atlantic states in the North Atlantic Ocean. The permit expires in 5 years.

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), an environmental assessment was prepared analyzing the effects of the permitted activities. After a Finding of No Significant Impact, the determination was made that it was not necessary to prepare an environmental impact statement.

Issuance of this permit, as required by the ESA, was based on a finding that such permit: (1) was applied for in good faith; (2) will not operate to the disadvantage of any endangered species; and (3) is consistent with the purposes and policies set forth in section 2 of the ESA.

Dated: July 13, 2006.

P. Michael Payne,

Chief, Permits, Conservation and Education Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. E6-11445 Filed 7-18-06; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-S

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 071006E]

Marine Mammals; Photography Permit Application No. 1100-1849

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

ACTION: Notice; receipt of application.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that Shane Moore, Moore & Moore Films, Box 2980, 1203 Melody Creek Lane, Jackson, Wyoming 83001 has applied in due form for a permit to conduct commercial/educational photography of killer whales (*Orcinus orca*), gray whales (*Eschrichtius robustus*), and