

REQUEST FOR 2012-2014 RENEWAL OF THE LETTER OF
AUTHORIZATION UNDER SECTION 101(a) (5) (A) OF THE MARINE
MAMMAL PROTECTION ACT FOR HARASSMENT OF MARINE
MAMMALS INCIDENTAL TO U.S. NAVY TRAINING CONDUCTED
WITHIN THE GULF OF MEXICO RANGE COMPLEX

Submitted To:
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November 2011

Enclosure

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

DoN	Department of the Navy
GOMEX	Gulf of Mexico
LOA	Letter of Authorization
MMPA	Marine Mammal Protection Act
NMFS	National Marine Fisheries Service

1. DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

Pursuant to the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 (MMPA), this document is the annual renewal application to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) for a Letter of Authorization (LOA) for incidental harassment of marine mammals from U.S. Navy (Navy) training and research activities within the Gulf of Mexico (GOMEX) Range Complex.

This LOA renewal is being sought to cover the 2-year period from March 18, 2012 to March 17, 2014 to cover the taking of marine mammals, as described by the MMPA, incidental to training and research within the GOMEX Range Complex. The LOA will not address activities designated for armed conflict or direct combat support operations, nor during periods of heightened national threat conditions, as determined by the President and Secretary of Defense or their duly designated alternatives or successors, as assisted by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The table below shows the MMPA permit documentation applicable to the GOMEX Range Complex and NMFS's authorization (**Table 1**). Information contained in these references provide a complete description of the background for the Navy's request, overview of the GOMEX Range Complex, description of the specified activities, description of marine mammals in the area, discussion of potential effects or lack of effects of specified activities on marine mammals, mitigation, marine mammal monitoring, and associated reporting. The descriptions contained in these references have not changed, except as where noted in this application renewal.

Table 1. Timeline of key GOMEX Range Complex MMPA documents

Timeline Date	From	Event	Reference
2 OCT 08	Navy	Letter Of Authorization Application (request for Incidental Harassment For GOMEX activities) submitted via Federal Express to NMFS Office of Protected Resources	DoN 2008
24 APR 09	Navy	Addendum to Letter of Authorization Application submitted via email to NMFS Office of Protected Resources	DoN 2009
14 JUL 09	NMFS	Proposed Rule published in Federal Register (74 Fed. Reg. 33960): Taking of Marine Mammals Incidental to Specified Activities; Taking Marine Mammals Incidental to Navy Training Operations Conducted Within the Navy Gulf of Mexico Range Complex	NMFS 2009
28 SEP 10	Navy	Addendum #2 to Letter of Authorization Application submitted via email to NMFS Office of Protected Resources	DoN 2010a
23 DEC 10	Navy	Final Gulf of Mexico Range Complex Environmental Impact Statement\Overseas Environmental Impact Statement published	DoN 2010b
17 FEB 11	NMFS	Final Rule published in Federal Register (76 Fed. Reg. 9250): Taking of Marine Mammals Incidental to Specified Activities; Taking Marine Mammals Incidental to Navy Training Operations Conducted Within the Navy Gulf of Mexico Range Complex	NMFS 2011a
18 MAR 11 – 17 MAR 12	NMFS	Annual Letter of Authorization for taking marine mammals incidental to U.S Navy's training on the GOMEX Range Complex issued 17 MAR 2011	NMFS 2011b

2. DURATION AND LOCATION OF ACTIVITIES

There are no changes from the description in Navy's 2008 Request for Letter of Authorization (DoN 2008) and 2009/2010 Addendums (DoN 2009, 2010a), and NMFS' 2011 Final Rule (NMFS 2011a) and Letter of Authorization (NMFS 2011b).

The amount of training over the 2-year renewal authorization request from March 2012 to March 2014 is consistent with (although doubled) previous annual authorizations from NMFS (**Table 2**).

Table 2. U.S. Navy training in GOMEX for 2012 to 2014.

Event	Annual Authorization	2-year Authorization (2012-2014)
Air-to-Surface Bombing Exercises (MK-83 1,000 lb high explosive bomb)	1 event	2 events
Small Arms Training (MK3A2 anti-swimmer concussion grenade)	6 events	12 events

3. MARINE MAMMAL SPECIES AND NUMBERS OCCURRING IN THE GULF OF MEXICO STUDY AREA

There are no changes from the description in Navy's 2008 Request for Letter of Authorization (DoN 2008) and 2009/2010 Addendums (DoN 2009, 2010a), and NMFS' 2011 Final Rule (NMFS 2011a) and Letter of Authorization (NMFS 2011b).

4. AFFECTED SPECIES STATUS AND DISTRIBUTION

There are no changes from the description in Navy's 2008 Request for Letter of Authorization (DoN 2008) and 2009/2010 Addendums (DoN 2009, 2010a), and NMFS' 2011 Final Rule (NMFS 2011a) and Letter of Authorization (NMFS 2011b).

5. TAKE AUTHORIZATION REQUESTED

There are no changes from the description in NMFS' 2011 Final Rule (NMFS 2011a) and Letter of Authorization (NMFS 2011b).

The amount of harassment authorization requested by the U.S. Navy is similar to the previous NMFS annual authorization from 2011 to 2012 (NMFS 2011b) and is shown below both annually (March 2012 to March 2013) and for the 2-year requested authorization (March 2012 to March 2014) (**Table 3**).

Table 3. Annual and 2-year harassment authorization request for 2012-2014

Species	Annual Requested Take	2-year Requested Take (2012-2014)
(a) Level B Harassment		
i. Sperm whales (<i>Physeter macrocephalus</i>)	5	10
ii. Pygmy or dwarf sperm whales (<i>Kogia breviceps</i> or <i>Kogia sima</i>)	20	40
iii. Beaked Whales (Cuvier's, True's, Gervais', Sowerby's, Blainville's, Northern bottlenose whale) (<i>Ziphius cavirostris</i> , <i>Mesoplodon mirus</i> , <i>M. europaeus</i> , <i>M. bidens</i> , <i>M. densirostris</i> , <i>Hyperoodon ampullatus</i>)	20	40
iv. Rough-toothed dolphin (<i>Steno bredanensis</i>)	20	40
v. Bottlenose dolphin (<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>)	30	60
vi. Pan-tropical spotted dolphin (<i>Stenella attenuata</i>)	26	52
vii. Atlantic Spotted dolphin (<i>Stenella frontalis</i>)	20	40
viii. Spinner dolphin (<i>Stenella longirostris</i>)	27	54
ix. Clymene dolphin (<i>Stenella clymene</i>)	20	40
x. Striped dolphin (<i>Stenella coeruleoalba</i>)	20	40
xi. Fraser's dolphin (<i>Lagenodelphis hosei</i>)	20	40
xii. Risso's dolphin (<i>Grampus griseus</i>)	30	60
xiii. Melon-headed whale (<i>Peponocephala electra</i>)	20	40
xiv. Pygmy killer whale (<i>Feresa attenuata</i>)	10	20
xv. False killer whale (<i>Pseudorca crassidens</i>)-	10	20
xvi. Short-finned pilot whale (<i>Globicephala macrorhynchus</i>)	20	40
(b) Level A Harassment		
i. Pan-tropical spotted dolphin (<i>Stenella attenuata</i>)	1	2
ii. Spinner dolphin (<i>Stenella longirostris</i>)	1	2

6. NUMBERS AND SPECIES TAKEN

There are no changes from the description in Navy's 2008 Request for Letter of Authorization (DoN 2008) and 2009/2010 Addendums (DoN 2009, 2010a), and NMFS' 2011 Final Rule (NMFS 2011a) and Letter of Authorization (NMFS 2011b).

7. IMPACTS TO MARINE MAMMAL SPECIES OR STOCKS

There are no changes from the description in Navy's 2008 Request for Letter of Authorization (DoN 2008) and 2009/2010 Addendums (DoN 2009, 2010a), and NMFS' 2011 Final Rule (NMFS 2011a) and Letter of Authorization (NMFS 2011b).

8. IMPACTS ON SUBSISTENCE USE

There are no changes from the description in Navy's 2008 Request for Letter of Authorization (DoN 2008) and 2009/2010 Addendums (DoN 2009, 2010a), and NMFS' 2011 Final Rule (NMFS 2011a) and Letter of Authorization (NMFS 2011b).

9. IMPACTS TO MARINE MAMMAL HABITAT AND RESTORATION LIKELIHOOD

There are no changes from the description in Navy's 2008 Request for Letter of Authorization (DoN 2008) and 2009/2010 Addendums (DoN 2009, 2010a), and NMFS' 2011 Final Rule (NMFS 2011a) and Letter of Authorization (NMFS 2011b).

10. IMPACTS TO MARINE MAMMALS FROM LOSS OR MODIFICATION OF HABITAT

There are no changes from the description in Navy's 2008 Request for Letter of Authorization (DoN 2008) and 2009/2010 Addendums (DoN 2009, 2010a), and NMFS' 2011 Final Rule (NMFS 2011a) and Letter of Authorization (NMFS 2011b).

11. MITIGATION MEASURES

There are no changes from the description in Navy's 2008 Request for Letter of Authorization (DoN 2008) and 2009/2010 Addendums (DoN 2009, 2010a), and NMFS' 2011 Final Rule (NMFS 2011a) and Letter of Authorization (NMFS 2011b).

12. MINIMIZATION OF ADVERSE EFFECTS ON SUBSISTENCE USE

There are no changes from the description in Navy's 2008 Request for Letter of Authorization (DoN 2008) and 2009/2010 Addendums (DoN 2009, 2010a), and NMFS' 2011 Final Rule (NMFS 2011a) and Letter of Authorization (NMFS 2011b).

13. MONITORING AND REPORTING MEASURES

There are no changes from the description in Navy's 2008 Request for Letter of Authorization (DoN 2008) and 2009/2010 Addendums (DoN 2009, 2010a), and NMFS' 2011 Final Rule (NMFS 2011a) and Letter of Authorization (NMFS 2011b).

14. RESEARCH EFFORTS

There are no changes from the description in Navy's 2008 Request for Letter of Authorization (DoN 2008) and 2009/2010 Addendums (DoN 2009, 2010a), and NMFS' 2011 Final Rule (NMFS 2011a) and Letter of Authorization (NMFS 2011b).

15. LIST OF PREPARERS

There are no changes from the description in Navy's 2008 Request for Letter of Authorization (DoN 2008) and 2009/2010 Addendums (DoN 2009, 2010a), and NMFS' 2011 Final Rule (NMFS 2011a) and Letter of Authorization (NMFS 2011b).

16. LITERATURE CITED

There are no changes from the description in Navy's 2008 Request for Letter of Authorization (DoN 2008) and 2009/2010 Addendums (DoN 2009, 2010a), and NMFS' 2011 Final Rule (NMFS 2011a) and Letter of Authorization (NMFS 2011b).