



Billing Code: 3510-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648- XZ66

Marine Mammals; File No. 781-1824

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

ACTION: Notice; issuance of permit amendment.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that a major amendment to Permit No. 781-1824-01 has been issued to the Northwest Fisheries Science Center (NWFSC, Dr. M. Bradley Hanson, Principal Investigator), 2725 Montlake Blvd. East, Seattle, Washington 98112-2097.

ADDRESSES: The permit amendment and related documents are available for review upon written request or by appointment in the following offices:

Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13705, Silver Spring, MD 20910; phone (301)427-8401; fax (301)713-0376; and

Northwest Region, NMFS, 7600 Sand Point Way NE, BIN C15700, Bldg. 1, Seattle, WA 98115-0700; phone (206)526-6150; fax (206)526-6426.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Laura Morse or Amy Sloan, (301)427-8401.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On November 9, 2010, notice was published in the Federal Register (75 FR 68757) that a request for an amendment to Permit No. 781-1824-01 to conduct research on cetacean species in the eastern North Pacific off the coast of Washington,

Oregon, and California for scientific research had been submitted by the above-named applicant. The requested permit amendment 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 amendment authorizes an increase in the number of Southern Resident killer whales (SRKW, Orcinus orca) suction cup tagged (from 10 to 20 animals annually) and allows satellite tagging of six SRKW with dart tags annually.

An environmental assessment (EA) analyzing the effects of the permitted activities on the human environment was prepared in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.). Based on the analyses in the EA, NMFS determined that issuance of the permit would not significantly impact the quality of the human environment and that preparation of an environmental impact statement was not required. That determination is documented in a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), signed on November 22, 2011.

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

Dated: December 8, 2011.

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P. Michael Payne, Chief, Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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