

Summary of Request

NMFS received a request for a letter of authorization on September 16, 1996, from Conoco, Inc. This letter requested a take by harassment of a small number of bottlenose and spotted dolphins incidental to the described activity. Issuance of this letter of authorization is based on a finding that the total takings will have a negligible impact on the bottlenose and spotted dolphin stocks of the Gulf of Mexico.

Dated: September 23, 1996.

Rennie S. Holt,

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

[FR Doc. 96-25162 Filed 10-1-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-F

[I.D. 092696A]**Incidental Take of Marine Mammals; Bottlenose Dolphins and Spotted Dolphins**

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

ACTION: Notice of issuance of letter of authorization.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) as amended, and implementing regulations, notification is hereby given that a letter of authorization to take bottlenose and spotted dolphins incidental to oil and gas structure removal activities was issued on September 27, 1996, to the Walter Oil & Gas Corporation, 1021 Main Street, Suite 2200, Houston, TX.

EFFECTIVE DATE: The letter of authorization is effective from September 27, 1996, through September 27, 1997.

ADDRESSES: The application and letter are available for review in the following offices: Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910 and the Southeast Region, NMFS, 9721 Executive Center Drive N, St. Petersburg, FL 33702.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Kenneth R. Hollingshead, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, (301) 713-2055 or Charles Oravetz, Southeast Region (813) 570-5312.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Section 101(a)(5)(A) of the MMPA (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*) directs NMFS to allow, on 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. Under the MMPA, the term "taking" means to harass, hunt, capture, or kill or to attempt to harass, hunt, capture or kill marine mammals.

Permission may be granted for periods up to 5 years if NMFS finds, after notification and opportunity for public comment, that the taking will have a negligible impact on the species or stock(s) of marine mammals and will not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of the species or stock(s) for subsistence uses. In addition, NMFS must prescribe regulations that include permissible methods of taking and other means effecting the least practicable adverse impact on the species and its habitat, and on the availability of the species for subsistence uses, paying particular attention to rookeries, mating grounds and areas of similar significance. The regulations must include requirements pertaining to the monitoring and reporting of such taking. Regulations governing the taking of bottlenose and spotted dolphins incidental to oil and gas structure removal activities in the Gulf of Mexico were published on October 12, 1995 (60 FR 53139) and remain in effect until November 13, 2000.

Summary of Request

NMFS received a request for a letter of authorization on September 25, 1996, from the Walter Oil & Gas Company. This letter requested a take by harassment of a small number of bottlenose and spotted dolphins incidental to the described activity. Issuance of this letter of authorization is based on a finding that the total takings will have a negligible impact on the bottlenose and spotted dolphin stocks of the Gulf of Mexico.

Dated: September 27, 1996.

Patricia Montanio,

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

[FR Doc. 96-25206 Filed 10-1-96; 8:45 am]

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[I.D. 092396A]**Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting**

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

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) will

convene a public meeting of the Socioeconomic Assessment Panel (SEP).

DATES: The meeting will be held on October 23, 1996, beginning at 8:00 a.m., and will conclude at 5:00 p.m. on October 24, 1996.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Radisson Bay Harbor Inn, 7700 Courtney Campbell Causeway, Tampa, FL; 813-281-8900.

Council address: Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, 5401 West Kennedy Boulevard, Suite 331, Tampa, FL 33609.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Antonio B. Lamberte, Economist; telephone: 813-228-2815.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The purpose of the meeting will be to review available social and economic data on the Gulf of Mexico red snapper, vermilion, and amberjack fisheries and to determine the social and economic implications of the levels of acceptable biological catch recommended by the Council's Reef Fish Stock Assessment Panel. The SEP may recommend to the Council total allowable catch levels for the 1996-97 fishing year.

A copy of the agenda can be obtained by contacting the Council (see **ADDRESSES**).

Special Accommodations

This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Anne Alford at the Council (see **ADDRESSES**) by October 17, 1996.

Dated: September 26, 1996.

Gary C. Matlock,

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

[FR Doc. 96-25204 Filed 10-1-96; 8:45 am]

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[I.D. 092596C]**Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting**

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

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) will convene a public meeting of the Stone Crab Advisory Panel (AP).

DATES: This meeting will be held on October 23, 1996, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

ADDRESSES: This meeting will be held at the Banana Bay Resort and Marina, 4590

Overseas Highway, Marathon, FL; telephone: 305-743-3500.

Council address: Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, 5401 West Kennedy Boulevard, Suite 331, Tampa, FL 33609.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Wayne Swingle, Executive Director; telephone: 813-228-2815.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The purpose of the meeting will be to review effort and landing trends in the fishery and indicate to the Council whether the industry supports development of a limited access or effort limitation system.

The AP is comprised of fisherman and other user groups who advise the Council on fishery issues.

Special Accommodations

This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Anne Alford at the Council (see **ADDRESSES**) by October 16, 1996.

Dated: September 26, 1996.

Gary C. Matlock,

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

[FR Doc. 96-25205 Filed 10-1-96; 8:45 am]

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[I.D. 090696H]

Endangered Species; Permits

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

ACTION: Issuance of permit 1015 and modification 2 to permit 885.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that NMFS issued Permit 1015 to Drs. Frank A. Chapman and Wallis H. Clark, Jr., of the Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences, University of Florida (P611), and modification 2 to Permit 885 to Mark B. Bain, New York Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit (P555), to take listed shortnose sturgeon for the purpose of scientific research subject to certain conditions set forth therein.

ADDRESSES: The applications, permits, and related documents are available for review by appointment in the following offices:

Office of Protected Resources, F/PR3, NMFS, 1315 East-West Hwy., Room 13307, Silver Spring, MD 20910-3226 (301-713-1401); and

Director, Northeast Region, NMFS, NOAA, One Blackburn Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930-2298 (508-281-9250) for Permit 885;

or

Director, Southeast Region, NMFS, NOAA, 9721 Executive Center Drive, St. Petersburg, FL 33702-2432 (813-893-3141) for Permit 1015.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Notice was published on June 6, 1996 (61 FR 28855) that Drs. Frank A. Chapman and Wallis H. Clark, Jr., of the Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences, University of Florida (P611), had applied for a permit to conduct scientific research on shortnose sturgeon (*Acipenser brevirostrum*), as authorized by the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA) (16 U.S.C. 1531-1543) and NMFS regulations governing listed fish and wildlife permits (50 CFR parts 217-222). The purpose of the research is to identify the physical, chemical, and biological parameters necessary for optimal survival and growth of shortnose sturgeon. Specific items to be studied are: salinity and temperature tolerance, nutrient requirements, embryonic development and metamorphosis, sex determination, and gonadal development and physiology. 200 shortnose sturgeon would be obtained from U.S. Fish and Wildlife hatcheries and transferred to the Permit Holders' facilities in Florida to be maintained in captivity. The fish would be PIT-tagged, anaesthetized, handled, have blood and tissue samples taken, and be spawned and progeny reared, in accordance with the application and current handling standards. On September 23, 1996, NMFS issued Permit 1015 for five years, authorizing the above research.

On August 22, 1996, NMFS issued modification 2 to Permit 885 held by Mark B. Bain, New York Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit (P555), to take listed shortnose sturgeon as authorized by the ESA. The purpose of the authorized research is to study endangered shortnose sturgeon in the Hudson River downstream of Albany, NY. Data from this project will help to assess the potential impact to shortnose sturgeon from development activities in the Hudson River, and may provide insight on the complimentary management of shortnose and Atlantic sturgeon. In addition, this project seeks to quantify the shortnose sturgeon population in the Hudson River. The applicant is authorized to collect, measure, weigh, and tag 5,000 shortnose sturgeon annually, and take blood and tissue samples from some fish. Two mortalities are authorized annually. Modification 2 authorizes the following: 1) Stomach sampling on 100 of the shortnose sturgeon, 2) attachment of sonic tags to 20 of the shortnose

sturgeon, 3) sampling of muscle tissue, and 4) extension of the permit expiration date until December 31, 1998.

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

Dated: September 25, 1996.

Robert C. Ziobro,

Acting Chief, Endangered Species Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 96-25163 Filed 10-1-96; 8:45 am]

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[I.D. 092496B]

Permits; Foreign Fishing

In accordance with a Memorandum of Understanding with the Secretary of State, the National Marine Fisheries Service publishes for public review and comment summaries of applications received by the Secretary of State requesting permits for foreign fishing vessels to operate in the exclusive economic zone under provisions of the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*). This notice concerns the receipt of an application from the Government of the Russian Federation requesting authorization for three vessels to conduct joint venture operations in the Northwest Atlantic Ocean for Atlantic mackerel. The large stern trawler/processors KOKAND, SADKO and ZUND are identified as the vessels that will receive Atlantic mackerel from U.S. vessels. Send comments on this application to:

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910; and/or to one or both of the Regional Fishery Management Councils listed below:

Chris Kellogg, Acting Executive Director, New England Fishery Management Council, 5 Broadway, Saugus, MA 01906, (617) 231-0422;

David R. Keifer, Executive Director, Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Federal Building, Room 2115, 300 South New Street, Dover, DE 19901-6790, (302) 674-2331.

For further information contact Robert A. Dickinson, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, (301) 713-2337.