

discretion of the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NOAA. All statements and opinions contained in the above application summary are those of the applicant and do not necessarily reflect the views of NMFS.

Dated: December 14, 1998.

Kevin Collins,

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

[FR Doc. 98-33728 Filed 12-18-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-F

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 120998A]

Marine Mammals; File No. 633-1483

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

ACTION: Receipt of application.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that the Center for Coastal Studies, P.O. Box 1036, Provincetown, MA 02657, has applied in due form for a permit to take right whales (*Eubalaena glacialis*) for purposes of scientific research.

DATES: Written or telefaxed comments must be received on or before January 20, 1999.

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

Permits and Documentation Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13130, Silver Spring, MD 20910 (301/713-2289); and

Regional Administrator, Northeast Region, National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA, One Blackburn Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930-2298 (978/281-9250).

Written comments or requests for a public hearing on this application should be mailed to the Chief, Permits and Documentation Division, F/PR1, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13705, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Those individuals requesting a hearing should set forth the specific reasons why a hearing on this particular request would be appropriate.

Comments may also be submitted by facsimile at (301) 713-0376, provided the facsimile is confirmed by hard copy submitted by mail and postmarked no later than the closing date of the

comment period. Please note that comments will not be accepted by e-mail or by other electronic media.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Sara Shapiro or Ruth Johnson, 301/713-2289.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The subject permit is requested under the authority of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (MMPA; 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 fish and wildlife (50 CFR 222.23).

The applicant seeks authorization to: (1) conduct behavioral observations of, and photo-identify Northern right whales (*Eubalaena glacialis*) during aerial and vessel surveys; (2) place VHF tags on right whales during the course of vessel surveys; (3) collect skin and blubber biopsy samples and sloughed skin; and (4) export skin samples for genetic analysis.

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), an initial determination has been made that the activity proposed is categorically excluded from the requirement to prepare an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement.

Concurrent with the publication of this notice in the **Federal Register**, NMFS is forwarding copies of this application to the Marine Mammal Commission and its Committee of Scientific Advisors.

Dated: December 15, 1998.

Ann D. Terbush,

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

[FR Doc. 98-33726 Filed 12-18-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-F

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 121098C]

Marine Mammals; Scientific Research Permit (PHF# 924-1484)

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

ACTION: Receipt of application.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that Dr. Marsha L. Green, Ph.D., Department of

Psychology, Albright College, P.O. Box 15234, Reading, PA 19612-5234, has applied in due form for a permit to take North Pacific humpback whales (*Megaptera novaeangliae*).

DATES: Written comments must be received on or before January 20, 1999.

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

Permits Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13130, Silver Spring, MD 20910 (301/713-2289);

Regional Administrator, Southwest Region, 501 West Ocean Boulevard, Suite 4200, Long Beach, CA 90802-4213 (562/980-4001); and

Protected Species Program Manager, Pacific Islands Area Office, 2570 Dole Street, Room 106, Honolulu, HI 9682-2396 (808/973-2987).

Written data or views, or requests for a public hearing on this request, should be submitted to the Director, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13705, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Those individuals requesting a hearing should set forth the specific reasons why a hearing on this application would be appropriate.

Comments may also be submitted by facsimile at (301) 713-0376, provided the facsimile is confirmed by hard copy submitted by mail and postmarked no later than the closing date of the comment period. Please note that comments will not be accepted by e-mail or by other electronic media.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jeannie Drevenak or Trevor Spradlin, 301/713-2289.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The subject permit is requested 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 (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), and the regulations governing the taking, importing, and exporting of endangered fish and wildlife (50 CFR part 222.23).

The purpose of the proposed research is to evaluate the behavior of whales in the presence of vessels. The research goals are to more precisely delineate which vessel parameters and approach techniques cause changes in humpback whale behavior and to more clearly define the interactive effect of size of vessel and engine loudness. Humpback whales may be harassed during controlled vessel approaches and surface and underwater observations and recordings of whale behavior and

social sounds. The proposed research would be conducted in Hawaiian waters between Maui and Lanai and off the northwest coast of Hawaii between Kona and Hawi from January 1, 1999 through May 15, 2004.

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), an initial determination has been made that the activity proposed is categorically excluded from the requirement to prepare an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement.

Concurrent with the publication of this notice in the **Federal Register**, NMFS is forwarding copies of this application to the Marine Mammal Commission and its Committee of Scientific Advisors.

Dated: December 14, 1998.

Ann D. Terbush,

*Chief, Permits and Documentation Division,
Office of Protected Resources, National
Marine Fisheries Service.*

[FR Doc. 98-33729 Filed 12-18-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-F

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Patent and Trademark Office

Electronic Application for Patent Examiners—Job Application Rating System (JARS)

ACTION: Proposed collection; comment request

SUMMARY: The Department of Commerce (DoC), as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, invites the general public and other Federal agencies to comment on the continuing information collection, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Public Law 104-13 (44 U.S.C. 3506(c)(2)(A)).

DATES: Written comments must be submitted on or before February 19, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Direct all written comments to Linda Engelmeier, Departmental Forms Clearance Officer, Department of Commerce, Room 5327, 14th and Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20230.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Requests for additional information should be directed to the attention of

Vivian Clark at P.O. Box 171, Washington, DC, 20231, by telephone at (703) 305-8227, or by facsimile transmission to (703) 305-9864.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Abstract

The Patent and Trademark Office (PTO) is developing an electronic Job Application Rating System (JARS) to assist in the hiring of 550 new patent examiners in FY 1999.

The PTO has received hiring assistance from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) through the use of their electronic application system called MARS. The PTO has found that the services provided by MARS do not meet current hiring needs.

In the current employment environment, Information Technology professionals and Engineering graduates are in great demand. The PTO is in direct competition with private industry for the same caliber of candidates with the requisite knowledge and skills to perform patent examination work. Consequently, it is imperative that every available technology be employed if the PTO is to remain competitive, meet the hiring goal, and fulfill the agency's congressional commitment to reduce the pendency rate for the examination of patent applications. The information supplied to the PTO by an applicant seeking a Patent Examiner position with the PTO will assist the Human Resources Specialists and hiring managers in determining whether an applicant possesses the basic qualification requirements for the Patent Examiner position. In addition, the electronic transmission of this information will expedite the hiring process by eliminating the time used in the mail distribution process.

JARS will provide the PTO a more user friendly online employment application process for applicants and will enable the PTO to process hiring actions in a more efficient and timely manner. The online application will provide an electronic real time candidate inventory that will allow the PTO to review applications from potential applicants almost instantaneously. Given the immediate hiring need of the Patent Examining Corps, time consumed in the mail distribution system or paper review of applications delays the decision making

process by several weeks. The implementation of the JARS system will result in increased speed and accuracy in the employment process. It will also streamline labor and reduce costs.

The use of the JARS online application fully meets the intent of 5 U.S.C. 2301, which requires adequate public notice to assure open competition by guaranteeing that necessary employment information will be accessible and available to the public on inquiry.

Since the JARS online application will be used as an alternative form of employment application, the collection and use of the information requires OMB approval as outlined in section 5.1 of the Delegated Examining Operations Handbook. The Handbook provides guidance to agencies under a delegated examining authority by OPM, under the provisions of Title 5, U.S. Code, Chapter 11, Section 1104.

II. Method of Collection

The application information is collected electronically from the applicant. Applicants may contact the PTO Web site on the Internet where they will find the application form. They can fill the form out while connected to the web site. For those applicants who do not have access to a personal computer, applications are available in the Personnel Office at the PTO or the applicant can go to the local library to complete an application.

III. Data

OMB Number: 0651-XXXX.

Type of Review: New information collection.

Affected Public: Individuals or households, businesses or other for-profit, not-for-profit institutions, farms, state, local or tribal governments, and the Federal Government.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 3,700 respondents per year.

Estimated Time Per Response: It is estimated that it will take from 20 minutes to one hour to complete the application, depending on the situation. On average, the time to complete the online application is estimated to be 30 minutes.

Estimated Total Annual Respondent Burden Hours: 1,850 hours per year.

Estimated Total Annual Respondent Cost Burden: \$323,750 per year.

Title of form	Form Nos.	Estimated time for response	Estimated annual burden hours	Estimated annual response
Electronic Employment Application	New Form #####	30 minutes	1,850	3,700