



INCIDENTAL HARASSMENT AUTHORIZATION

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Alaska State Office, 222 West Seventh Avenue, #13 Anchorage, Alaska 99513- 504 and/or its designees (holders of the Authorization) are hereby authorized under section 101(a)(5)(D) of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 1371(a)(5)(D)) to harass small numbers of marine mammals incidental to conducting land survey activities on an island in the eastern Aleutian Islands archipelago, Alaska:

1. This Authorization is valid from June 9, 2015 through July 31, 2015.
2. This Authorization is valid only for research activities that would occur in the following specified geographic area: the island within the eastern Aleutian Islands archipelago identified in BLM's application.
3. Species Authorized and Level of Takes
 - (a) The taking, by Level B harassment only, is limited to the following species: 20 Steller sea lions (*Eumetopias jubatus*).
 - (b) The taking by injury (Level A harassment), serious injury or death of the species listed in Condition 3(a) or the taking of any kind of any other species of marine mammal is prohibited and may result in the modification, suspension or revocation of this Authorization.
 - (c) The taking of any marine mammal in a manner prohibited under this Authorization must be reported immediately to the Chief, Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, at (301) 427-8401.
4. General Conditions
 - (a) A copy of this Authorization must be in the possession of the Bureau of Land Management, its designees, and field crew personnel (including research collaborators) operating under the authority of this Authorization at all times. BLM and its designees must also abide by the Terms and Conditions included within the Biological Opinion's Incidental Take Statement.



5. Mitigation Measures

In order to ensure the least practicable impact on the species listed in condition 3(a), the BLM and its designees must implement the following mitigation measures:

- (a) Conduct a slow and controlled approach to the island by vessel and skiff as far away as possible from hauled out sea lions to prevent or minimize stampeding.
- (b) Ensure that the main vessel and skiff approach the island at a reasonably slow speed (*i.e.*, no faster than 8 knots [9.2 miles per hour]).
- (c) Monitor for offshore predators such as great white sharks (*Carcharodon carcharias*) or killer whales (*Orcinus orca*) prior to accessing the island. If BLM and/or its designees see predators in the area, they must not disturb the animals until the area is free of predators.
- (d) Avoid placing the skiff in the path of swimming sea lions that may be present in the area.
- (e) Select a pathway of approach to the survey site that minimizes the number of marine mammals harassed and conduct slow movements while accessing and exiting the island to prevent or minimize stampeding.
- (f) Maintain a quiet working atmosphere, avoid loud noises, and use hushed voices in the presence of hauled out pinnipeds.
- (g) Initiate the land survey away from hauled out Steller sea lions as far away as practicable. If BLM and/or its designees need to survey in the direction of hauled out Steller sea lions, they must proceed in a slow and controlled manner to minimize disturbance and allow animals to slowly flush into the water.
- (h) Use binoculars to detect pinnipeds before close approach to avoid being seen by animals.

6. Monitoring

The holder of this Authorization is required to conduct monitoring of marine mammals present at the survey site. BLM and/or its designees shall have at least one NMFS-qualified biologist serve as a marine mammal observer to evaluate incidental take and implement mitigation measures.

- (a) Record the date, time, and location (or closest point of ingress) of each visit to the research site. BLM and/or its designees shall record the following:
 - i. Species counts (with numbers of adults/juveniles); and:
 - ii. Numbers of disturbances, by species and age, according to a three-point scale of intensity including: (1) Head orientation in response to disturbance, which may include turning head towards the disturbance, craning head and neck while holding the body rigid in a u-shaped position, or changing from a lying to a sitting position and/or slight movement of less than 1 meter; “alert”; (2) Movements in response to or away from disturbance, typically over short distances (1-3 meters) and including dramatic changes in

direction or speed of locomotion for animals already in motion; “movement”; and (3) All flushes to the water as well as lengthier retreats (>3 meters); “flight”.

iii. Information on the weather, including the tidal state and horizontal visibility.

(b) If applicable, note observations of marked or tag-bearing pinnipeds or carcasses, as well as any rare or unusual species of marine mammal.

(c) If applicable, note the presence of any offshore predators (*i.e.*, date, time, number, species).

7. Reporting

The holder of this Authorization is required to:

(a) Draft Report: Submit a draft final report to the Chief, Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, Headquarters, NMFS within 90 days after Authorization expires. The report will include the information gathered pursuant to the monitoring requirements listed in item 6, along with an executive summary.

(b) NMFS will review the Draft Report which is subject to review and comment by us. BLM must address any recommendations made by NMFS in the Final Report prior to submission to NMFS. If NMFS decides that the draft final report needs no comments, NMFS will consider the draft report as the Final Report. Final Report: BLM shall prepare and submit a Final Report to NMFS within 30 days following resolution of any comments on the draft report from NMFS.

8. Reporting Prohibited Take

In the unanticipated event that the specified activity clearly causes the take of a marine mammal in a manner prohibited by the authorization, such as an injury (Level A harassment), serious injury, or mortality (*e.g.*, vessel-strike, stampede, etc.), BLM shall immediately cease the specified activities and immediately report the incident to the Chief, Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, at 301-427-8401 and/or by email to Jolie.Harrison@noaa.gov and the Alaska Regional Stranding Coordinator at (907) 586-7248 (Aleria.Jensen@noaa.gov):

Time, date, and location (latitude/longitude) of the incident; the name and type of vessel involved; the vessel’s speed during and leading up to the incident; description of the incident; water depth; environmental conditions (*e.g.*, wind speed and direction, Beaufort sea state, cloud cover, and visibility); description of marine mammal observations in the 24 hours preceding the incident; species identification or description of the animal(s) involved; the fate of the animal(s); and photographs or video footage of the animal (if equipment is available).

BLM shall not resume its activities until NMFS is able to review the circumstances of the prohibited take. We will work with BLM to determine what is necessary to minimize the

likelihood of further prohibited take and ensure MMPA compliance. BLM may not resume their activities until notified by us via letter, email, or telephone.

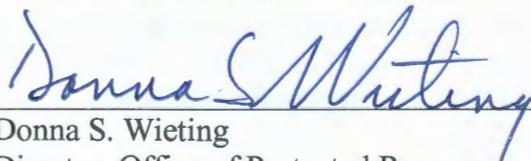
9. Reporting an Injured or Dead Marine Mammal with an Unknown Cause of Death

In the event that BLM discovers an injured or dead marine mammal, and the lead researcher determines that the cause of the injury or death is unknown and the death is relatively recent (*i.e.*, in less than a moderate state of decomposition as we describe in the next paragraph), BLM will immediately report the incident to the Chief, Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, at 301-427-8401 and/or by email to Jolie.Harrison@noaa.gov and the Alaska Regional Stranding Coordinator at (907) 586-7248 (Aleria.Jensen@noaa.gov). The report must include the same information identified in the paragraph above this section. Activities may continue while we review the circumstances of the incident. NMFS will work with BLM to determine whether modifications in the activities are appropriate. BLM can continue their research activities.

10. Reporting an Injured or Dead Marine Mammal not Related to the Activities

In the event that BLM discovers an injured or dead marine mammal, and the lead visual observer determines that the injury or death is not associated with or related to the authorized activities (*e.g.*, previously wounded animal, carcass with moderate to advanced decomposition, or scavenger damage), BLM will report the incident to the Chief, Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, at 301-427-8401 and/or by email to Jolie.Harrison@noaa.gov and the Alaska Regional Stranding Coordinator at (907) 586-7248 (Aleria.Jensen@noaa.gov) within 24 hours of the discovery. BLM researchers will provide photographs or video footage (if available) or other documentation of the stranded animal sighting to us. BLM can continue their research activities.

11. A copy of this Authorization must be in the possession of BLM and its designees (including contractors and marine mammal monitors) operating under the authority of this Incidental Harassment Authorization at all times.



Donna S. Wieting
Director, Office of Protected Resources,
National Marine Fisheries Service

JUN - 9 2015

Date