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(2) Acoustic Monitoring. (i) During all target missile launches, calibrated recordings of the levels and characteristics of the received launch sounds will be obtained from 3 different locations of varying distances from the target missile's flight path. To the extent practicable, these acoustic recording locations will correspond with the haul-out sites where video and human observer monitoring is done.

(ii) Acoustic recordings will be supplemented by the use of radar and telemetry systems to obtain the trajectory of target missiles in three dimensions.

(iii) Acoustic equipment used to record launch sounds will be suitable for collecting a wide range of parameters, including the magnitude, characteristics, and duration of each target missile.

(e) The holder of the Letter of Authorization must implement the following reporting requirements:

(1) For each target missile launch, the lead contractor or lead observer for the holder of the Letter of Authorization must provide a status report to the National Marine Fisheries Service, Southwest Regional Office, providing reporting items found under the Letter of Authorization, unless other arrangements for monitoring are agreed in writing.

(2) An initial report must be submitted to the Office of Protected Resources, and the Southwest Regional Office at least 60 days prior to the expiration of each annual Letter of Authorization. This report must contain the following information:

(i) Timing and nature of launch operations;

(ii) Summary of pinniped behavioral observations;

(iii) Estimate of the amount and nature of all takes by harassment or by other means.

(3) A draft comprehensive technical report will be submitted to the Office of Protected Resources and Southwest Regional Office, National Marine Fisheries Service, 180 days prior to the expiration of these regulations and providing full documentation of the methods, results, and interpretation of all monitoring tasks for launches to date plus preliminary information for missile launches during the first 6 months of the final Letter of Authorization.

(4) A revised final technical report, including all monitoring results during the entire period of the Letter of Authorization will be due 90 days after the end of the period of effectiveness of these regulations.

(5) Both the 60-day and final reports will be subject to review and comment by the National Marine Fisheries Service. Any recommendations made by the National Marine Fisheries Service must be addressed in the final comprehensive report prior to acceptance by the National Marine Fisheries Service.

(f) Activities related to the monitoring described in paragraphs (c) and (d) of this section, or in the Letter of Authorization issued under § 216.106, including the retention of marine mammals, may be conducted without the need for a separate scientific research permit.

(g) In coordination and compliance with appropriate Navy regulations, at its discretion, the National Marine Fisheries Service may place an observer on San Nicolas Island for any activity involved in marine mammal monitoring either prior to, during, or after a missile launch in order to monitor the impact on marine mammals.

§ 216.156 Letter of Authorization.

(a) A Letter of Authorization, unless suspended or revoked, will be valid for a period of time specified in the Letter of Authorization but may not exceed the period of validity of this subpart.

(b) A Letter of Authorization with a period of validity less than the period of validity of this subpart may be renewed subject to renewal conditions in § 216.157.

(c) A Letter of Authorization will set forth:

(1) Permissible methods of incidental taking;

(2) Authorized geographic area for taking;

(3) Means of effecting the least practicable adverse impact on the species of marine mammals authorized for taking and its habitat; and

(4) Requirements for monitoring and reporting incidental takes.

(d) Issuance of a Letter of Authorization will be based on a determination that the number of marine mammals taken by the activity will be small, and that the number of marine mammals taken by the activity, specified in § 216.151(b), as a whole, will have no more than a negligible impact on the species or stocks of affected marine mammal(s).

(e) Notice of issuance or denial of a Letter of Authorization will be published in the **Federal Register** within 30 days of a determination.

§ 216.157 Renewal of a Letter of Authorization.

(a) A Letter of Authorization issued under § 216.106 and § 216.156 for the

activity identified in § 216.151(a) will be renewed annually upon:

(1) Notification to the National Marine Fisheries Service that the activity described in the application for a Letter of Authorization submitted under § 216.156 will be undertaken and that there will not be a substantial modification to the described work, mitigation, or monitoring undertaken during the upcoming season;

(2) Timely receipt of the monitoring reports required under § 216.155, which have been reviewed by the National Marine Fisheries Service and determined to be acceptable;

(3) A determination by the National Marine Fisheries Service that the mitigation, monitoring, and reporting measures required under §§ 216.153 and 216.155 and the Letter of Authorization were undertaken and will be undertaken during the upcoming period of validity of a renewed Letter of Authorization; and

(4) Renewal of a Letter of Authorization will be based on a determination that the number of marine mammals taken by the activity continues to be small and that the number of marine mammals taken by the activity, specified in § 216.151(b), will have no more than a negligible impact on the species or stock of affected marine mammal(s).

(b) A notice of issuance or denial of a renewal of a Letter of Authorization will be published in the **Federal Register** within 30 days of a determination.

§ 216.158 Modifications to the Letter of Authorization.

(a) Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section, no substantive modification, including withdrawal or suspension, to the Letter of Authorization issued pursuant to § 216.106 and subject to the provisions of this subpart shall be made until after notice and an opportunity for public comment.

(b) If the Assistant Administrator determines that an emergency exists that poses a significant risk to the well-being of the species or stocks of marine mammals specified in § 216.151(b), the Letter of Authorization issued pursuant to § 216.106 may be substantively modified without prior notice and an opportunity for public comment. Notification will be published in the **Federal Register** subsequent to the action.

[FR Doc. 03-11613 Filed 5-8-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510-22-S