

DATES: Written comments must be submitted on or before February 17, 2004.

ADDRESSES: Direct all written comments to Diana Hynek, Departmental Paperwork Clearance Officer, Department of Commerce, Room 6625, 14th and Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20230 (or via the Internet at dHynek@doc.gov).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Requests for additional information or copies of the information collection instrument and instructions should be directed to Dr. Juan Agar, Department of Commerce, NOAA, National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Fisheries Science Center, 75 Virginia Beach Drive, Miami, FL 33149, (305 361 4218).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Abstract

The National Marine Fisheries Service proposes to conduct a survey to collect socio-economic data to strengthen the management, protection, and conservation of existing and proposed Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in the U.S. Caribbean (Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands). MPAs are any area of the marine environment that has been reserved by Federal, State, territorial, tribal, or local laws or regulations to provide lasting protection for part or all of the natural and cultural resources therein. The survey intends to collect demographic, cultural, and economic information from communities that are dependent on the estuarine and marine resources for their livelihood. The proposed data collection is necessary to develop science-based criteria and protocols to identify and evaluate the economic impacts of management decisions. The information will be used to protect the sustainable use of estuarine and marine ecosystems for present and future generations. The information collected will also be used to satisfy legal mandates under Executive Order 13158, the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation Act, the National Marine Sanctuaries Act, the National Wildlife Refuge Administration Act, the Coastal Zone Management Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, and other pertinent statutes.

II. Method of Collection

The socio-economic information will be collected via personal interviews and mail surveys.

III. Data

OMB Number: None.

Form Number: None.

Type of Review: Regular submission.

Affected Public: Business and other for-profit organizations.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 700.

Estimated Time Per Response: 1 hour.

Estimated Total Annual Burden

Hours: 700.

Estimated Total Annual Cost to Public: \$0.

IV. Request for Comments

Comments are invited on: (a) whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden (including hours and cost) of the proposed collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized and/or included in the request for OMB approval of this information collection; they also will become a matter of public record.

Dated: December 10, 2003.

Gwellnar Banks,

Management Analyst, Office of the Chief Information Officer.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 120903D]

Marine Mammals; File No. 881-1724

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

ACTION: Receipt of application.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that the Alaska SeaLife Center, 301 Railway Avenue, Seward, Alaska 99664, has applied in due form for a permit to import and export marine mammal parts for purposes of scientific research.

DATES: Written or telefaxed comments must be received on or before January 16, 2004.

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

Permits, Conservation and Education Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13705, Silver Spring, MD 20910; phone (301)713-2289; fax (301)713-0376; and

Alaska Region, NMFS, P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802-1668; phone (907)586-7221; fax (907)586-7249.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Amy Sloan 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.*), the regulations governing the taking, importing, and exporting of endangered and threatened species (50 CFR 222-226), and the Fur Seal Act of 1966, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1151 *et seq.*).

The applicant requests authorization to import and export an unlimited number of specimen samples (hard and soft parts) from the following species: Antarctic fur seal (*Arctocephalus gazella*), Australian fur seal (*Arctocephalus pusillus*), Australian sea lion (*Neophoca cinerea*), California sea lion (*Zalophus californianus*), harbor seal (*Phoca vitulina*), northern fur seal (*Callorhinus ursinus*), ribbon seal (*Phoca fasciata*), ringed seal (*Phoca hispida*), Southern fur seal (*Arctocephalus australis*), Southern sea lion (*Otaria flavescens*), Steller sea lion (*Eumetopias jubatus*), beluga whale (*Delphinapterus leucas*), bowhead whale (*Balaena mysticetus*), gray whale (*Eschrichtius robustus*), humpback whale (*Megaptera novaeangliae*), killer whale (*Orcinus orca*), and sperm whale (*Physeter catodon*). Specimens would be collected from the following sources and then imported or exported: under existing permits in the country of origin; from legal subsistence hunts; from legal incidental bycatch; and from opportunistic collection of stranded carcasses. The purposes of this research are for a number of projects to study marine mammal population ecology, diet and nutrition, reproductive physiology, toxicology, and health. The applicant has requested a five-year permit.

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