

May 28, 1996), NMFS released an EA that addressed the impacts on the human environment from issuance of the authorization and the alternatives to the proposed action. No comments were received on that document and, on July 18, 1996, NMFS concluded that neither implementation of the proposed authorization to BPXA for the harassment of small numbers of several species of marine mammals incidental to conducting seismic surveys during the open water season in the U.S. Beaufort Sea nor the alternatives to that action would significantly affect the quality of the human environment. As a result, the preparation of an environmental impact statement on this action is not required by section 102(2) of NEPA or its implementing regulations. A copy of the EA is available upon request (see ADDRESSES).

This year's activity is a continuation of the seismic work conducted in 1996 and 1997. For BPXA's 1998 application, NMFS has conducted a review of the impacts expected from the issuance of an Incidental Harassment Authorization in comparison to those impacts evaluated in 1996. As assessed in detail in this document, NMFS has preliminarily determined that there will be no more than a negligible impact on marine mammals from the issuance of the harassment authorization and that there will not be any unmitigable impacts to subsistence communities, provided the mitigation measures required under the authorization are implemented. Because the activity is substantially the same as the one conducted in 1996 and no new impacts on the environment have been identified, a new EA is not warranted.

Conclusions

NMFS has preliminarily determined that the short-term impact of conducting seismic surveys in the U.S. Beaufort Sea will result, at worst, in a temporary modification in behavior by certain species of cetaceans and possibly pinnipeds. While behavioral modifications may be made by these species to avoid the resultant noise, this behavioral change is expected to have a negligible impact on the animals.

As the number of potential incidental harassment takes will depend on the distribution and abundance of marine mammals (which vary annually due to variable ice conditions and other factors) in the area of seismic operations, due to the distribution and abundance of marine mammals during the projected period of activity and the location of the proposed seismic activity in waters generally too shallow and distant from the edge of the pack ice for

most marine mammals of concern, the number of potential harassment takings is estimated to be small. In addition, no take by injury and/or death is anticipated, and the potential for temporary or permanent hearing impairment will be avoided through the incorporation of the mitigation measures mentioned in this document. No rookeries, mating grounds, areas of concentrated feeding, or other areas of special significance for marine mammals occur within or near the planned area of operations during the season of operations.

Because bowhead whales are east of the seismic area in the Canadian Beaufort Sea until late August/early September, seismic activities are not expected to impact subsistence hunting of bowhead whales prior to that date. After August 31, 1998, BPXA will initiate aerial survey flights for bowhead whale assessments. Appropriate mitigation measures to avoid an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of bowhead whales for subsistence needs will be the subject of consultation between BPXA and subsistence users.

Also, while open-water seismic exploration in the U.S. Beaufort Sea has some potential to influence seal hunting activities by residents of Nuiqsut, because (1) the peak sealing season is during the winter months, (2) the main summer sealing is off the Colville Delta, and (3) the zone of influence by seismic sources on belukha and seals is fairly small, NMFS believes that BPXA's seismic survey will not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of these stocks for subsistence uses.

Proposed Authorization

NMFS proposes to issue an incidental harassment authorization for the 1998 Beaufort Sea open water season for a seismic survey provided the above mentioned mitigation, monitoring, and reporting requirements are incorporated. NMFS has preliminarily determined that the proposed seismic activity would result in the harassment of only small numbers of bowhead whales, gray whales, and possibly belukha whales, bearded seals, and largha seals; would have a negligible impact on these marine mammal stocks; and would not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of marine mammal stocks for subsistence uses.

Information Solicited

NMFS requests interested persons to submit comments, and information, concerning this request (see ADDRESSES).

Dated: May 1, 1998.

Patricia A. Montanio,

Deputy Director, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.
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COMMODITY FUTURES TRADING COMMISSION

Sunshine Act Meeting

AGENCY HOLDING THE MEETING:
Commodity Futures Trading Commission.

TIME AND DATE: 2:00 p.m., Thursday, May 28, 1998.

PLACE: 1155 21st St., N.W., Washington, D.C., 9th Floor Conference Room.

STATUS: Closed.

MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED:
Enforcement Matters.

CONTACT PERSON FOR MORE INFORMATION:
Jean A. Webb, 202-418-5100.

Jean A. Webb,

Secretary of the Commission.

[FR Doc. 98-12118 Filed 5-4-98; 10:46 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Office of the Secretary

Submission for OMB review; comment request

ACTION: Notice.

The Department of Defense has submitted to OMB for clearance, the following proposal for collection of information under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35).

Title and OMB Number: Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement (DFARS) Appendix I, Department of Defense Pilot Mentor-Protégé Program; OMB Number 0704-0332.

Type of Request: Extension.
Number of Respondents: 124.
Responses Per Respondent: 2.
Annual Responses: 248.
Average Burden Per Response: 1 hour response; 2 recordkeeping hours.
Annual Burden Hours: 496 (Includes 248 recordkeeping hours.)

Needs and Uses: In order to evaluate whether the purposes of the DoD Pilot Mentor-Protégé Program (established under Section 831 of Public Law 101-510, National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1991, as amended) have been attained, Appendix I of the DFARS requires that companies participating in