reports; 15 minutes for weekly electronic HMS dealer landing reports (*e*-dealer); 30 minutes for weekly electronic HMS dealer landing reports using the file upload method (*e*-dealer); 5 minutes for negative weekly electronic HMS dealer landing reports (*e*-dealer); 15 minutes for voluntary fishing vessel and catch forms; 2 minutes for provision of HMS dealer email address.

Total Annual Burden Hours: 6,863 hours.

Needs and Uses: This is a request for a revision and extension of an existing information collection, HMS Dealer Family of Forms (0648–0040). This information collection covers reports from seafood dealers regarding purchases, sales, imports, exports, or re-exports of Atlantic highly migratory species (HMS), including federally managed bigeye, albacore, yellowfin, and skipjack (BAYS) tunas, Bluefin tuna (BFT), sharks, and swordfish (SWO). Domestic catch/landing data are necessary to effectively manage domestic fisheries. This information, consistent with the stated purpose of Executive Order (E.O.) 14276 of ensuring the integrity of the seafood supply chain, is used to monitor quotas, estimate fishing mortality, and identify the geographic and temporal distribution of fish and fisheries. The International Commission requires international trade-tracking programs for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT). As part of this revision, the process for collecting email addresses from new HMS dealers has been updated. Previously, new HMS dealers were asked to submit their email addresses via email or phone. However, it is now a standard part of the annual dealer permit application process to collect email addresses. Consequently, there is no longer a need for new HMS dealers to provide their emails separately. Therefore, the burden estimates associated with collecting email addresses are no longer applicable for this ICR. The overall goal of these trade-tracking programs is to reduce illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing for the covered species and improve the management of associated fisheries. This goal aligns with the policies outlined in Executive Orders (E.O.) 14276, which seeks to combat IUU fishing and protect U.S. seafood markets from unfair trade practices, and E.O. 14303, which ensures that federal decisions are based on the most credible, reliable, and impartial data available.

Affected Public: Business or other for-profit organizations.

Frequency: Daily and biweekly for bluefin tuna dealer reports; weekly for swordfish, sharks, and BAYS tuna dealer reports and negative reports; biweekly for trade reports; and as needed for submission of non-governmental validation authorizations and validation of catch and statistical reports and re-export certifications.

Respondent's Obligation: Mandatory.

Legal Authority: Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*), and the Atlantic Tunas Convention Act of 1975 (16 U.S.C. 971 *et seq.*).

This information collection request may be viewed at *www.reginfo.gov.* Follow the instructions to view the Department of Commerce collections currently under review by OMB.

Written comments and recommendations for the proposed information collection should be submitted within 30 days of the publication of this notice on the following website *www.reginfo.gov/public/do/PRAMain.* Find this particular information collection by selecting ''Currently under 30-day Review—Open for Public Comments'' or by using the search function and entering either the title of the collection or the OMB Control Number 0648–0040.

Sheleen Dumas,

Departmental PRA Compliance Officer, Office of the Under Secretary for Economic Affairs, Commerce Department.

[FR Doc. 2025–22170 Filed 12–5–25; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–22–P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648–XF349]

Taking and Importing Marine Mammals; Taking Marine Mammals Incidental to Geophysical Surveys Related to Oil and Gas Activities in the Gulf of America (Formerly Gulf of Mexico)

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

ACTION: Notice; issuance of letter of authorization.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), as amended, its implementing regulations, and NMFS' MMPA regulations for taking marine mammals incidental to geophysical surveys related to oil and gas activities in the Gulf of America, originally published as ''Taking Marine Mammals Incidental to Geophysical Surveys Related to Oil and Gas Activities in the Gulf of Mexico,'' notification is hereby given that a Letter of Authorization (LOA) has been issued to WesternGeco LLC (WesternGeco) for the take of marine mammals incidental to geophysical survey activity in the Gulf of America (GOA).

DATES: The LOA is effective December 3, 2025 through April 19, 2026.

ADDRESSES: The LOA, LOA request, and supporting documentation are available online at: *https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/action/incidental-take-authorization-oil-and-gas-industry-geophysical-survey-activity-gulf-america.* In case of problems accessing these documents, please call the contact listed below (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jenna Harlacher, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, (301) 427–8401.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Sections 101(a)(5)(A) and (D) of the MMPA (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*) direct the Secretary of Commerce to allow, upon request, the incidental, but not intentional, taking of small numbers of marine mammals by U.S. citizens who engage in a specified activity (other than commercial fishing) within a specified geographical region if certain findings are made and either regulations are issued or, if the taking is limited to harassment, a notice of a proposed authorization is provided to the public for review.

An authorization for incidental takings shall be granted if NMFS finds that the taking will have a negligible impact on the species or stock(s), will not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of the species or stock(s) for subsistence uses (where relevant), and if the permissible methods of taking and requirements pertaining to the mitigation, monitoring and reporting of such takings are set forth. NMFS has defined ''negligible impact'' in 50 CFR 216.103 as an impact resulting from the specified activity that cannot be reasonably expected to, and is not reasonably likely to, adversely affect the species or stock through effects on annual rates of recruitment or survival.

Except with respect to certain activities not pertinent here, the MMPA defines ''harassment'' as: any act of pursuit, torment, or annoyance which (i) has the potential to injure a marine mammal or marine mammal stock in the wild (Level A harassment); or (ii) has the potential to disturb a marine mammal or marine mammal stock in the wild by causing disruption of behavioral patterns, including, but not limited to,

migration, breathing, nursing, breeding, feeding, or sheltering (Level B harassment).

On January 19, 2021, we issued a final rule with regulations to govern the unintentional taking of marine mammals incidental to geophysical survey activities conducted by oil and gas industry operators, and those persons authorized to conduct activities on their behalf (collectively ''industry operators''), in U.S. waters of the GOA [1] over the course of 5 years (86 FR 5322, January 19, 2021). The rule was based on our findings that the total taking from the specified activities over the 5-year period will have a negligible impact on the affected species or stock(s) of marine mammals and will not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of those species or stocks for subsistence uses, and became effective on April 19, 2021.

The regulations at 50 CFR 217.180 *et seq.* allow for the issuance of LOAs to industry operators for the incidental take of marine mammals during geophysical survey activities and prescribe the permissible methods of taking and other means of effecting the least practicable adverse impact on marine mammal species or stocks and their habitat (often referred to as mitigation), as well as requirements pertaining to the monitoring and reporting of such taking. Under 50 CFR 217.186(e), issuance of an LOA shall be based on a determination that the level of taking will be consistent with the findings made for the total taking allowable under these regulations and a determination that the amount of take authorized under the LOA is of no more than small numbers.

NMFS subsequently discovered that the 2021 rule was based on erroneous take estimates. We conducted another rulemaking using correct take estimates and other newly available and pertinent information relevant to the analyses supporting some of the findings in the 2021 final rule and the taking allowable under the regulations. We issued a final rule in April 2024, effective May 24, 2024 (89 FR 31488, April 24, 2024).

The 2024 final rule made no changes to the specified activities or the specified geographical region in which those activities would be conducted, nor to the original 5-year period of effectiveness. In consideration of the new information, the 2024 rule presented new analyses supporting affirmance of the negligible impact determinations for all species, and affirmed that the existing regulations, which contain mitigation, monitoring, and reporting requirements, are consistent with the ''least practicable adverse impact'' standard of the MMPA.

Summary of Request and Analysis

WesternGeco plans to conduct a three-dimensional (3D) ocean bottom node (OBN) survey over 200 lease blocks in the Green Canyon and Walker Ridge areas, with water depths ranging from approximately 1,400 to 3,200 meters (m). See section F of the LOA application for a map of the area.

WesternGeco would use one of the following source configurations: a conventional airgun array source consisting of 28 elements with a total volume of 5,000 cubic inches (in^3) or a combination of the conventional airgun array source and a low-frequency tuned pulse source (TPS). Please see WesternGeco's application for additional detail.

The TPS was not included in the acoustic exposure modeling developed in support of the rule. However, the TPS was previously described and evaluated in support of previous LOAs, and we rely on those analyses here (86 FR 37309, 37310, July 15, 2021; see also 87 FR 55790, 55791, September 12, 2022). For additional detail regarding sources, see section C of the LOA application. Based on this information we have determined there will be no effects of a magnitude or intensity different from those evaluated in support of the rule. NMFS therefore expects that use of modeling results supporting the final rule relating to use of airgun arrays are expected to be conservative as a proxy for use in evaluating potential impacts of use of the TPS.

Consistent with the preamble to the final rule, the survey effort proposed by WesternGeco in its LOA request was used to develop LOA-specific take estimates based on the acoustic exposure modeling results described in the preamble (89 FR 31488, April 24, 2024). Because WesternGeco plans to use the specified 28-element, 5,000 in^3 airgun array source for either source configuration, this source was used to evaluate the appropriate proxy array. In order to generate the appropriate take numbers for authorization, the following information was considered: (1) survey type; (2) location (by modeling zone); [2] (3) number of days; (4) source; and (5) month.[3] To determine the most appropriate proxy array from the exposure modeling, the directionally dependent source level in a plane parallel to the sea surface was compared to the three airgun array sources which were originally modeled, including the 4,130, 5,110, and 8,000 in^3 arrays. Out of these three proxies, the source which had the smallest relative error (arithmetic mean difference taken over the azimuthal or vessel bearing angle) was chosen as the most representative proxy. In this case, the 5110 in^3 had the lowest mean error (0.9 decibel) and was the airgun array proxy that was selected. The acoustic exposure modeling performed in support of the rule provides 24-hour exposure estimates for each species, specific to each modeled source and survey type in each zone and month.

No 3D OBN surveys were included in the modeled survey types, and use of existing proxies (*i.e.,* two-dimensional (2D), 3D narrow-azimuth (NAZ), 3D wide-azimuth (WAZ), Coil) is generally conservative for use in evaluation of 3D OBN survey effort, largely due to the greater area covered by the modeled proxies. Summary descriptions of these modeled survey geometries are available in the preamble to the proposed rule (83 FR 29212, 29220, June 22, 2018). Coil was selected as the best available proxy survey type in this case because the spatial coverage of the planned survey is most similar to the coil survey pattern. Among the different parameters of the modeled survey patterns (*e.g.,* area covered, line spacing, number of sources, shot interval, total simulated pulses), NMFS considers area covered per day to be most influential on daily modeled exposures exceeding Level B harassment criteria. Although WesternGeco is not proposing to perform a survey using the coil geometry, the coil proxy is most representative of the effort planned by WesternGeco in terms of predicted Level B harassment exposures.

The survey will take place over approximately 100 days with 80 days of sound source operation, with 30 days planned in Zone 5 and 50 days planned in Zone 7. The monthly distribution of survey days is not known in advance, though we assume that the planned 80 days of source operation would occur contiguously. Take estimates for each

[1] Pursuant to Executive Order 14172, ''Restoring Names That Honor American Greatness,'' and Department of the Interior Secretarial Order 3423, ''The Gulf of America,'' the body of water formerly known as the Gulf of Mexico is now called the Gulf of America. Accordingly, NMFS amended the incidental take regulations to reflect the change. See 90 FR 38001 (August 7, 2025).

[2] For purposes of acoustic exposure modeling, the GOA was divided into seven zones. Zone 1 is not included in the geographic scope of the rule.

[3] Acoustic propagation modeling was performed for two seasons: Winter (December–March) and Summer (April–November). Marine mammal density data is generally available on a monthly basis, and therefore further refines take estimates temporally.

species are based on the time period that produces the greatest value.

For the Rice's whale, take estimates based on the modeling yielded results that are not realistically likely to occur when considered in light of other relevant information concerning Rice's whale habitat preferences considered during the rulemaking process. NMFS' 2024 final rule provided detailed discussion regarding Rice's whale habitat (see, *e.g.,* 89 FR 31508, 31519, April 24, 2024). In summary, recent survey data, sightings, and acoustic data support Rice's whale occurrence in waters throughout the GOA between approximately 100 m and 400 m depth along the continental shelf break, and associated habitat-based density modeling has identified similar habitat (*i.e.,* approximately 100 to 400 m water depths along the continental shelf break) as being Rice's whale habitat (Garrison *et al.,* 2023; Soldevilla *et al.,* 2022, 2024).

Although Rice's whales may occur outside of the general depth range expected to provide suitable habitat, we expect that any such occurrence would be rare. WesternGeco's planned activities will occur in water depths of approximately 1,400 to 3,200 m in the central GOA. Thus, NMFS does not expect there to be the reasonable potential for take of Rice's whale in association with this survey and, accordingly, does not authorize take of Rice's whale through the LOA.

Based on the results of our analysis, NMFS has determined that the level of taking expected for this survey and authorized through the LOA is consistent with the findings made for the total taking allowable under the regulations. See table 1 in this notice and table 6 of the rule (89 FR 31488, April 24, 2024).

Small Numbers Determination

Under the rule, NMFS may not authorize incidental take of marine mammals in an LOA if it will exceed ''small numbers.'' In short, when an acceptable estimate of the individual marine mammals taken is available, if the estimated number of individual animals taken is up to, but not greater than, one-third of the best available abundance estimate, NMFS will determine that the numbers of marine mammals taken of a species or stock are small (see 89 FR 31535, May 24, 2024). For more information please see NMFS' discussion of small numbers in the 2021 final rule (86 FR 5438, January 19, 2021).

The take numbers for authorization are determined as described above in the Summary of Request and Analysis section. Subsequently, the total incidents of harassment for each species are multiplied by scalar ratios (except in the cases where the take estimate has been rounded up to reflect a group size) to produce a derived product that better reflects the number of individuals likely to be taken within a survey (as compared to the total number of instances of take), accounting for the likelihood that some individual marine mammals may be taken on more than 1 day (see 86 FR 5404, January 19, 2021). The output of this scaling, where appropriate, is incorporated into adjusted total take estimates that are the basis for NMFS' small numbers determinations, as depicted in table 1.

This product is used by NMFS in making the necessary small numbers determinations through comparison with the best available abundance estimates (see discussion at 86 FR 5391, January 19, 2021). For this comparison, NMFS' approach is to use the maximum theoretical population, determined through review of current stock assessment reports (SAR; *https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/marine-mammal-protection/marine-mammal-stock-assessments*) and model-predicted abundance information (*https://seamap.env.duke.edu/models/Duke/GOM/*). Information supporting the small numbers determinations is provided in table 1.

TABLE 1—TAKE ANALYSIS

Species	Authorized take	Scaled take [1]	Abundance [2]	Percent abundance
Rice's whale	0	n/a	51	n/a
Sperm whale	295	125	2,451	5.1
Kogia spp	[3] 313	94.1	1,385	8.2
Beaked whales	1,033	104	1,038	10.1
Rough-toothed dolphin	1,382	397	4,853	8.2
Bottlenose dolphin	703	202	166,538	0.1
Clymene dolphin	1,875	538	6,136	8.8
Atlantic spotted dolphin	202	58	21,506	0.3
Pantropical spotted dolphin	14,871	4268	50,209	8.5
Spinner dolphin	166	48	2,991	1.6
Striped dolphin	5,341	1,533	16,102	9.5
Fraser's dolphin	572	164.2	1,665	9.9
Risso's dolphin	164	48	1,974	2.4
Blackfish [4]	4,081	1,204	9,535	12.6
Short-finned pilot whale	148	44	3,277	1.3

[1] Scalar ratios were applied to ''Authorized Take'' values as described at 86 FR 5322, 5404 (January 19, 2021) to derive scaled take numbers shown here.

[2] Best abundance estimate. For most taxa, the best abundance estimate for purposes of comparison with take estimates is considered here to be the model-predicted abundance (Garrison *et al.,* 2023). For Rice's whale, Atlantic spotted dolphin, and Risso's dolphin, the larger estimated SAR abundance estimate is used.

[3] Includes 20 takes by Level A harassment and 293 takes by Level B harassment. Scalar ratio is applied to takes by Level B harassment only; small numbers determination made on basis of scaled Level B harassment take plus authorized Level A harassment take.

[4] The ''blackfish'' guild includes melon-headed whales, false killer whales, pygmy killer whales, and killer whales.

Based on the analysis contained herein of WesternGeco's proposed survey activity described in its LOA application and the anticipated take of marine mammals, NMFS finds that small numbers of marine mammals will be taken relative to the affected species or stock sizes (*i.e.,* less than one-third of the best available abundance estimate) and therefore the taking is of no more than small numbers.

Authorization

NMFS has determined that the level of taking for this LOA request is consistent with the findings made for the total taking allowable under the incidental take regulations and that the amount of take authorized under the LOA is of no more than small numbers. Accordingly, we have issued an LOA to WesternGeco authorizing the take of marine mammals incidental to its geophysical survey activity, as described above.

Dated: December 4, 2025.

Kimberly Damon-Randall,

Director, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 2025–22198 Filed 12–5–25; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–22–P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Agency Information Collection Activities; Submission to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for Review and Approval; Comment Request; Office of Education Higher Education Scholarship, Fellowship, and Internship Programs

AGENCY: National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of information collection, request for comment.

SUMMARY: The Department of Commerce, in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA), invites the general public and other Federal agencies to comment on proposed, and continuing information collections, which helps us assess the impact of our information collection requirements and minimize the public's reporting burden. The purpose of this notice is to allow for 60 days of public comment preceding submission of the collection to OMB.

DATES: To ensure consideration, comments regarding this proposed information collection must be received on or before February 6, 2026.

ADDRESSES: Interested persons are invited to submit written comments to Adrienne Thomas, NOAA PRA Officer, at *NOAA.PRA@noaa.gov.* Please reference OMB Control Number 0648–0568 in the subject line of your comments. All comments received are part of the public record and will generally be posted on *https://www.regulations.gov* without change. Do not submit Confidential Business Information or otherwise sensitive or protected information.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Requests for additional information or specific questions related to collection activities should be directed to John Baek, Senior Education Evaluator, NOAA Office of Education, 1315 East-West Hwy., Silver Spring, MD 20910, 202–743–0332, or *John.Baek@noaa.gov.*

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Abstract

This request is for extension and revision of a current information collection.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Office of Education is sponsoring the information collection herein described. The Administrator of NOAA is authorized by section 4002 of the America COMPETES Act, Public Law 110–69, to establish and administer a Graduate Sciences Program and two undergraduate scholarship programs to enhance understanding of ocean, coastal, Great Lakes, and atmospheric science and stewardship by the general public and other coastal stakeholders, including underrepresented groups in ocean and atmospheric science and policy careers. In addition, NOAA's Administrator is authorized by section 214 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2005, Public Law 108–447, to establish and administer the Ernest F. Hollings Undergraduate Scholarship Program to support undergraduate studies in oceanic and atmospheric science, research, technology, and education that support NOAA's mission and programs.

The NOAA Office of Education collects, evaluates, and assesses student data and information for the purpose of selecting successful candidates for scholarships, fellowships and internships, generating internal NOAA reports, and articles to demonstrate the success of its program.

The purpose of the NOAA Educational Partnership Program with Minority Serving Institutions (EPP/MSI) is to educate, train and graduate students in NOAA mission-aligned disciplines to build a pool of candidates eligible for the future NOAA workforce. The EPP/MSI program is strongly committed to broadening the participation of Minority Serving Institutions such as Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic-Serving Institutions, Indian Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities, Alaska Native-Serving Institutions, and Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions. The EPP/MSI program has five program components: The Undergraduate Scholarship Program (USP); the Cooperative Science Centers (CSCs); Graduate Fellowship Program (GFP); the Graduate Sciences Program (GSP); and the Environmental Entrepreneurship Program (EEP). The GSP and EEP programs are no longer actively supporting students, however alumni of those programs may provide updates to EPP/MSI of educational and career changes.

The NOAA Office of Education requires all applicants to NOAA's Undergraduate Scholarship Programs to complete an application in order to be considered. The application package requires two faculty and/or academic advisors to complete a student scholar reference form in support of the scholarship application. Undergraduate scholarship recipients are required to complete a Student Scholarship Training Record to track their time, attendance, and accomplishments during their internships. Student scholar alumni are also requested to provide information to NOAA for internal tracking purposes. This information informs NOAA whether NOAA-funded students pursue and complete post-graduate NOAA-related science degrees, are employed by NOAA or a NOAA contractor, or in fields related to NOAA's mission.

NOAA EPP/MSI CSC grant award recipients are required to update the student tracker database with the required student information in order to assess compliance with award performance measures. While supported by NOAA scholarship and internship programs, the Office of Education surveys students and mentors to gain feedback on experiences and to assess program impact. Feedback collected from surveys will be used to improve programs to ensure the highest quality experience for supported students.

The collected data supports the Office of Education's program performance measures. To measure the impact of these programs, the data collected are compared to the available data in the national education databases (*e.g.,* National Science Foundation and National Center for Education Statistics) and NOAA workforce management database. Furthermore, the student data collection identifies degree and NOAA mission-aligned discipline pipeline areas, guiding NOAA's effort to recruit for its mission-aligned educational and training programs and future workforce.

This information collection includes several changes to the type and amount of information being collected as described below: