

in Zone 5. The monthly distribution of survey days is not known in advance, though we assume that the planned 5 days of source operation would occur contiguously. Take estimates for each species are based on the time period that produces the greatest value.

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 7 of the rule (91 FR 20784, April 17, 2026).

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 91 FR 20784, April 17, 2026). For more information, please see NMFS’ discussion of small numbers in the 2026 final rule (91 FR 20784, April 17, 2026).

The take numbers for authorization, determined as described in the

Summary of Request and Analysis section, are used by NMFS in making the necessary small numbers determinations, through comparison with the best available abundance estimates (see discussion at 91 FR 20784, 20812, April 17, 2026). 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 ¹

Species	Authorized take	Abundance ²	Percent abundance
Rice’s whale	0	51	N/A
Sperm whale	³ 3	2,451	<1
<i>Kogia</i> spp.	0	1,385	N/A
Beaked whales	39	1,038	3.8
Rough-toothed dolphin	⁴ 0	4,853	N/A
Bottlenose dolphin	86	166,538	<1
Clymene dolphin	⁴ 0	6,136	N/A
Atlantic spotted dolphin	⁵ 26	21,506	<1
Pantropical spotted dolphin	⁴ 0	50,209	N/A
Spinner dolphin	⁴ 0	2,991	N/A
Striped dolphin	⁴ 0	16,102	N/A
Fraser’s dolphin	0	1,665	N/A
Risso’s dolphin	⁴ 0	1,974	N/A
Blackfish ⁶	0	9,535	N/A
Short-finned pilot whale	0	3,277	N/A

¹ Scalar ratios were not applied in this case due to brief survey duration.

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, spinner dolphin, and Risso’s dolphin, the estimated SAR abundance estimate is used.

³ Modeled take of two increased to account for potential encounter with a group of average size (Maze-Foley and Mullin, 2006).

⁴ Modeled take decreased to zero. For these species, use of the exposure modeling produces results that are smaller than the average GOA group size (*e.g.*, estimated exposure value of 2, relative to assumed average group size of 14) (Maze-Foley and Mullin, 2006). NMFS’ typical practice is to increase exposure estimates to the assumed average group size for a species in order to ensure that, if the species is encountered, exposures will not exceed the authorized take number; however, given the very short survey duration and small estimated exposure value, NMFS determined that it is unlikely these species would be encountered at all. As a result, in this case NMFS has not authorized take for these species.

⁵ Modeled take of 19 increased to account for potential encounter with a group of average size (Maze-Foley and Mullin, 2006).

⁶ The “blackfish” guild includes melon-headed whales, false killer whales, pygmy killer whales, and killer whales.

Based on the analysis contained herein of Fugro’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 Fugro authorizing the take of marine mammals incidental to its geophysical survey activity, as described above.

Dated: July 23, 2026.

Kimberly Damon-Randall,

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

[FR Doc. 2026–15205 Filed 7–27–26; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RTID 0648–XF916

Marine Mammals; File No. 29804

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

ACTION: Notice; receipt of application.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that the New England Aquarium, Central Wharf, Boston, MA 02110, (Responsible Party: Letise LaFeir, Ph.D.), has applied

in due form for a permit to conduct research on marine mammals.

DATES: Written comments must be received on or before August 27, 2026.

ADDRESSES: The application and related documents are available for review upon written request via email to NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov.

Written comments on this application should be submitted via email to NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov. Please include File No. 29804 in the subject line of the email comment.

Those individuals requesting a public hearing should submit a written request via email to NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov. The request should set forth the specific reasons why a hearing on this application would be appropriate.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Shasta McClenahan, Ph.D., or Courtney Smith, Ph.D., (301) 427–8401.

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.*), and the regulations governing the taking, importing, and exporting of endangered and threatened species (50 CFR parts 222–226).

The applicant requests a 10-year permit to conduct research on 14 species of cetaceans and 2 species of pinnipeds in U.S. and international waters of the North Atlantic Ocean. ESA-listed species include: bowhead (*Balaena mysticetus*), blue (*Balaenoptera musculus*), fin (*Balaenoptera physalus*), North Atlantic right (*Eubalaena glacialis*), sei (*Balaenoptera borealis*), and sperm (*Physeter macrocephalus*) whales. The objectives are to identify, assess, quantify, and monitor trends in demographics, health, and anthropogenic impacts on marine

mammals, with a focus on North Atlantic right whales. Cetaceans may be taken during vessel and aerial surveys, including uncrewed aircraft systems, for counts, photography, videography, photogrammetry, thermal imaging, observations, passive acoustic recordings, biological sampling (blow, feces, sloughed skin, and skin and blubber biopsies), and suction-cup tagging. Pinnipeds may be unintentionally harassed during research. Cetacean parts may also be imported, exported, or received for analysis and curation. See the application for complete numbers of animals requested by species, life stage, and procedure.

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 prepare an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement.

Concurrent with the publication of this notice in the **Federal Register**, NMFS is forwarding copies of the application to the Marine Mammal Commission and its Committee of Scientific Advisors.

Dated: July 22, 2026.

Larissa Plants,

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

[FR Doc. 2026–15160 Filed 7–27–26; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648–XF851]

Marine Mammals and Endangered Species

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and

Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice; issuance of permits, including amendments.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that permits have been issued under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) and the Endangered Species Act (ESA), as applicable.

ADDRESSES: The permits and related documents are available for review upon written request via email to NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Sara Young (File No. 28671), Shasta McClenahan, Ph.D., (File Nos. 28860–01 and 29467), Jennifer Skidmore (File Nos. 29014 and 29107), and Amy Hapeman (File No. 29414); at (301) 427–8401.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The requested permits have been issued under the MMPA of 1972, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*), the regulations governing the taking and importing of marine mammals (50 CFR part 216), the ESA of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), and the regulations governing the taking, importing, and exporting of endangered and threatened species (50 CFR parts 222–226), as applicable. Notices were published in the **Federal Register** on the dates listed below that requests had been submitted. To locate the **Federal Register** notice that announced our receipt of the application and a complete description of the activities, go to <https://www.federalregister.gov> and search for the file number provided in table 1 below.

TABLE 1—ISSUED PERMITS

File No.	Version No.	RTID	Applicant	Previous Federal Register notice	Issuance date
28671	N/A	0648–XF586 ...	Colleen Reichmuth, Ph.D., Long Marine Laboratory, Institute of Marine Sciences, University of California at Santa Cruz, 115 McAllister Way, Santa Cruz, CA 95060.	91 FR 1217, March 12, 2026 ..	June 9, 2026.
28860	01	0648–XF027 ...	British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) Natural History and Factual Productions Ltd. and BBC Studios Americas Inc., Bridge-water House, Counterslip, Redcliffe, Bristol, BS1 6BX, United Kingdom (Responsible Party: Sarah Conner).	90 FR 35512, July 28, 2025	June 12, 2026.
29014	N/A	0648–XF678 ...	Erich Jarvis, Ph.D., The Rockefeller University, 1230 York Ave, New York, NY 10065.	91 FR 18835, April 13, 2026 ...	June 16, 2026.