1. Support quality research and monitoring to obtain the most complete scientific information available to assess and manage fisheries within an ecosystem approach.

2. Promote an ecosystem approach to fisheries management including reducing bycatch in fisheries and minimizing impacts on marine habitat and impacts on protected species and addressing climate change adaptation and mitigation.

3. Conduct education and outreach to foster good stewardship principles and broad and direct public participation in the Council's decision-making process.

4. Recognize the importance of island cultures and traditional fishing practices in managing fishery resources and foster opportunities for participation.

5. Promote responsible domestic fisheries development to provide long-term economic growth, stability and climate resilience by reducing foreign imports and increasing local seafood production.

6. Promote regional cooperation and capacity-building to manage domestic and international fisheries.

7. Encourage development of technologies and methods to achieve the most effective level of monitoring, control and surveillance and to ensure safety at sea.

Please refer to the MCP for projects and activities designed to meet each objective, the evaluative criteria, and priority rankings.

This notice announces that NMFS has reviewed the MCP and determined that it satisfies the requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. Accordingly, we have approved the MCP for the 3-year period from August 4, 2026, through August 3, 2029. This MCP supersedes the one approved for the period August 4, 2023, through August 3, 2026 (88 FR 34131, May 26, 2023).

Dated: November 18, 2026.

Shannon Bettridge,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 2026–23710 Filed 11–19–26; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648–XG133]

Take of Marine Mammals Incidental to Specified Activities; Taking Marine Mammals Incidental to Seabird Research Activities in the Farallon Islands, California

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

ACTION: Notice; receipt of application for Letter of Authorization; request for comments and information.

SUMMARY: NMFS has received a request from Point Blue Conservation Science (Point Blue) for authorization to take small numbers of marine mammals incidental to seabird research activities at the Farallon Islands over the course of 5 years from the date of issuance. Pursuant to regulations implementing the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), NMFS is announcing receipt of Point Blue's request for the development and implementation of regulations governing the incidental taking of marine mammals. NMFS invites the public to provide information, suggestions, and comments on Point Blue's application and request.

DATES: Comments and information must be received no later than December 21, 2026.

ADDRESSES: Comments on the applications should be addressed to the Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service. Physical comments should be sent to 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910 and electronic comments should be sent to *ITP.gatzke@noaa.gov.*

Instructions: NMFS is not responsible for comments sent by any other method, to any other address or individual, or received after the end of the comment period. Comments received electronically, including all attachments, must not exceed a 25-megabyte file size. Attachments to electronic comments will be accepted in Microsoft Word or Excel or Adobe PDF file formats only. All comments received are a part of the public record and will generally be posted online at *https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/permit/incidental-take-authorizations-under-marine-mammal-protection-act* without change. All personal identifying information (*e.g.,* name, address) voluntarily submitted by the commenter may be publicly accessible. Do not submit confidential business information or otherwise sensitive or protected information.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jennifer Gatzke, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, (301) 427–8401. An electronic copy of Point Blue's application may be obtained online at: *https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/marine-mammal-protection/incidental-take-authorizations-research-and-other-activities.* In case of problems accessing these documents, please call the contact listed above.

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 (as delegated to NMFS) 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 incidental take authorization 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.

The MMPA states that the term ''take'' means to harass, hunt, capture, kill or attempt to harass, hunt, capture, or kill any marine mammal.

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).

Summary of Request

On August 25, 2026, NMFS received an application from Point Blue Conservation Science requesting authorization for take of five species of marine mammals incidental to disturbance related to seabird research activities at the Farallon Islands, off the California coast. After Point Blue responded to our questions, we determined the application was adequate and complete on November 16, 2026. The requested regulations would be valid for 5 years, from July 1, 2027 through June 30, 2032. Point Blue plans to conduct necessary work, including light maintenance of living quarters, small boat landings and departures, seabird nesting observations, and bird netting and banding, to continue their long-standing seabird research program. The proposed actions may incidentally expose pinnipeds occurring in the vicinity to the sounds and visual disturbance of human presence, thereby resulting in incidental take, by Level B harassment only. Therefore, Point Blue requests authorization to incidentally take marine mammals.

Specified Activities

Point Blue Conservation Science has conducted year-round wildlife research and monitoring activities at the South Farallon Islands, part of the Farallon Islands National Wildlife Refuge, since 1968. Most intertidal areas of the island, where five species of pinnipeds are present, are rarely visited in seabird research. Most potential for incidental take will occur at the island's two small boat landings, and the marine terrace in front of the living quarters. Most visits to pinniped haulout areas are brief (15 minutes). Boat landings to re-supply the field station, lasting 1–3 hours, are conducted every 2 weeks at one of the two landing sites. Activities involve launching the boat with one operator, while two to four other researchers assist with the operations from land. At East Landing, the primary landing site, all personnel assisting with the landing stay on the loading platform 30 ft (9.14 meters) above the water. At North Landing, loading operations occur at the water level in the intertidal and boat access.

Information Solicited

Interested persons may submit information, suggestions, and comments concerning Point Blue's request (see **ADDRESSES**). NMFS will consider all information, suggestions, and comments related to the request during the development of proposed regulations governing the incidental taking of marine mammals by Point Blue, if appropriate.

Dated: November 17, 2026.

Larissa Plants,

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

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648–XG131]

Draft 2026 Marine Mammal Stock Assessment Reports

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

ACTION: Notice; request for comments and new information.

SUMMARY: NMFS reviewed the Alaska, Atlantic, and Pacific regional marine mammal stock assessment reports (SARs) in accordance with the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA). SARs for marine mammals in all three regions were revised to include new information. NMFS is soliciting public comments on the draft 2026 SARs. We will consider all comments that are received by the close of the comment period.

DATES: Comments must be received by February 18, 2027.

ADDRESSES: The 2026 draft SARs are available in electronic form via the internet at *https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/marine-mammal-protection/draft-marine-mammal-stock-assessment-reports.*

You may submit comments or new information, identified by NOAA–NMFS–2026–3499, via electronic submission through the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal:

Electronic Submission: Submit all electronic public comments via the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal. Go to *https://www.regulations.gov* and type NOAA–NMFS–2026–3499 in the Search box. Click on the ''Comment'' icon, complete the required fields, and enter or attach your comments.

Instructions: NMFS may not consider comments if they are sent by any other method, to any other address or individual, or received after the end of the comment period. All comments received are a part of the public record and will generally be posted for public viewing on *https://www.regulations.gov* without change. All personal identifying information (*e.g.,* name, address, *etc.*), confidential business information, or otherwise sensitive information submitted voluntarily by the sender will be publicly accessible. NMFS will accept anonymous comments (enter ''N/A'' in the required fields if you wish to remain anonymous).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Zachary Schakner, Office of Science and Technology, (301) 427–8106, *Zachary.Schakner@noaa.gov;* Nancy Young, *Nancy.Young@noaa.gov,* regarding Alaska regional stock assessments; Jessica McCordic, *Jessica.McCordic@noaa.gov,* regarding Atlantic, Gulf of America, and Caribbean regional stock assessments; or Amanda Bradford, *Amanda.Bradford@noaa.gov,* regarding Pacific regional stock assessments.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Section 117 of the MMPA (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*) requires NMFS and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to prepare stock assessments for each stock of marine mammals occurring in waters under the jurisdiction of the United States. These SARs must contain information regarding the distribution and abundance of the stock, population growth rates and trends, estimates of annual human-caused mortality and serious injury (M/SI) from all sources, descriptions of the commercial fisheries with which the stock interacts, and the status of the stock. Initial SARs were completed in 1995.

The MMPA requires NMFS and USFWS to review the SARs at least annually for strategic stocks and stocks for which significant new information is available and at least once every three years for non-strategic stocks. The term ''strategic stock'' means a marine mammal stock: (A) for which the level of direct human-caused mortality exceeds the potential biological removal level (defined by the MMPA as the maximum number of animals, not including natural mortalities, that may be removed from a marine mammal stock while allowing that stock to reach or maintain its optimum sustainable population); (B) which, based on the best available scientific information, is declining and is likely to be listed as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) within the foreseeable future; or (C) which is listed as a threatened species or endangered species under the ESA or is designated as depleted under the MMPA. NMFS and USFWS are required