- Acoustic and oceanographic science and technology (sonar and other transducers, in-water detonations, non-explosive impulsive sources),
- Unmanned system (sonar and other transducers), and
- Vessel evaluation (sonar and other transducers).

The application includes proposed mitigation measures for marine mammals that would be implemented during training and testing activities in the NWTT Study Area (see section 11 of the application). Proposed activity-based mitigation would generally involve: (1) the use of one or more trained Lookouts to diligently observe for specific biological resources within a mitigation zone; (2) requirements for Lookouts to immediately communicate sightings of specific biological resources to the appropriate watch station for information dissemination; and (3) requirements for the watch station to implement mitigation (*e.g.,* halt an activity) until certain recommencement conditions have been met. Mitigation measures are also proposed for specific mitigation areas and consist of a variety of measures including, but not limited to: (1) not conducting hull-mounted mid-frequency active sonar; (2) conducting a limited amount of hull-mounted mid-frequency active sonar per year; and (3) not expending explosive or non-explosive ordnance.

The Action Proponents also propose to undertake monitoring and reporting efforts to better understand the impacts of their activities on marine mammals and their habitat.

Information Solicited

Interested persons may submit information, suggestions, and comments concerning the Action Proponents' request (see **ADDRESSES** section). 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 the Action Proponents, if appropriate.

Dated: November 18, 2026.

Larissa Plants,

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

[FR Doc. 2026–23728 Filed 11–19–26; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–22–P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648–XG094]

Pacific Island Fisheries; Marine Conservation Plan for Pacific Insular Areas Other Than American Samoa, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands; Western Pacific Sustainable Fisheries Fund

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

ACTION: Notice of agency decision.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces approval of a Marine Conservation Plan (MCP) for Pacific Insular Areas other than American Samoa, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands.

DATES: This agency decision is effective from August 4, 2026, through August 3, 2029.

ADDRESSES: You may obtain a copy of the MCP, identified by NOAA–NMFS–2026–2773, from the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal, *https://www.regulations.gov/docket/NOAA-NMFS-2026-2773,* or from the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council), 1164 Bishop St., Suite 1400, Honolulu, HI 96813, 808–522–8220, *https://www.wpcouncil.org.*

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jarad Makaiau, Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS Pacific Islands Regional Office, 808–725–5170.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Section 204(e) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act) authorizes the Secretary of State, with the concurrence of the Secretary of Commerce (Secretary), and in consultation with the Council, to negotiate and enter into a Pacific Insular Area fishery agreement (PIAFA). A PIAFA would allow foreign fishing within the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) adjacent to a Pacific Insular Area other than American Samoa, Guam, or the Northern Mariana Islands, that is, in the EEZ around the Pacific Remote Island Areas (PRIA). The PRIA are Baker Island, Howland Island, Jarvis Island, Johnston Atoll, Kingman Reef, Midway Island, Palmyra Atoll, and Wake Island.

Before entering into a PIAFA for the PRIA, the Council must develop and submit to the Secretary a 3-year MCP that details the uses for funds collected by the Secretary under the PIAFA. NMFS is the designee of the Secretary for MCP review and approval. The Magnuson-Stevens Act requires payments received under a PIAFA, and any funds or contributions received in support of conservation and management objectives for the MCP, to be deposited into the Western Pacific Sustainable Fisheries Fund (Fund) for use by the Council. Additionally, in the case of violations by foreign fishing vessels in the EEZ around the PRIA, amounts received by the Secretary attributable to fines and penalties imposed under the Magnuson-Stevens Act, including sums collected from the forfeiture and disposition or sale of property seized subject to its authority, are deposited into the Fund for use by the Council, after direct costs of the enforcement action are subtracted. Section 204(e)(7)(C) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act also authorizes the Council to use the Fund to meet conservation and management objectives in the State of Hawaii, if funds remain available.

An MCP must be consistent with the Council's fishery ecosystem plans (FEPs), must identify conservation and management objectives (including criteria for determining when such objectives have been met), and must prioritize planned marine conservation projects. Although no foreign fishing in the PRIA is being considered at this time, the Council reviewed and approved the draft MCP at its March 2026 meeting. On March 30, 2026, the Council's Executive Director submitted the MCP to NMFS for review and approval.

The MCP contains the following five conservation and management objectives that are consistent with the FEP for the PRIA and the FEP for Pelagic Fisheries of the Western Pacific:

1. Support quality research and monitoring to obtain the most complete scientific information available to assess and manage fisheries within an ecosystem approach.
2. Conduct education and outreach to foster good stewardship principles and broad and direct public participation in the Council's decision-making process.
3. Promote regional cooperation to manage domestic and international fisheries.
4. Encourage development of technologies and methods to achieve the most effective level of fishery monitoring, control and surveillance, and to ensure safety at sea.
5. Western Pacific Community Development Program and Western Pacific Community Demonstration Projects Program.

In addition, the MCP contains seven conservation and management objectives that are consistent with the FEP for the Hawaii Archipelago:

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]

BILLING CODE 3510–22–P

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).