UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
PROGRAM PLANNING AND INTEGRATION
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

JUL 2 2010

To All Interested Government Agencies and Public Groups:

Under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), an environmental review has been performed on the following action.

TITLE: Environmental Assessment for Issuance of a Scientific Research Permit [File No. 14097] for Pinniped, Cetacean, and Sea Turtle Studies

LOCATION: Pacific, Southern, Indian, and Arctic Oceans

SUMMARY: The proposed action is issuance of a scientific research permit that would authorize vessel surveys, aerial surveys, photogrammetry, photo-identification, biological sampling, radio tagging, and satellite tagging on five species of pinniped and fifty-seven species of cetacean; and the opportunistic capture of five species of sea turtles during cetacean research for collection of blood samples, stomach contents, and tissue samples and to attach satellite tags. The purposes of pinniped research are to conduct population assessments to determine abundance, distribution patterns, length frequencies, and breeding densities. The purpose of cetacean research is to determine the abundance, distribution, movement patterns, and stock structure of cetaceans in U.S. territorial and international waters. The purpose of sea turtle research is to determine the abundance, distribution, movement patterns, stock structure, and diet of sea turtles in U.S. territorial and international waters. Impacts from these activities would be short-term and minimal to individual animals and negligible to the species. A biological opinion concluded that the proposed action would not likely jeopardize the continued existence of the species and would not likely destroy or adversely modify designated critical habitat. The permit would be valid until June 30, 2015.

RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL:

James H. Lecky
Director, Office of Protected Resources
National Marine Fisheries Service
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
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The environmental review process led us to conclude that this action will not have a significant effect on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared. A copy of the finding of no significant impact (FONSI) including the supporting environmental assessment (EA) is enclosed for your information.

Although NOAA is not soliciting comments on this completed EA/FONSI we will consider any comments submitted that would assist us in preparing future NEPA documents. Please submit any written comments to the responsible official named above.

Sincerely,

for

Paul N. Doremus, Ph.D.
NOAA NEPA Coordinator

Enclosure