

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

## National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XW34

**Incidental Taking of Marine Mammals; Taking of Marine Mammals Incidental to the Explosive Removal of Offshore Structures in the Gulf of Mexico**

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

**ACTION:** Notice; issuance of letters of authorization.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) and implementing regulations, notification is hereby given that NMFS has issued one-year Letters of Authorization (LOA) to take marine mammals incidental to the explosive removal of offshore oil and gas structures (EROS) in the Gulf of Mexico.

**DATES:** These authorizations are effective from June 1, 2010 through May 31, 2011, July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2011, and August 1, 2010 through July 31, 2011.

**ADDRESSES:** The application and LOAs are available for review by writing to P. Michael Payne, Chief, Permits, Conservation, and Education Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910-3235 or by telephoning the contact listed here (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**), or online at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/permits/incidental.htm>. Documents cited in this notice may be viewed, by appointment, during regular business hours, at the aforementioned address.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Howard Goldstein or Jolie Harrison, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 301-713-2289.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Section 101(a)(5)(A) of the MMPA (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*) directs the Secretary of Commerce (who has delegated the authority to NMFS) to allow, upon request, the incidental, but not intentional, taking of small numbers of marine mammals by United States (U.S.) citizens who engage in a specified activity (other than commercial fishing) within a specified geographical region, if certain findings are made and regulations are issued. Under the MMPA, the term "take" means to harass, hunt, capture, or kill or to attempt to harass, hunt, capture, or kill marine mammal.

Authorization for incidental taking, in the form of annual LOAs, may be granted by NMFS for periods up to five years if NMFS finds, after notification and opportunity for public comment, that the taking will have a negligible impact on the species or stock(s) of marine mammals, and will not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of the species or stock(s) for subsistence uses (where relevant). In addition, NMFS must prescribe regulations that include permissible methods of taking and other means of effecting the least practicable adverse impact on the species and its habitat (i.e., mitigation), and on the availability of the species for subsistence uses, paying particular attention to rookeries, mating rounds, and areas of similar significance. The regulations also must include requirements pertaining to the monitoring and reporting of such taking. Regulations governing the taking of marine mammals incidental to EROS were published on June 19, 2008 (73 FR 34875), and remain in effect through July 19, 2013. For detailed information on this action, please refer to that **Federal Register** notice. The species that applicants may take in small numbers during EROS activities are bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*), Atlantic spotted dolphins (*Stenella frontalis*), pantropical spotted dolphins (*Stenella attenuata*), Clymene dolphins (*Stenella clymene*), striped dolphins (*Stenella coeruleoalba*), spinner dolphins (*Stenella longirostris*), rough-toothed dolphins (*Steno bredanensis*), Risso's dolphins (*Grampus griseus*), melon-headed whales (*Peponocephala electra*), short-finned pilot whales (*Globicephala macrorhynchus*), and sperm whales (*Physeter macrocephalus*).

Pursuant to these regulations, NMFS has issued an LOA to Fairways Offshore Exploration, Inc., El Paso Exploration & Production Company, L.P., and ATP Oil & Gas Corporation. Issuance of the LOAs is based on a finding made in the preamble to the final rule that the total taking by these activities (with monitoring, mitigation, and reporting measures) will result in no more than a negligible impact on the affected species or stock(s) of marine mammals and will not have an unmitigable adverse impact on subsistence uses. NMFS also finds that the applicant will meet the requirements contained in the implementing regulations and LOA, including monitoring, mitigation, and reporting requirements.

Dated: May 17, 2010.

**James H. Lecky,**

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

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

## National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XW57

**New England Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting**

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

**ACTION:** Notice of a public meeting.

**SUMMARY:** The New England Fishery Management Council's (Council) Groundfish/Scallop Advisory Panel will meet to consider actions affecting New England fisheries in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ).

**DATES:** The meeting will be held on Monday, June 7, 2010 at 9:30 a.m.

**ADDRESSES:** The meeting will be held at the Hilton Garden Inn, One Thurber Street, Warwick, RI 02886; telephone: (401) 734-9600; fax: (401) 734-9700.

*Council address:* New England Fishery Management Council, 50 Water Street, Mill 2, Newburyport, MA 01950.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Paul J. Howard, Executive Director, New England Fishery Management Council; telephone: (978) 465-0492.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The items of discussion in the panel's agenda are as follows:

1. The Joint Groundfish/Scallop Advisory Panel (AP) will meet to consider measures that will facilitate harvesting optimum yield from the two fisheries by addressing the potential constraints of groundfish stock allocations. The Joint AP may also consider measures to reduce catch of groundfish in the scallop fishery by adopting measures that would allow benefits for the fishery from reduction in groundfish catch. These measures will be considered by the Joint Committee at a future date, and may become part of an amendment to the Northeast Multispecies and Scallop Fishery Management Plans.

2. Other business may also be discussed.

Although non-emergency issues not contained in this agenda may come before this group for discussion, those issues may not be the subject of formal