



BILLING CODE 3510-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XF453

Marine Mammals; File No. 21114

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 Whale Museum (Responsible Party: Jenny Atkinson), P.O. Box 945, Friday Harbor, WA 98250 has applied in due form for a permit to conduct research on marine mammals.

DATES: Written, telefaxed, or e-mail comments must be received on or before

[INSERT DATE 30 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

ADDRESSES: The application and related documents are available for review by selecting “Records Open for Public Comment” from the “Features” box on the Applications and Permits for Protected Species (APPS) home page, <https://apps.nmfs.noaa.gov>, and then selecting File No. 21114 from the list of available applications.

These documents are also available upon written request or by appointment in the Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-

West Highway, Room 13705, Silver Spring, MD 20910; phone (301) 427-8401; fax (301) 713-0376.

Written comments on this application should be submitted to the Chief, Permits and Conservation Division, at the address listed above. Comments may also be submitted by facsimile to (301) 713-0376, or by email to *NMFS.PrIComments@noaa.gov*. Please include the File No. in the subject line of the email comment.

Those individuals requesting a public hearing should submit a written request to the Chief, Permits and Conservation Division at the address listed above. The request should set forth the specific reasons why a hearing on this application would be appropriate.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Shasta McClenahan or Amy Hapeman, (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 proposes to take cetaceans during vessel surveys for the Soundwatch Boater Education program in the in-land waters of Washington to evaluate vessel regulations and guidelines, characterize vessel trends, and prevent vessel disturbances to marine mammals. The primary target species are Southern Resident and transient killer whales (*Orcinus orca*), but additional cetaceans may include fin

(*Balaenoptera physalus*), gray (*Eschrichtius robustus*), humpback (*Megaptera novaeangliae*), and minke (*B. acutorostrata*) whales, Dall's (*Phocoenoides dalli*) and harbor (*Phocoena phocoena*) porpoises, and Pacific white-sided dolphins (*Lagenorhynchus obliquidens*). Research activities would include photography, video recording, photo-identification, behavioral observations, and incidental harassment. Take numbers would include up to 100 whales of each killer whale stock, and up to 20 individuals each of all other cetacean species, annually. Five species of non-listed pinnipeds may be harassed incidental to research activities. Please see the take table for complete list of take numbers by species. The permit would be valid for five years from the date of issuance.

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: June 1, 2017.

Donna S. Wieting,

Director,

Office of Protected Resources,

National Marine Fisheries Service.

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