



## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648-XE924]

#### Marine Mammals; File No. 28408

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

**ACTION:** Notice; receipt of application.

**SUMMARY:** Notice is hereby given that Iain Kerr, D.H.L., Ocean Alliance, 32 Horton Street, Gloucester, MA 01930, has applied in due form for a permit to conduct research on marine mammals.

**DATES:** Written 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 home page, <https://apps.nmfs.noaa.gov>, and then selecting File No. 28408 from the list of available applications. These documents are also available upon written request via email to [NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov](mailto:NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov).

Written comments on this application should be submitted via email to [NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov](mailto:NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov). Please include File No. 28408 in the subject line of the email comment.

Those individuals requesting a public hearing should submit a written request via email to [NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov](mailto:NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov). The request should set forth the specific reasons why a hearing on this application would be appropriate.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Shasta McClenahan, Ph.D., 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 (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 requests a 10-year permit to conduct research in U.S. and international waters of the North Atlantic Ocean and Hawaii to study behavioral, feeding, and acoustic ecology, distribution, toxicology, microplastics, and the effects of anthropogenic noise. Up to 15 species of cetaceans and 2 species of pinnipeds may be harassed including the following ESA-listed species: blue whales (*Balaenoptera musculus*), fin whales (*B. physalus*), North Atlantic right whales (*Eubalaena glacialis*), sei whales (*B. borealis*), and sperm whales (*Physeter macrocephalus*). Research may be conducted from a vessel or unmanned aircraft system for counts, observations, photography and video recording, photo-ID, photogrammetry, thermal imaging, passive acoustics, biological sampling (exhaled air, feces, sloughed skin, and skin and blubber biopsy), cell line development, and suction-cup tagging. Parts may be imported and exported for analysis, including those collected on the high seas, and parts collected in foreign territorial waters. See the application for complete numbers of animals requested by species, age-class, and procedure.

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: July 23, 2025.

**Shannon Bettridge,**

*Chief, Marine Mammal and Sea Turtle Conservation Division,*

*Office of Protected Resources,*

*National Marine Fisheries Service.*

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