



DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648-XF774]

Marine Mammals; File No. 29621

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

ACTION: Notice; receipt of application.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that NMFS' Marine Mammal Laboratory, 7600 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle, WA 98118 (Responsible Party: Nancy Friday, Ph.D.), has applied in due form for a permit to conduct research on northern fur seals (*Callorhinus ursinus*).

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. 29621 from the list of available applications. These documents are also available upon written request via email to NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov.

Written comments on this application should be submitted via email to NMFS.Pr1Comments@noaa.gov. Please include File No. 29621 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. The request should set forth the specific reasons why a hearing on this application would be appropriate.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Sara Young or Shasta McClenahan, Ph.D., (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 (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), the regulations governing the taking, importing, and exporting of endangered and threatened species (50 CFR parts 222-226), and the Fur Seal Act of 1966, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1151 *et seq.*).

The applicant requests a research permit to investigate population status and trends, demographics, health, disease, and foraging ecology of northern fur seals. Northern fur seals may be taken annually from the Eastern Pacific stock in Alaska, including by capture and handle, harassment, unintentional disturbance, ground and aerial surveys, observation, photograph/video, capture/handling, and collection of scat/spew. Samples may be salvaged from pinnipeds found dead, received from subsistence harvested animals, and exported for analysis. During capture and handling, animals may receive drug administration, external instruments, marks, biological sampling, measured and weighed. Up to 4 unintentional mortalities of northern fur seals annually, not to exceed 13 over the life of the permit, are also requested. Steller sea lions (*Eumetopias jubatus*) from the endangered western Distinct Population Segment and harbor seals (*Phoca vitulina*) may be unintentionally disturbed annually during research.

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: May 15, 2026.

Shannon Bettridge,

Chief, Marine Mammal and Sea Turtle Conservation Division,

Office of Protected Resources,

National Marine Fisheries Service.

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