



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
NAVAL AIR WARFARE CENTER WEAPONS DIVISION
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CHINA LAKE, CA 93555-6100 POINT MUGU, CA 93042-5049

IN REPLY REFER TO:

5090
52F00ME/4170
September 27, 2012

Mr. James H. Lecky
Director, Office of Protected Resources
National Marine Fisheries Service
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3283

Subj: Request for Letter of Authorization and Annual Monitoring Report

Dear Mr. Lecky:

The Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division requests a new Letter of Authorization (LOA) to harass Pacific harbor seals, California sea lions, and northern elephant seals incidental to missile launch activities from San Nicolas Island pursuant to Small Take Regulations (50 CFR 216.150-158). We are also pleased to submit our annual report for missile launch operations under the Regulations. As required by our current LOA dated November 22, 2011, this report presents data on the methods, results, and interpretation of all monitoring tasks, and mitigation measures undertaken, during the September 2011 through September 2012 time period. We do not currently anticipate more launches during the duration of the current LOA.

The results from the 2011-2012 monitoring period (and those from previous monitoring periods) suggest that any effects of the launch operations were minor, short-term, and localized. Approximately 902 California sea lions, 19 Pacific harbor seals, and no northern elephant seals were estimated to have been affected. The pinnipeds included in these estimates either left the haul-out site in response to missile launches, or exhibited prolonged movement or behavioral changes relative to their behavior immediately prior to launches. It is not likely that any of the pinnipeds on SNI were adversely impacted by the launches.

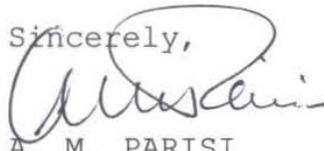
Consistent with new regulations which allow for Navy LOAs with longer periods of validity (Fed. Reg. Vol. 77, No. 21), we request the issuance of a new LOA to cover the remaining period of the Small Take Regulations for missile launch operations at

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San Nicolas Island (December 1, 2012 through June 2, 2014). This extends the final LOA for the current Small Take Regulations to a period of 18 months and will reduce unnecessary reporting prior to the end of the regulations. We propose to continue the same mitigations and monitoring included in our current LOA.

If you should have any questions or need any additional information, please contact Mr. John Ugoretz, Marine Resources Manager, at (805) 989-4852; john.ugoretz@navy.mil.

Sincerely,



A. M. PARISI
By direction

Enclosure: Pinniped Monitoring During Missile Launches on San Nicolas Island, California, September 2011 - September 2012

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Copy to: Ms. Monica DeAngelis
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Southwest Regional Office
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Long Beach, CA 90802-4213

Copy to: Mr. Dan Shide
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