



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

FEB 05 2015

Mr. Bruce W. Hagedorn  
Acting Chief, Eglin Natural Resources  
501 DeLeon Street, Suite 101  
Eglin Air Force Base, Florida 32542-5133

Dear Mr. Hagedorn:

Enclosed is an Incidental Harassment Authorization (IHA) issued to Eglin Air Force Base (Eglin AFB), pursuant to Section 101(a)(5)(D) of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*), to take marine mammals by Level A and Level B harassment incidental to conducting Maritime Weapon Systems Evaluation Program (Maritime WSEP) Operations in Eglin AFB's Gulf Test and Training Range.

Eglin AFB is required to comply with the conditions contained in the IHA. In addition, Eglin AFB must submit a draft report to the National Marine Fisheries Service's (NMFS) Office of Protected Resources, within 90 days after completion of the work authorized herein.

If you have any questions concerning the IHA or its requirements, please contact Jeannine Cody NMFS, Office of Protected Resources, at (301) 427-8401.

Sincerely,

for

Donna S. Wieting  
Director  
Office of Protected Resources

Enclosure



DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION  
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE  
INCIDENTAL HARASSMENT AUTHORIZATION

The Commanding Officer, Eglin Air Force Base, FL 32542-5133 is hereby authorized under section 101(a)(5)(D) of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 1371), to harass marine mammals incidental to conducting Maritime Weapon Systems Evaluation Program (Maritime WSEP) Operational Testing within the Eglin Gulf Test and Training Range within the Eglin Gulf Test and Training Range (EGTTR), contingent upon the following conditions:

1. This Authorization is valid from February 6, 2015 through April 1, 2015.
2. This Authorization is valid only for activities within the EGTTR. The EGTTR is the airspace over the Gulf of Mexico beyond 3 nautical miles (nm) from shore that is controlled by Eglin Air Force Base. The specified activities will take place within the boundaries of Warning Area W-151. The inshore and offshore boundaries of W-151 are roughly parallel to the shoreline contour. The shoreward boundary is 3 nm from shore, while the seaward boundary extends approximately 85 to 100 nm offshore, depending on the specific location. W-151 has a surface area of approximately 10,247 nm<sup>2</sup> (35,145 square kilometers (km)), and includes water depths ranging from approximately 20 to 700 meters (m).

**General Conditions**

3. The taking of marine mammals by Eglin AFB is only authorized if it occurs incidental to the activities associated with the Maritime WSEP operations using munitions identified in Attachment 1 of this Authorization:

(a) The incidental taking of marine mammals is limited to the species listed under condition 3(b). The taking by harassment, injury, or death of any other species of marine mammal is prohibited and may result in the modification, suspension, or revocation of this Authorization.

(b) The incidental take of marine mammals under the activities identified Attachment 1 is limited to the following species, by the indicated method of take and the indicated number:

- (i) Level B Harassment (TTS or behavioral)
  - (A) Atlantic bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*) – 796 total
  - (B) Atlantic spotted dolphin (*Stenella frontalis*) – 137 total
  - (C) Unidentified bottlenose dolphin/Atlantic spotted dolphin – 9 total
- (ii) Level A Harassment (PTS)
  - (A) Atlantic bottlenose dolphin – 33
  - (B) Atlantic spotted dolphin (*Stenella frontalis*) – 5



## Mitigation

4. When conducting this activity, the following mitigation measures must be undertaken:

(a) If daytime weather and/or sea conditions preclude adequate monitoring for detecting marine mammals and other marine life, Maritime WSEP operations must be delayed until adequate sea conditions exist for monitoring to be undertaken. Daytime exercises will be conducted only when sea surface conditions do not exceed Beaufort sea state 4 (*i.e.*, wind speed 13-18 miles per hour (11-16 knots); wave height 1 m (3.3 feet (ft)), the visibility is 5.6 km (3 nm) or greater, and the ceiling is 305 m (1,000 ft) or greater.

(b) On the morning of the Maritime WSEP mission, the test director and safety officer will confirm that there are no issues that would preclude mission execution and that the weather is adequate to support monitoring and mitigation measures. Eglin AFB will use 3 high definition video cameras to monitor the test area. If the high-definition video cameras are not operational for any reason, Eglin AFB will not conduct Maritime WSEP missions.

(c) Two Hours Prior to Mission:

(i) Mission-related surface vessels will be stationed on site.

(ii) Vessel-based observers on board at least one vessel will assess the overall suitability of the test site based on environmental conditions (*e.g.*, sea state) and presence/absence of marine mammal or marine mammal indicators (*e.g.*, large schools of fish, jellyfish, Sargassum rafts, and large flocks of birds feeding at the surface). Observers will relay this information to the safety officer.

(d) One and One-half Hours Prior to Mission

(i) Vessel-based surveys and video camera surveillance will commence. Vessel-based observers will survey the 5.1-km Zone of Impact (ZOI) and relay all marine mammal and indicator sightings, including the time of sighting and direction of travel (if known) to the safety officer. Surveys will continue for approximately one hour.

(ii) If marine mammals or marine mammal indicators are observed within the ZOI, the test range will be declared “fouled,” which will signify to mission personnel that conditions are such that a live ordnance drop cannot occur.

(iii) If no marine mammals or marine mammal indicators are observed, the range will be declared “green,” which will signify to mission personnel that conditions are such that a live ordnance drop may occur.

(e) One-half Hours Prior to Mission

(i) Approximately 30 minutes prior to live weapon deployment, vessel-based observers will be instructed to leave the test site and remain outside the safety zone, which will be 9.5 miles from the detonation point (actual size will be determined by

weapon net explosive weight (NEW) and method of delivery) during the conduct of the mission.

(ii) Monitoring for marine mammals will continue from the periphery of the safety zone while the mission is in progress. Other safety boat crews will be instructed to observe for marine mammals during this time.

(iii) After survey vessels have left the test site, marine species monitoring will continue from the Eglin Central Control Facility (CCF) through the video feed received from the high definition cameras on the instrument barge.

(f) Execution of Mission:

(i) Immediately prior to live weapons drop, the test director and safety officer will communicate to confirm the results of the marine mammal survey and the appropriateness of proceeding with the mission. The safety officer will have final authority to proceed with, postpone, move, or cancel the mission.

(ii) The mission will be postponed or moved if: Any marine mammal is visually detected within the 5.1-km ZOI. Postponement will continue until the animal(s) that caused the postponement is confirmed to be outside of the ZOI due to swimming out of the range; or large schools of fish, jellyfish, Sargassum rafts, or large flocks of birds feeding at the surface are observed within the 5.1-km ZOI. Postponement will continue until these potential indicators are confirmed to be outside the 5.1-km ZOI.

(iii) In the event of a postponement, pre-mission monitoring will continue as long as weather and daylight hours allow.

(g) Post Mission

(i) Post-mission surveys will commence as soon as Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) personnel declare the test area safe. These surveys will be conducted by the same vessel-based observers that conducted the pre-mission surveys.

(ii) Survey vessels will move into the 5.1-km ZOI from outside the safety zone and monitor for at least 30 minutes, concentrating on the area down-current of the test site.

(iii) Any marine mammals killed or injured as a result of the test will be documented and immediately reported to the NMFS Southeast Region Marine Mammal Stranding Network at 877-433-8299 (Blair.Mase@noaa.gov and Erin.Fougeres@noaa.gov) and the Florida Marine Mammal Stranding Hotline at 888-404-3922. The species, number, location, and behavior of any animals observed will be documented and reported.

(iv) If post-mission surveys determine that an injury or lethal take of a marine mammal has occurred, the next Maritime WSEP mission will be suspended until the test procedure and the monitoring methods have been reviewed with NMFS and appropriate changes made.

## **Monitoring**

5. The holder of this Authorization is required to cooperate with the National Marine Fisheries Service and any other Federal, state or local agency monitoring the impacts of the activity on marine mammals.

(a) The holder of this Authorization will track their use of the EGTTR for the Maritime WSEP missions and marine mammal observations, through the use of mission reporting forms.

(b) Maritime WSEP operations will coordinate with other activities conducted in the EGTTR (*e.g.*, Precision Strike Weapon and Air-to-Surface Gunnery missions) to provide supplemental post-mission observations of marine mammals in the operations area of the exercise.

(c) Any dead or injured marine mammals observed or detected prior to testing or injured or killed during live drops, must be immediately reported to the NMFS Southeast Region Marine Mammal Stranding Network at 877-433-8299 (Blair.Mase@noaa.gov and Erin.Fougeres@noaa.gov) and the Florida Marine Mammal Stranding Hotline at 888-404-3922.

(d) Any unauthorized impacts on marine mammals must be immediately reported to Dr. Roy E. Crabtree, the National Marine Fisheries Service's Southeast Regional Administrator, at 727-842-5312 or Roy.Crabtree@noaa.gov, and Jolie Harrison, Chief, Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources at 301-427-8401 or [Jolie.Harrison@noaa.gov](mailto:Jolie.Harrison@noaa.gov).

(e) The monitoring team will document any marine mammals that were killed or injured as a result of the test and, if practicable, coordinate with the local stranding network and NMFS to assist with recovery and examination of any dead animals, as needed.

(f) Activities related to the monitoring described in this Authorization, including the retention of marine mammals, do not require a separate scientific research permit issued under section 104 of the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

## **Reporting**

6. A draft report of marine mammal observations and Maritime WSEP mission activities must be submitted to the National Marine Fisheries Service's Southeast Regional Office, Protected Resources Division, 263 13th Ave. South, St. Petersburg, FL 33701 and NMFS's Office of Protected Resources, 1315 East West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910. This draft report must include the following information:

(i) Date and time of each Maritime WSEP mission;

(ii) A complete description of the pre-exercise and post-exercise activities related to mitigating and monitoring the effects of maritime strike missions on marine mammal populations;

(iii) Results of the monitoring program, including numbers by species/stock of any marine mammals noted injured or killed as a result of the Maritime WSEP mission and number of marine mammals (by species if possible) that may have been harassed due to presence within the 5.1-km ZOI; and

(iv) The draft report will be subject to review and comment by the National Marine Fisheries Service. Any recommendations made by the National Marine Fisheries Service must be addressed in the final report prior to acceptance by the National Marine Fisheries Service. The draft report will be considered the final report for this activity under this Authorization if the National Marine Fisheries Service has not provided comments and recommendations within 90 days of receipt of the draft report.

**Additional Conditions**

7. The Maritime WSEP mission monitoring team will participate in the marine mammal species observation training. Designated crew members will be selected to receive training as protected species observers. Observers will receive training in protected species survey and identification techniques through a National Marine Fisheries Service-approved training program.

8. The holder of this Authorization must inform the Director, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service, (301-427-8400) or designee (301-427-8401) prior to the initiation of any changes to the monitoring plan for a specified mission activity.

9. A copy of this Authorization must be in the possession of the safety officer on duty each day that Maritime WSEP missions are conducted.

10. This Authorization may be modified, suspended or withdrawn if the holder fails to abide by the conditions prescribed herein, or if the authorized taking is having more than a negligible impact on the species or stock of affected marine mammals.

*Donna S. Wieting*

*for*

Donna S. Wieting  
Director, Office of Protected Resources  
National Marine Fisheries Service

FEB - 5 2015

Date

**Attachment 1 – Maritime WSEP munitions levels proposed for use in the W-151A test area.**

<b>Type of Munition</b>	<b>Total # of Live Munitions</b>	<b>Detonation Type</b>	<b>Warhead – explosive material</b>	<b>Net Explosive Weight per Munition</b>
GBU-10 or GBU-24	2	Surface	MK-84 - Tritonal	945 lbs
GBU-12 or GBU- 54 (LJDAM)	6	Surface	MK-82 - Tritonal	192 lbs
AGM-65 (Maverick)	6	Surface	WDU-24/B penetrating blast-fragmentation warhead	86 lbs
CBU-105 (WCMD)	4	Airburst	10 BLU-108 sub-munitions each containing 4 projectiles parachute, rocket motor and altimeter	83 lbs
GBU-38 (Laser Small Diameter Bomb)	4	Surface	AFX-757 (Insensitive munition)	37 lbs
AGM-114 (Hellfire)	15	Subsurface (10 msec delay)	High Explosive Anti-Tank (HEAT) tandem anti-armor metal augmented charge	20 lbs
AGM-176 (Griffin)	10	Surface	Blast fragmentation	13 lbs
2.75 Rockets	100	Surface	Comp B-4 HEI	Up to 12 lbs
PGU-12 HEI 30 mm	1,000	Surface	30 x 173 mm caliber with aluminized RDX explosive. Designed for GAU-8/A Gun System	0.1 lbs
7.62 mm/.50 cal	5,000	Surface	N/A	N/A

Key: AGL = above ground level; AGM = air-to-ground missile; CBU = Cluster Bomb Unit; GBU = Guided Bomb Unit; JLDAM = Joint Direct Attack Munition; LJDAM = Laser Joint Direct Attack Munition; mm = millimeters; msec = millisecond; lbs = pounds; PGU = Projectile Gun Unit; HEI = high explosive incendiary.