



INCIDENTAL HARASSMENT AUTHORIZATION

Point Blue Conservation Science (Point Blue), 3820 Cypress Drive #11, Petaluma, California 94954 and/or its designees (holders of the Authorization) are hereby authorized under section 101(a)(5)(D) of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 1371(a)(5)(D)) to harass small numbers of marine mammals incidental to conducting seabird and pinniped research activities on the South Farallon Islands, Año Nuevo Island, Point Reyes National Seashore, San Francisco Bay, and the Russian River in central California:

1. This Authorization is valid from January 31, 2015 through January 30, 2016.
2. This Authorization is valid only for activities associated with seabird research that would occur in the following specified geographic area:

In the vicinity of pinniped haul out sites located on Southeast Farallon Island (37°41'54.32" N, 123° 0'8.33" W), Año Nuevo Island (37° 6'29.25" N, 122°20'12.20" W), within Point Reyes National Seashore (37°59'38.61" N, 122°58'24.90" W), San Francisco Bay, or the Russian River in Sonoma County.

3. Species Authorized and Level of Takes

(a) The taking, by Level B harassment only, is limited to the following species: 9,871 California sea lions (*Zalophus californianus*), 343 Pacific harbor seals (*Phoca vitulina*), 196 northern elephant seals (*Mirounga angustirostris*), and 106 Steller sea lions (*Eumetopias jubatus*).

(b) The taking by injury (Level A harassment), serious injury or death of any of the species listed in Condition 3(a) or the taking of any kind of any other species of marine mammal is prohibited and may result in the modification, suspension or revocation of this Authorization.

(c) The taking of any marine mammal in a manner prohibited under this Authorization must be reported immediately to the West Coast Regional Administrator, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), at (562) 980-4001 and to the Chief, Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, at (301) 427-8401.

4. General Conditions

(a) A copy of this Authorization must be in the possession of Point Blue, its designees, and field crew personnel (including research collaborators from Point Reyes National Seashore and Oikonos - Ecosystem Knowledge) operating under the authority of this IHA.



- (b) The holder must notify the Assistant Regional Administrator for Protected Resources, West Coast Region at (562) 982-4000 at least 24 hours prior to starting pinniped and seabird research activities (unless constrained by the date of issuance of this Authorization).

5. Mitigation Measures

In order to ensure the least practicable impact on the species listed in condition 3(a), the holder of this Authorization is required to:

- (a) Minimize the potential for disturbance (to the lowest level practicable near known pinniped haul outs by boat travel and pedestrian approach during pinniped and seabird research operations). Point Blue and its designees are expected to conduct the activities during the planned dates stated in the application.
 - i. Postpone beach landings until pinnipeds that may be present in the access areas have entered the water.
 - ii. Select a pathway of approach to research sites that minimizes the number of marine mammals harassed.
 - iii. Avoid visits to sites used by pinnipeds for pupping.
 - iv. Monitor for offshore predators and not approach hauled out pinnipeds if great white sharks (*Carcharodon carcharias*) or killer whales (*Orcinus orca*) are in the area. If Point Blue and/or its designees see predators in the area, they must not disturb the animals until the area is free of predators.
 - v. Keep voices hushed and bodies low to the ground in the visual presence of pinnipeds.
 - vi. Conduct seabird observations at North Landing on Southeast Farallon Island in an observation blind, shielded from the view of hauled out pinnipeds.
 - vii. Crawl slowly to access seabird nest boxes on Año Nuevo Island if pinnipeds are within view.
 - viii. Coordinate research visits to intertidal areas of Southeast Farallon Island (to reduce potential take) and coordinate research goals for Año Nuevo Island to minimize the number of trips to the island.
 - ix. Coordinate monitoring schedules on Año Nuevo Island, so that areas near any pinnipeds would be accessed only once per visit.
 - x. Have the lead biologist serve as an observer to evaluate incidental take.

6. Monitoring

The holder of this Authorization is required to:

- (a) Record the date, time, and location (or closest point of ingress) of each visit to the research site. See Table 2 for an example of a data collection sheet.

- (b) Collect the following information for each visit:
 - i. composition of the marine mammals sighted, such as species, gender and life history stage (e.g., adult, sub-adult, pup);
 - ii. information on the numbers (by species) of marine mammals observed during the activities;
 - iii. the estimated number of marine mammals (by species) that may have been harassed during the activities;
 - iv. any behavioral responses or modifications of behaviors that may be attributed to the specific activities and a description of the specific activities occurring during that time (e.g., pedestrian approach, vessel approach); and
 - v. information on the weather, including the tidal state and horizontal visibility.
- (c) Observers will record marine mammal behavior patterns observed before, during, and after the activities; in the following manner:
 - i. flushing into the water;
 - ii. stampeding into water;
 - iii. moving more than 1 meter (m), but not in the water;
 - iv. becoming alert and moving, but did not move more than 1 m; or
 - v. changing the direction of current movement.
- (d) If applicable, note observations of marked or tag-bearing pinnipeds or carcasses, as well as any rare or unusual species of marine mammal.
- (e) If applicable, note the presence of any offshore predators (date, time, number, species).

7. Reporting

The holder of this Authorization is required to:

- (a) Report observations of unusual behaviors of pinnipeds to Monica DeAngelis, Fishery Biologist, West Coast Region at (562) 982-3232 so that the appropriate personnel in the Regional Office may conduct any potential follow-up observations.
- (b) Draft Report: Submit a draft final report to the Chief, Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, Headquarters, NMFS within 90 days after the expiration of the IHA. The report will include the information gathered pursuant to the monitoring requirements listed in item 6, along with an executive summary.
- (c) The Draft Report shall be subject to review and comment by NMFS. Any recommendations made by NMFS must be addressed in the Final Report prior to submission to NMFS. If we decide that the draft final report needs no comments, the draft final report will be considered to be the final report.
- (d) Final Report: Submit a final report to the Chief, Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, Headquarters, NMFS within 30 days after receiving comments from us on the draft final report.

8. Reporting Prohibited Take

In the unanticipated event that Point Blue's activities cause any taking of a marine mammal in a manner prohibited by the IHA, such as an injury (Level A harassment), serious injury or mortality (e.g., vessel-strike), Point Blue shall immediately cease the specified activities and immediately report the incident to the Incidental Take Program Supervisor, Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, at 301-427-8401 and/or by email to Jolie.Harrison@noaa.gov and ITP.Cody@noaa.gov and the Assistant West Coast Regional Stranding Coordinator at (562) 980-3264 (Justin.Greenman@noaa.gov). The report must include the following information:

Time, date, and location (latitude/longitude) of the incident; the name and type of vessel involved; the vessel's speed during and leading up to the incident; description of the incident; water depth; environmental conditions (e.g., wind speed and direction, Beaufort sea state, cloud cover, and visibility); description of marine mammal observations in the 24 hours preceding the incident; species identification or description of the animal(s) involved; the fate of the animal(s); and photographs or video footage of the animal (if equipment is available).

Point Blue shall not resume its activities until we are able to review the circumstances of the prohibited take. NMFS will work with Point Blue to determine what is necessary to minimize the likelihood of further prohibited take and ensure MMPA compliance. Point Blue may not resume their activities until notified by NMFS in writing via a letter or email or via the telephone.

9. Reporting an Injured or Dead Marine Mammal with an Unknown Cause of Death

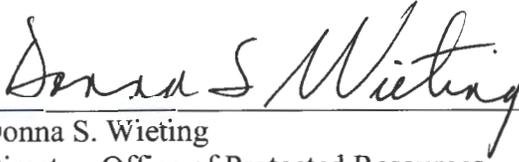
In the event that Point Blue discovers an injured or dead marine mammal, and the lead researcher determines that the cause of the injury or death is unknown and the death is relatively recent (i.e., in less than a moderate state of decomposition as described in the next paragraph), Point Blue will immediately report the incident to the Incidental Take Program Supervisor, Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, at 301-427-8401 and/or by email to Jolie.Harrison@noaa.gov and ITP.Cody@noaa.gov and the Assistant West Coast Regional Stranding Coordinator at (562) 980-3264 (Justin.Greenman@noaa.gov). The report must include the same information identified in the paragraph above this section. Activities may continue while we review the circumstances of the incident. NMFS will work with Point Blue to determine whether modifications to the activities are appropriate.

10. Reporting an Injured or Dead Marine Mammal not Related to Point Blue's Activities

In the event that Point Blue discovers an injured or dead marine mammal, and the lead researcher determines that the injury or death is not associated with or related to the activities authorized in the IHA (e.g., previously wounded animal, carcass with moderate to advanced decomposition, or scavenger damage), Point Blue will report the incident to the Incidental Take Program Supervisor, Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, at 301-427-8401 and/or by email to Jolie.Harrison@noaa.gov and ITP.Cody@noaa.gov and the Assistant West Coast Regional Stranding Coordinator at (562) 980-3264 (Justin.Greenman@noaa.gov) within 24 hours of the discovery. Point Blue will provide photographs or video footage (if available) or other documentation of the stranded animal

sighting to us and the Marine Mammal Stranding Network. Point Blue can continue their research activities.

11. A copy of this Authorization must be in the possession of Point Blue and its designees (including contractors and marine mammal monitors) operating under the authority of this Incidental Harassment Authorization at all times.



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

JAN 30 2015

Date

Attachments

Table 1. Authorized Take Numbers for Point Blue's Seabird Research Activities

Species	Authorized Take Numbers
Steller sea lion (<i>Eumetopias jubatus</i>) Eastern U.S. stock	106
California sea lion (<i>Zalophus californianus</i>)	9,871
Pacific harbor seal (<i>Phoca vitulina</i>)	343
Northern elephant seal (<i>Mirounga angustirostris</i>)	196

Table 2. California Sea Lion (CSL) counts and responses during activities associated with seabird and pinniped research activities (Example Table).

Date	Location	Activity	Time	Response	# CSL non-pups	# CSL pups
4/15/2010	SEFI	walking to site	before	alert	100	0
			during	flush	40	0
			after	alert	60	0