



INCIDENTAL HARASSMENT AUTHORIZATION

The University of California Santa Cruz's Partnership for the Interdisciplinary Studies of Coastal Oceans (PISCO) is hereby authorized under section 101(a)(5)(D) of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA; 16 U.S.C. 1371(a)(5)(D)) to harass marine mammals incidental to specified activities associated with rocky intertidal monitoring surveys along the California and Oregon coasts, contingent upon the following conditions:

1. This IHA is valid from February 3, 2016 through February 2, 2017.
2. This IHA is valid only for specified activities associated with rocky intertidal monitoring surveys at specific sites along the U.S. California and Oregon coasts.
3. General Conditions
 - a. A copy of this IHA must be in the possession of personnel operating under the authority of this authorization.
 - b. The incidental taking of marine mammals, by Level B harassment only, is limited to the following species along the Oregon and California coasts:
 - i. 203 harbor seal (*Phoca vitulina richardii*);
 - ii. 720 California sea lion (*Zalophus californianus*);
 - iii. 40 northern elephant seal (*Mirounga angustirostris*); and
 - c. The taking by injury (Level A harassment), serious injury, or death of any of the species listed in condition 3(b) of the IHA or any taking of any other species of marine mammal is prohibited and may result in the modification, suspension, or revocation of this IHA.
4. Mitigation Measures: The holder of this IHA is required to implement the following mitigation measures:
 - a. Field biologists must approach study sites cautiously and quietly, such that any disturbance of pinnipeds is minimized. The pathway and rate of approach must be chosen judiciously, avoiding to the extent possible any approach of hauled-out pinnipeds. If approach is unavoidable, field biologists must approach gradually such that stampeding of pinnipeds is avoided. Specific care must be taken to avoid any disturbance that may place pinniped pups at risk. Site visits should be limited to no more than 6 hours in the absence of extenuating circumstances, and personnel shall vacate the area as soon as sampling of the site is completed.

- b. Field biologists shall use binoculars to detect pinnipeds before close approach to avoid being seen by the animals.
- c. Field biologists shall monitor the offshore area for predators (such as killer whales and white sharks) and avoid flushing of pinnipeds when predators are observed in nearshore waters.
- d. Field biologists shall reschedule work at sites where pups are present, unless other means to accomplishing the work can be done without causing disturbance to mothers and dependent pups.
- e. Field biologists shall approach pinnipeds when located in the sampling plots only if there are no other means to accomplish the survey and there are no pups present (however, approach must be slow and quiet so as not to minimize potential for stampede).
- f. Sampling shall be rescheduled if Steller sea lions are present at the study site.

5. Monitoring: The holder of this IHA is required to conduct monitoring of marine mammals present at study sites prior to approaching the sites.

- a. Marine Mammal Observer (MMO) qualifications:
 - i. Project field biologists will function as MMOs. Minimum qualifications for MMOs include an undergraduate degree in biology.
- b. Information to be recorded shall include the following:
 - i. Species counts (with numbers of pups/juveniles); and
 - ii. Numbers of disturbances, by species and age, according to a three-point scale of intensity including (1) Head orientation in response to disturbance, which may include turning head towards the disturbance, craning head and neck while holding the body rigid in a u-shaped position, or changing from a lying to a sitting position and/or slight movement of less than 1 m; “alert”; (2) Movements in response to or away from disturbance, over short distances (typically two times its body length) and including dramatic changes in direction or speed of locomotion for animals already in motion; “movement”; and (3) All flushes to the water as well as lengthier retreats (> 3 m); “flight”. However, authorized takes shall only be recorded when disturbances meet criteria for #2 and #3 described above.

6. Reporting: The holder of this IHA is required to:

- a. Report observations of unusual behaviors, numbers, or distributions of pinnipeds, or of tag-bearing carcasses, to NMFS Southwest Fisheries Science Center (SWFSC).

b. Submit a draft monitoring report to NMFS Office of Protected Resources within 60 days after the conclusion of the 2016 field season or 60 days prior to the start of the next field season if a new IHA will be requested. A final report shall be prepared and submitted within 30 days following resolution of any comments on the draft report from NMFS. This report must contain the informational elements described above, at minimum.

c. Reporting injured or dead marine mammals:

i. In the event that the specified activity clearly causes the take of a marine mammal in a manner prohibited by this IHA, such as an injury (Level A harassment), serious injury, or mortality, PISCO shall immediately cease the specified activities and report the incident to the Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, (301-427-8401) and the West Coast Regional Stranding Coordinator, NMFS, (562-980-3230). The report must include the following information:

1. Time and date of the incident;
2. Description of the incident;
3. Environmental conditions (e.g., wind speed and direction, Beaufort sea state, cloud cover, and visibility);
4. Description of all marine mammal observations in the 24 hours preceding the incident;
5. Species identification or description of the animal(s) involved;
6. Fate of the animal(s); and
7. Photographs or video footage of the animal(s).

Activities shall not resume until NMFS is able to review the circumstances of the prohibited take. NMFS will work with PISCO to determine what measures are necessary to minimize the likelihood of further prohibited take and ensure MMPA compliance. PISCO may not resume the activities until notified by NMFS.

ii. In the event that an injured or dead marine mammal is discovered and it is determined that the cause of the injury or death is unknown and the death is relatively recent (e.g., in less than a moderate state of decomposition), PISCO shall immediately report the incident to the Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, (301-427-8401) and the West Coast Regional Stranding Coordinator, NMFS, (562-980-3230). The report must include the same information identified in 6(c)(i) of this IHA. Activities may continue while NMFS reviews the circumstances of the incident. NMFS will work with PISCO to determine

whether additional mitigation measures or modifications to the activities are appropriate.

iii. In the event that an injured or dead marine mammal is discovered and it is determined 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), PISCO shall report the incident to the Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, (301-427-8401) and the West Coast Regional Stranding Coordinator, NMFS, (562-980-3230) within 24 hours of the discovery. PISCO shall provide photographs or video footage or other documentation of the stranded animal sighting to NMFS. Activities may continue while NMFS reviews the circumstances of the incident.

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

Donna S. Wieting

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

FEB 03 2016

Date

Table 1. Authorized take numbers, by species

Species	Authorized Take
California sea lion (<i>Zalophus californianus</i>)	720
Harbor seal (<i>Phoca vitulina richardii</i>)	203
Northern Elephant seal (<i>Mirounga angustirostris</i>)	40