



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

## INCIDENTAL HARASSMENT AUTHORIZATION

The United States Department of the Navy (Navy) 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 Ice Exercises in the Arctic Ocean and Beaufort Sea when adhering to the following terms and conditions.

1. This Authorization is valid from February 1, 2018 through May 1, 2018.
2. This Authorization is valid only for activities associated with submarine training, and testing and research in the Arctic Ocean and Beaufort Sea.
3. General Conditions
  - (a) A copy of this Authorization must be in the possession of the Navy, its designees, and work crew personnel operating under the authority of this Authorization.
  - (b) The number of animals and species authorized for taking by Level B harassment is 1,676 ringed seals.
4. Prohibitions
  - (a) The taking, by incidental harassment only, is limited to the species and number listed under condition 3(b).
  - (b) The taking by death of these species or 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.
5. Mitigation Measures

The holder of this Authorization is required to implement the following mitigation measures.

- (a) Shutdown and Delay Measures
  - (i) The Navy shall implement shutdown and delay measures if a marine mammal is detected by submarines via passive acoustics 15 minutes before or during use of active sonar transmissions from submarines or torpedoes.



- (ii) The Navy shall not restart acoustic transmissions, including launching of torpedoes until after 15 minutes have passed with no marine mammal detections.
  - (iii) Passive acoustic monitoring shall begin 5 minutes prior to start of exercise activities.
- (b) The Navy shall avoid on-ice take by implementing the following:
- (i) Foot and snowmobile movement shall avoid pressure ridges.
  - (ii) The ice camp and runway shall be built on multi-year ice without pressure ridges.
  - (iii) Snowmobiles shall follow established routes, when available.
  - (iv) Camp deployment shall be gradual with activity increasing over the first five days and shall be completed by March 15, 2018.
  - (v) Implementation of 100-meter avoidance distance of all terrestrial and marine mammals.
  - (vi) All material (e.g., tents, unused food, excess fuel) and wastes (e.g., solid waste, hazardous waste) would be removed from the ice floe upon completion of ICEX18.

## 6. Monitoring

- (a) Ice camp personnel shall maintain an awareness of the surrounding environment. If any unusual wildlife-related activities or events (e.g. death or injury of an animal) are observed, they must be documented in the exercise monitoring report and, potentially, reported to NMFS (See 7(d)).

## 7. Reporting

The holder of this Authorization is required to:

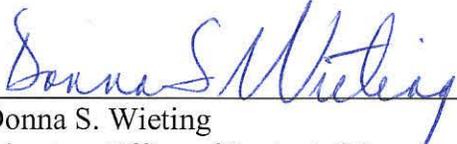
- (a) Submit a draft exercise monitoring report within 90 days of the completion of proposed training and testing activities.
- (b) The draft exercise monitoring report shall include data regarding sonar use and any marine mammal sightings or detection. It shall also include information on the number of sonar-related shutdowns recorded.
- (c) If no comments are received from NMFS within 30 days of submission of the draft final report, the draft final report shall constitute the final report. If

comments are received, a final report must be submitted within 30 days after receipt of comments.

(d) Reporting injured or dead marine mammals:

- (i) In the unanticipated event that the specified activity clearly causes the take of a marine mammal in a manner prohibited by this Authorization, such as an injury (Level A harassment), serious injury, or mortality, the Navy shall immediately cease the specified activities and report the incident to the Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, and the Alaska Regional Stranding Coordinator, NMFS. The Navy shall adhere to protocols outlined in the Stranding Response Plan for Atlantic Fleet Training and Testing (AFTT) Study Area (November 2013).
- (ii) All dead/injured marine mammals shall be reported to Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, and the Alaska Regional Stranding Coordinator, even if the cause of death/injury is unknown.

8. This Authorization 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  
Director, Office of Protected Resources  
National Marine Fisheries Service

JAN 31 2018

Date



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JAN 31 2018

Elizabeth Nashold  
Director, Fleet Installations and Environment  
and Deputy Chief of Staff  
Department of the Navy  
U.S. Fleet Forces Command  
1562 Mitscher Avenue, Suite 250  
Norfolk, VA 23551-2487

Dear Ms. Nashold,

Enclosed is an Incidental Harassment Authorization (IHA), issued pursuant to Section 101(a)(5)(D) of the Marine Mammal Protection Act, to take small numbers of marine mammals, by Level B harassment, incidental to Ice Exercise (ICEX) training and testing activities occurring in the Beaufort Sea and Arctic Ocean.

You are required to comply with the conditions contained in the IHA, including all mitigation, monitoring and reporting requirements

If you have any questions concerning the IHA or its requirements, please contact Rob Pauline, Office of Protected Resources, at 301-427-8408.

Sincerely,

Donna S. Wieting  
Director, Office of Protected Resources

Enclosure



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