UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
PROGRAM PLANNING AND INTEGRATION
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

To All Interested Government Agencies and Public Groups:

JAN 20 2012

Under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), an environmental review has been performed on the following action.

TITLE: Environmental Assessment on the Issuance of an Incidental Harassment Authorization to the U.S. Navy to Take Marine Mammals by Harassment Incidental to a Physical Oceanographic Survey in the Southwest Indian Ocean

LOCATION: Southwest Indian Ocean

SUMMARY: NMFS proposes to issue an Incidental Harassment Authorization (IHA) to the U.S. Navy to allow the take, by Level B harassment, of 30 species of marine mammals incidental to a physical oceanographic survey. Elevated sound levels may result in short-term harassment of marine mammals, including avoidance and behavioral changes.

RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL:
James H. Lecky
Director, Office of Protected Resources
National Marine Fisheries Service
1315 East West Highway
Silver Spring, MD
301-427-8400

The environmental review process, including preparation of the Environmental Assessment (EA), led us to conclude that this action will not have a significant effect on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared. A copy of the finding of no significant impact (FONSI), including the supporting EA, is enclosed for your information.

Although NOAA is not soliciting comments on this completed EA/FONSI we will consider any comments submitted that would assist us in preparing future NEPA documents. Please submit any written comments to the responsible official named above.

Sincerely,

Patricia A. Montanio
NOAA NEPA Coordinator

Enclosure

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