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

FEB 9 2012

To All Interested Government Agencies and Public Groups:

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

TITLE: *Environmental Assessment on the Promulgation of Regulations and the Issuance of Letters of Authorization to Take Marine Mammals, By Level B Harassment, Incidental to Naval Explosive Ordnance Disposal School Training Operations at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida*

LOCATION: Eglin Air Force Base, Florida (off Santa Rosa Island)

SUMMARY: The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) proposes to promulgate regulations and issue Letters of Authorizations to the U.S. Air Force, Headquarters 96th Air Base Wing, Eglin Air Force Base for the take, by Level B harassment only, of marine mammals during Naval Explosive Ordnance Disposal School (NEODS) training operations within the Eglin Gulf Test and Training Range at property off Santa Rosa Island, Florida, from March, 2012 to March, 2017. NMFS has determined that the impact of conducting the NEODS training operations at Eglin AFB may result, at worst, in a temporary modification in behavior of Atlantic bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*). No injury (Level A harassment), serious injury, or mortality is anticipated to result from this activity, nor is it authorized. NMFS has further determined that this activity will result in a negligible impact on the affected species or stocks.

RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL:

James H. Lecky
Director
Office of Protected Resources
National Marine Fisheries Service
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
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The environmental review process 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 Environmental Assessment (EA), prepared by NMFS, is enclosed for your information.

Although NOAA is not soliciting comments on this 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