



JUN 15 2013

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 Issuance of an Amendment to Scientific Research Permit No. 10018-01 to Satellite Tag Humpback Whales in Hawaii

LOCATION: Hawaiian and Alaskan waters

SUMMARY: The proposed action is issuance of an amendment to a scientific research permit for takes of marine mammals during suction cup tagging. The proposed permit amendment would authorize harassment during satellite tagging activities on female-calf pairs of humpback whales in Hawaii. The purposes of the tagging activities are to: 1) verify the impact of research vessels during boat-based behavioral follows, 2) further understand how female-calf pairs use breeding ground habitat, and 3) further document the behavioral dynamics of newly-independent yearlings within breeding regions. Impacts from these activities would be short-term and minimal to individual animals and negligible to the species. A biological opinion concluded that the proposed action would not likely jeopardize the continued existence of the species. The permit would be valid until June 30, 2013.

**RESPONSIBLE
OFFICIAL:**

Helen M. Golde
Acting Director, Office of Protected Resources
National Marine Fisheries Service
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
1315 East-West Highway, Room 13821
Silver Spring, MD 20910
(301) 427-8400



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) 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "P. Montanio", with a stylized, cursive script.

Patricia A. Montanio
NOAA NEPA Coordinator

Enclosure