

monitoring reports annually for each of three sites in the region covered by the specific regulations.

Title: Marine Mammals; Incidental Take During Specified Activities.

Bureau form number: None.

Frequency of collection: Biannually.

Description of respondents: Oil and gas industry companies.

Number of respondents: 5 for each of 3 active sites per year.

Estimated completion time: For the initial year only, a 200 hour application burden is estimated. For the initial year and annually thereafter, 8 hours per LOA, 4 hours for monitoring, and 8 hours per monitoring report are estimated for each of 5 companies for each of 3 active sites (20 hours × 5 companies × 3 sites).

Burden estimate: 200 hours (only in initial year for application).

300 hours (for initial year and annually thereafter).

Dated: March 24, 1998.

Gary Edwards,

Assistant Director—Fisheries.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Information Collection to be Submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for Approval Under the Paperwork Reduction Act

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of Intent to Request Information Collection Authority.

SUMMARY: The collection of information described below will be submitted to OMB for renewal of approval under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995. Copies of specific information collection requirements, related forms, and explanatory material may be obtained by contacting the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) Information Collection Clearance Officer at the address or phone number listed below.

DATES: Comments must be submitted on or before June 1, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Comments and suggestions on specific requirements should be sent to the Service's Information Collection Clearance Officer, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, MS 222 ARLSQ, 1849 C Street, NW, Washington, DC 20240; Telephone 703/358-1943.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jeffrey L. Horwath, U.S. Fish and

Wildlife Service, Division of Fish and Wildlife Management Assistance, Arlington, Virginia, at 703/358-1718, or Wells Stephensen, Office of Marine Mammals Management, Anchorage, Alaska, 907/786-3815.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Service proposes to submit the following information collection clearance requirements to OMB for review and renewal of approval under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Public Law 104-13. This information collection requirement is currently approved through August 1998 and assigned OMB clearance number 1018-0066. Comments are invited on.

(1) whether the collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility, (2) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of burden, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used, (3) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected, and (4) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

As authorized by Section 109(I) of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (Act) (16 U.S.C. 1361-1407), the Service in October 1988 implemented formal Marking, Tagging, and Reporting Regulations in 50 CFR 18.23 for Alaskan Natives harvesting polar bear, sea otter, and Pacific walrus. Under Section 101(b) of the Act, Alaskan Natives residing in Alaska and dwelling on the coast of the North Pacific or Arctic Oceans may harvest these species for subsistence or handcraft purposes. Section 109(I) of the Act authorizes the Service, acting on behalf of the Secretary of the Interior, to prescribe marking, tagging, and reporting regulations applicable to this Native subsistence and handcraft take.

On June 28, 1988, the Service published, under authority of Section 109(I) of the Act, a final rule in the **Federal Register** that added paragraph (f) to regulations at 50 CFR 18.23 that enabled the Service to gather data on the Native subsistence and handcraft harvest and biology of polar bear, sea otter, and Pacific walrus in order to determine what effect such take is having on these populations. It also provided the Service with a means of monitoring the disposition of the harvest to ensure that any commercial

use of products created from these species meets the criteria set forth in Section 101(b) of the Act.

The information collected by the Service from Alaskan Natives is used to improve the Service's decision-making ability by substantially expanding the quality and quantity of harvest and biological data upon which future management decisions can be based. It provides the Service with the ability to make inferences about the condition and general health of these populations and to consider the importance and impacts to these populations from such processes as development activities and habitat degradation. Without authority to collect this harvest information, the Service's ability to measure the take of polar bear, sea otter and walrus is inadequate. Mandatory marking, tagging, and reporting is considered essential to improve the quality and quantity of harvest and biological data upon which future management decisions will be based. It allows the Service to make rational, knowledgeable decisions regarding the Native harvest, habitat degradation, and the effects of oil and gas exploration, development and production planned or underway for areas within the range of these species.

The Service estimates that the annual burden associated with this request will be 500 hours for each year of the 3-year period of OMB authorization. This estimated burden was calculated based on previous experience suggesting that Alaskan Natives annually will take about 2,000 polar bears, sea otters, and walrus for subsistence and handcraft purposes, and that 15 minutes will be needed to provide the required information for each animal taken.

Title: Marine Mammal Marking, Tagging and Reporting Program.

Bureau form numbers: R7-50, R7-51 and R7-52.

Frequency of collection: Occasional.

Description of respondents: Individuals and households.

Number of respondents: Approximately 2,000 per year.

Estimated completion time: 15 minutes per response.

Annual burden hours: 500 hours.

Current OMB Clearance Number: 1018-0066.

Approval Expires: August 31, 1998.

Dated: March 27, 1998.

Rowan Gould,

Acting Assistant Director—Fisheries.

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