



MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION

27 May 2010

Ms. Diana Hynek
Departmental Paperwork Clearance Officer
Department of Commerce
14th and Constitution Ave., NW, Room 6625
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Ms. Hynek:

The Marine Mammal Commission has reviewed the *Federal Register* notice regarding reporting requirements related to the marine mammal stranding program and rehabilitation of stranded animals (75 Fed. Reg. 27294). As stated in the notice, the National Marine Fisheries Service is required to collect information on marine mammal strandings around the country. The agency uses these data to analyze by region the species, numbers, conditions, and causes of illness and death in stranded animals. Data collected on marine mammals undergoing rehabilitation is used to monitor and track animals being held in various authorized facilities in the United States.

Stranded marine mammals are one of the primary sources of information on the distribution of marine mammals, the condition of animals within their populations, and the risk factors (e.g., disease, fishery interactions) that affect them. In the Commission's view, the data obtained through this collection effort are vital if the National Marine Fisheries Service is to fulfill its responsibilities under the Marine Mammal Protection Act. In view of the modest burden imposed on the respondents and the low annual cost to the public, the Marine Mammal Commission endorses continuation of efforts to collect this information.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Timothy J. Ragen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Timothy J. Ragen, Ph.D.
Executive Director