



MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION

16 July 2010

Mr. P. Michael Payne, Chief
Permits, Conservation, and Education Division
Office of Protected Resources
National Marine Fisheries Service
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Re: Permit Application No. 15471
(Michael Adkesson, D.V.M., Chicago
Zoological Society)

Dear Mr. Payne:

The Marine Mammal Commission, in consultation with its Committee of Scientific Advisors on Marine Mammals, has reviewed the above-referenced permit request with regard to the goals, policies, and requirements of the Marine Mammal Protection Act. The applicant is requesting authorization to import and possess biological samples collected from both live and dead South American fur seals (*Arctocephalus australis*) during ongoing health assessment studies in Punta San Juan, Peru. Biological samples (blood, swabs, feces, blubber, milk, fur, and skin) will be imported from 50 adult female and 50 pups annually for a five-year period. Biological samples previously collected during a 2009 pilot study also will be imported. Additionally, tissue samples from 250 naturally deceased fur seals may be imported during the five-year period. The purpose of the requested permit is to enable the applicant to characterize the health of the current Punta San Juan fur seal population, establish baseline health parameters to monitor future changes, assess potential future threats, and evaluate environmental contamination as a measure of ecosystem health. The request pertains only to the importation and possession of samples from animals legally taken under other permits. Samples may be archived, transported, and analyzed by researchers to optimize the amount of biological information gained from each animal.

RECOMMENDATION

The Marine Mammal Commission recommends that the National Marine Fisheries Service issue the requested permit, provided that—

- the applicant be required to obtain all necessary export permits under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora before importing any fur seal parts into the United States; and
- the applicant periodically provide reports to the Service sufficient to demonstrate that each specimen was taken in accordance with the laws of the country of origin, was not taken in violation of the Marine Mammal Protection Act or other applicable U.S. laws, and is being used only for bona fide scientific purposes.

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The Commission believes that the activities for which it has recommended approval are consistent with the purposes and policies of the Marine Mammal Protection Act and other applicable laws.

Please contact me if you have any questions concerning this recommendation.

Sincerely,



Timothy J. Ragen, Ph.D.
Executive Director