

MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION
4340 East-West Highway, Room 700
Bethesda, MD 20814-4447

27 February 2009

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 20910-3225

Re: Permit Application No. 14142
(Niladri Basu, Ph.D.)

Dear Mr. Payne:

The Marine Mammal Commission, in consultation with its Committee of Scientific Advisors on Marine Mammals, has reviewed the above-referenced permit application with regard to the goals, policies, and requirements of the Marine Mammal Protection Act. We offer the following recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION

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

- the Service determines that all samples to be imported were taken in accordance with the laws of the country of origin, and
- the applicant is required to obtain all necessary permits under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora before importing the samples.

BACKGROUND

The applicant is requesting authorization to obtain and import from Denmark tissue samples (brain, liver, muscle, kidney, and skin) from up to 100 individuals (five samples from each individual) of each of the following species: ringed, hooded, harp, harbor, and grey seals; narwhals; pilot and beluga whales; and harbor porpoises. The samples would be obtained from researchers at the National Environmental Research Institute of Denmark who routinely collect tissues from subsistence-harvested or dead stranded marine mammals in Greenland, the Faroe Islands, and Denmark. The objectives of the proposed research are to assess time trends of pollution in tissues of Arctic marine mammals to determine if exposures are changing; determine which tissues accumulate certain types of pollutants; and determine if pollutant levels are sufficient to affect the health of Arctic marine mammals. The permit is requested for a five-year period.

The Marine Mammal Commission recommends that the requested permit be issued, provided that the Service determines that all samples to be imported were taken in accordance with

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the laws of the country of origin and provided that the applicant is required to obtain the necessary permits under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora before importing samples.

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